Academic Literacies in Higher Education in Paraná: Opportunities and Shortcomings

Letramentos Acadêmicos no Ensino Superior Público Paranaense: oportunidades e lacunas

Bruno Silva Sanches
Universidade Estadual de Londrina, Londrina, Paraná, Brasil

Vera Lúcia Lopes Cristovão
Universidade Estadual de Londrina, Londrina, Paraná, Brasil

Abstract: Studies in academic literacies emerge from the necessity to expand and/or investigate the opportunities for students' engagement and agency in academia. The university is an educational environment, which requires students to deal with a diverse range of social situations involving genres such as research articles, reading projects, oral presentations, among others, and their social roles implied. Based on the model of academic literacies by Lea and Street (1998), we analyse the prospects of actions a public University of Paraná State has (or has not) provided to facilitate the development and inclusion of its students in the production and understanding of academic genres, focusing on the opportunities for engaging with texts in Portuguese (mother tongue), English, Spanish, and/or French. In order to gather data, an online questionnaire was used and a focus group run with 4th-year students of an English Language Teacher Education course. The results show considerable shortcomings and needs for improvement especially concerning academic literacy development in additional languages and the necessity for more opportunities to supply demands shown in this study from the data analysed.

Keywords: Academic literacies; Textual genre; English language; Academic writing; Additional languages

Resumo: Os estudos em letramentos acadêmicos surgem da necessidade de ampliar e/ou investigar as oportunidades de engajamento e agência dos alunos na academia. A universidade é um ambiente educacional, que exige que os alunos lidem com uma gama diversificada de situações sociais envolvendo gêneros como artigos de pesquisa, projetos de leitura, apresentações orais, entre outros, e seus papéis sociais implicados. Com base no modelo de letramentos acadêmicos de Lea e Street (1998), analisamos as perspectivas de ações que uma universidade pública do estado do Paraná tem (ou não) proporcionado para facilitar o desenvolvimento e a inclusão de seus alunos na produção e compreensão de gêneros acadêmicos, com foco nas oportunidades de interação com textos em português (língua materna), inglês, espanhol e/ou francês. Para a coleta de dados, foi utilizado um questionário online e um grupo focal com alunos do 4º ano do curso de Formação de

Professores de Língua Inglesa. Os resultados mostram deficiências consideráveis e necessidades de melhoria, principalmente no que diz respeito ao desenvolvimento do letramento acadêmico em idiomas adicionais e a necessidade de mais oportunidades para suprir as demandas apresentadas neste estudo a partir dos dados analisados.

Palavras-chave: Letramentos Acadêmicos; Gênero textual; Língua Inglesa; Escrita acadêmica; Línguas Adicionais

1 Introduction

The university sphere is a space for contributions to our society as a whole. In this sphere, much is produced and used such as the innumerous research groups and fields of study counting with the collaboration of the entire academic staff. The productions stemming from these groups, however, do not come from simple tasks; students must be aware of the ways knowledge is conveyed in this space of human interaction and what power relationships underlie the life on campus. A newcomer to this context will most likely be expected to have mastered the basic genres (such as summary, essays and so forth) during their basic schooling, however, the school genres and academic genres differ in their textual features, and production aims. Higher education students are also asked to write in their mother tongues and in additional languages (or foreign languages) which implies to further the obstacles for the production of academic genres as means of fostering their academic literacies (henceforth AL).

This study is set out to investigate the opportunities and shortcomings at a traditional state university in Paraná, Brazil (henceforth RHEI[1]) concerning AL which to date, has received scant attention in the research literature. By means of quantitative and qualitative analysis using an online questionnaire via Google forms, we seek to understand if students (of a varied range of disciplinary cultures on campus) have opportunities to engage in practices of AL. In addition, we seek to infer a broader understanding of the existing opportunities by analysing the discourse of senior 4th year undergraduate students from the English language teacher education course[2]. Through a

---

[1] From Portuguese – Instituição de Ensino Superior Pesquisada (IESP) into English – Researched Higher Education Institution.
[2] The undergraduate course has its original name "Letras Inglês e suas respectivas literaturas" (English Letters and its respective literatures). It is a four-year course which aims at educating pre-service English teachers: A Major in the English Language and Literatures.

focus group, we sought to assess the extent of the practices they have been involved in during the 4 years of undergraduate studies and whether it was sufficient to prepare them for producing, understanding and engaging with academic genres and within academia as a whole.

This paper has been organised firstly with an introduction, where we develop the topic in context, state the aim and scope of the research, provide an overview of the key theory behind our study and briefly outline the purpose of this article. Second, the literature review, where we present relevant literature research and what is already known in the field. Thirdly, the methods of analysis, where we describe the kind of data used, what was done to collect information and limitations we came across while collecting data. Later we present our findings and discussion, bringing the results of the data collected and assess their implications dialoguing with prior research. Finally, the conclusion, where we summarise our study, final thoughts and set ground for further research in the field.

2 Academic literacies

In this part, we present prior investigation, findings and key terms we used and the reflections regarding our own study based on their perspectives. A seminal study by Lea and Street (1984) proposes two types of AL: the autonomous and the ideological. The former deals with the belief that learning how to write and read is enough to enable students to gain a set of skills, which would be the easy transit, and resolution of all problems faced by a literate society. The latter sees literacy or literacies as something intricate, which takes into account the many socio-cultural aspects and ideologies implied in any literacy[3] events. The authors also point out that there are three models of writing skills in academia (LEA, STREET, 1998) remarking that they do not cancel one another but rather are a complement to each other. The first is the "study skills approach" which focuses on the linguistic aspects or "formats" in terms of structure for academic genres and in this model, knowing those structures is enough to produce many genres of different types. The second model named "academic socialisation skills" focuses on the exposure

---

[3] Here literacy being used as a means to educate people not only in terms of reading and writing but by making them able to perceive the world through critical lenses.

of the student to the academic sphere in all its aspects; however, it addresses this scope as homogeneous disregarding the power structures in any social context. It also understands genres as transparent means of reproduction and fails to address socio-ideological perspectives in the written text that will be dealt with in the theory of academic literacy. The third model is denominated "academic literacies" which seeks to foster the use of genres as a socio-discursive vehicle for the spreading of academic-genre skills and social practice, leading to personal and possible social transformations. The latter is the most congruent model with the views and perspectives of the New Literacy study group embodying literacies as social practices rather than a set of skills that must be learnt or schematised.

Our search for other research works was based on nine journals[4] that published special numbers on academic writing or academic literacies and the keywords for our search were: *students* and *academic genres*. Among the journals and based on the key words 8 texts were selected (ALMEIDA, FIGUEREDO, 2013; FERREIRA, LOUSADA, 2016; BELOTI, MENEGASSI, 2017; OLIVEIRA, ARAÚJO, 2017; FERREIRA, ARAÚJO, 2017; FARAH, SILVA, 2017; BESSA, 2017; FIRPO, DORNELLES, 2019;). From these authors, Beloti and Menegassi (2017) had a different research niche to our own. Oliveira and Araújo (2017) had a similar scope but they did not use the same theoretical framework and so this study was not included as part of our set of data. Ferreira and Lousada (2016) presented coherent and essential scope to assist our own research. Ferreira and Araújo (2017) did not focus on AL and then diverged in tangent to our own ideas; Farah and Silva (2017) did not focus on AL either but rather in the students' representation in written texts. Firpo and Dornelles (2019) had significant objectives about our own aims and so provided insights into data and contextual issues. Almeida and Figueredo (2013) approached similar scope but we decided to look into Cristovão and Vignoli's (2020) research which was fundamental to lead the way and uphold our claims in both theoretical and contextual dimensions. Lastly, Bessa (2017) did not approach the same scopes and aims so it was also left out of this research.

Firpo and Donelles (2019) study traces the development and agency of first year students' AL by fostering their engagement in practices that involved academic genres

---

[4] Ilha do Desterro (2016); Raído (2017); Revista do GEL(2017); Revista da ANPOLL (2019); Scripta (2019); Letras (UFSM) (2020); Revista da ABRALIN (2021), DELTA (2021); SIGNUM (2021).

based on the perspectives of Lea and Street (1998) and the New literacy study group (LEA, STREET, 1998; LEA, STREET, 2006; FIAD, 2011, 2013; JUCHUM, 2016, ZAVALA, 2021). Firpo and Donelles focused on building an online community of mutual support with other students on campus. The productions were themed on undergraduate students' first experiences and their expectations, impressions and difficulties being new members of the academic community. The findings show the relevance of insertions in the academic world with newcomers, most productions analysed expressed the students' agency in taking their new identities as university students.

Ferreira and Lousada (2016) also investigate students' AL using a model of laboratory[5]/study centre, in this case a space for students to practise and be involved in AL development. This laboratory/study centre is institutional at the University of São Paulo (USP) and relies on the help of monitors and professors' training and assistance. Their article reports how the project was developed and how it has been aiding students to develop their literacy skills in a collaborative learning process. The authors claim that while universities are gaining more and more space in international fields, the level of AL in additional languages such as English, French, Spanish and others have been left to chance. Student's proficiency levels in additional languages is generally low and the possibilities of insertion in additional language AL activities is unfeasible. During our study we also seek to understand if the same applies to our context in relation to the development of AL not only using the Portuguese language but also in other additional languages.

A recent study provides insights into the scope of our research. Cristovão and Vignoli (2020) present a mapping of the practices and requirements regarding AL in three state universities in Paraná (UEL, UNESPAR[6] and UTFPR[7]). In their study, they carried out three phases. The first was a mapping out of the existing practices in these higher education institutions (HEI) carried out via questionnaires and curricula analysis from the courses on the campuses. The second phase comprised an action plan to integrate a laboratory (a study centre) concerned with the development of AL (named LILA[8]); the

---

[5] The original term employed in Portuguese is "laboratório" which is a centre for assisting students while they develop new skills (skills related to AL, in this scope).
[6] UNESPAR (Universidade Estadual do Paraná - State University of Paraná).
[7] UTFPR (Universidade Tecnológica Federal do Paraná - Federal Technological University of Paraná).
[8] LILA (Laboratório Integrado de Letramentos Acadêmico-Científico - Integrated Laboratory of Scientific-Academic Literacies). One can read more about it at https://periodicos.ufsm.br/letras/article/view/53338

third and final phase of their study was the implementation of LILA and its effectiveness in the HEI presented in the mapping. This study provides space for discussion with our own analysis. Their study also draw data from the investigation of demands for AL development in Brazil and more specifically in Paraná. Once ready to run, this laboratory/study centre (LILA) will enable students from all fields and levels to develop and improve their AL in their mother tongue as well as in other languages.

3 Method

In this section, we present the methodological procedures taken while conducting this research. In regard to the data generated which oriented the results for this piece of research, a questionnaire[9] was designed via Google forms consisting of 13 questions (multiple choice and open-ended questions) directed to the students of the State/Public Universities, the context in which our RHEI belongs. From the questionnaire, 4 questions addressed students' basic information such as name, university, course, and term. 9 questions addressed specific information regarding their linguistic improvement (in Portuguese and in an additional language), the courses/subjects concerning academic genres, what genres students feel confident about as far as writing is concerned (i.e. summaries, essays, posters, seminars and so on) both in Portuguese and in an additional language. An open-ended one followed all questions so that students could comment their answers, and lastly students answered the term of authorization for taking part in the research. This form was sent to the RHEI's pro-rectory of graduate studies (PROGRAD) and went through minor adjustments in terms of structure. The aim of this form was to collect information on students' AL opportunities at the RHEI. This questionnaire was sent to every college coordinators via email to all the 53 courses on campus (undergraduate, graduate courses, and bachelor's levels), regarding the production of academic genres in their mother tongue (Portuguese) and in additional languages [10](English, Spanish, and French). After sending the emails we noticed that the number of responses was low (5 to 7 responses) which concerned us. A new attempt was made by

---

[9] This study is part of a bigger Project, Ações de Didatização de Gêneros em prol de Letramentos Acadêmicos, approved by Plataforma Brasil, CAAE: 09695319.4.1001.5231, n. 3.270.217.
[10] Preferred term by the authors (instead of foreign languages).

going back to the centres and asking senior students' timetable for classes so that we could go talk to them personally and ask them for their collaboration.

Some members of the undergraduate course replied to our email and forwarded our proposal by sending the link of the questionnaire to their students. After the new responses were registered (21 in total), new attempts could not be made largely because of the university lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The 21 responses to the questionnaire were transferred into a spreadsheet and then converted into graphics as you will be able to check in the findings and discussions section. As soon as remote lessons were established at the RHEI we invited 4th/senior undergraduate students from the English language teaching group to a focus group[11] in order to answer one of the research questions by analysing their understanding of AL and the opportunities they had had during the 4 years of their undergraduate course. Ten questions were addressed to the students, nine questions were related to the production of their paper and also to aspects involving academic writing[12] (such as production, publication, submission and so on).

The focus group was recorded with prior permission of the participants[13] and the views each student constructed during the discussion was analysed. Along with the analysis, the recording of the meeting was rewatched/reanalysed and the points that were relevant to understand the opportunities and shortcomings present in the course English language Teacher Education. The key issues are detailed in the section of findings and discussions through a global textual plan to comment on the students' answers directly related to what they have said regarding AL through the lenses of our theoretical reference.

---

[11] A focus group consists of a discussion with questions that will guide it. According to Nyumba et al "[a] Focus group discussion is frequently used as a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of social issues. The method aims to obtain data from a purposely selected group of individuals rather than from a statistically representative sample of a broader population."

[12] Students in the course of English language teaching at RHEI (Syllabus 2014-2018) have in their 4th years the subject "Academic writing" which aims at teaching students to write their final paper and some types of academic genres.

[13] The participants allowed the use of the focus group's recording to contribute to this research by signing an authorization form TCLE which is a Research Ethics and Informed Consent either signed online or in paper. It provides information about the procedures, methods, motifs, outcomes and risks of the research they are taking part.

4 Findings and disscusion

This section is dedicated to the presentation of the results obtained from this piece of research at UEL. Our first data set comes from the online questionnaire answered by the respondents via Google Forms and the focus group replies/discussion. The overall ratio of responses to this questionnaire was low, especially due to the sudden lockdown given the COVID-19 pandemic worldwide, which did not allow us to reach more students. Using questionnaires to elicit information on informants´ (in this case, undergraduate students) views and experiences on writing is a common method for an exploratory study (HYLAND, 2010). As we can see the chart below shows that twenty-one participants returned the questionnaire. The overview of the students' participation is presented in percentages together with the name of the courses they are enrolled in.

**Chart 1 -** Undergraduate students' responses via questionnaire and corresponding courses.
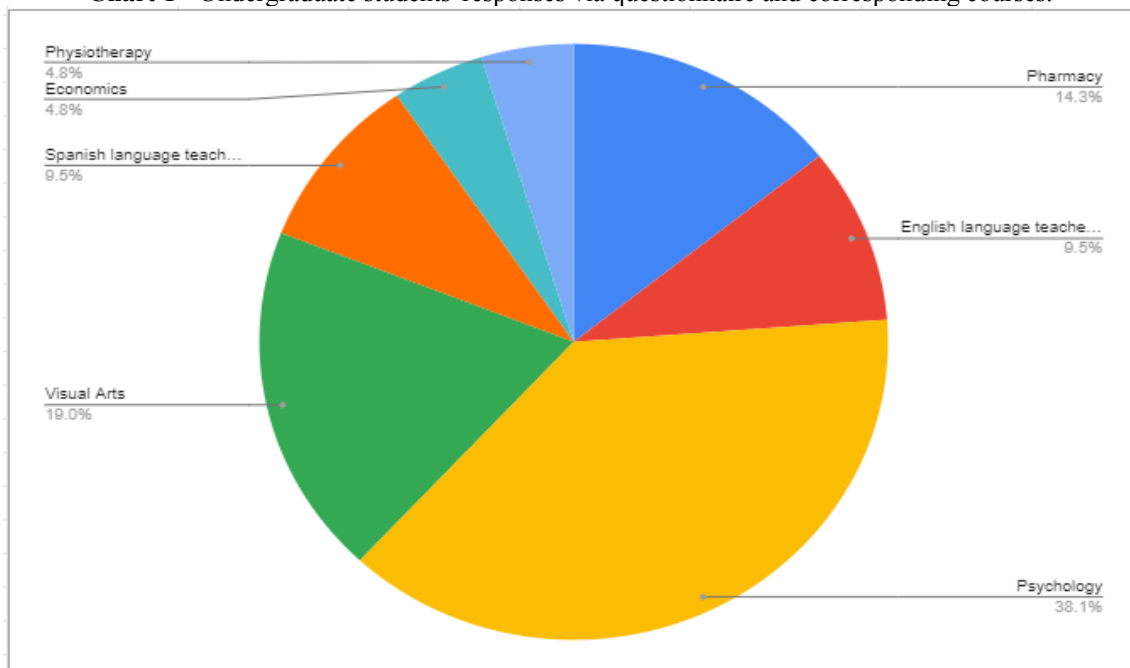
Source: the authors

As seen in chart one, undergraduate students from the Psychology course had the highest response rates (total of 8 or 38.1% of the respondents). We believe that the college reinforced the importance of the research and hence the numbers were higher than any other course. On the other hand, the courses from our own centre had few or no response (they account from History, Philosophy, Social Sciences, Portuguese, Spanish and

English language teacher education and Bachelor of Arts in French). This was one of the main difficulties we found when analysing data from the questionnaire. The low rates may also show a minor attention given by some instances within the campus which do not prioritize human science research (CARRARA, 2020) or research as a whole.

Overall, the participants' responses show a gap concerning at times any awareness of the relevance of genres, let alone opportunities for these students to develop AL during their undergraduate years. The implications as to the lack of opportunities emerge from the supposed ideal plan that the student must know how to write such genres and their social roles from primary and secondary schools. Such view has been known as the "deficit discourse" and denied by authors such as Lea and Street (1998) who defend that practices must be included in the curriculum and in research to provide tools and opportunities for students to learn within their discursive community. Concerning additional languages, the questionnaire also points to a gap in relation to text production and the awareness of their roles in society and in the academy (PRIOR, 1998).

As far as Chart 2 is concerned, it presents a panorama regarding the students' opportunities on their AL in their mother tongue (Brazilian Portuguese) and in additional languages (English, Spanish and French). Opportunities are taken here as spaces for the development of their AL, physical spaces or in form of projects, workshops and so on.

Chart 2 - AL Opportunities in Portuguese and Additional Languages
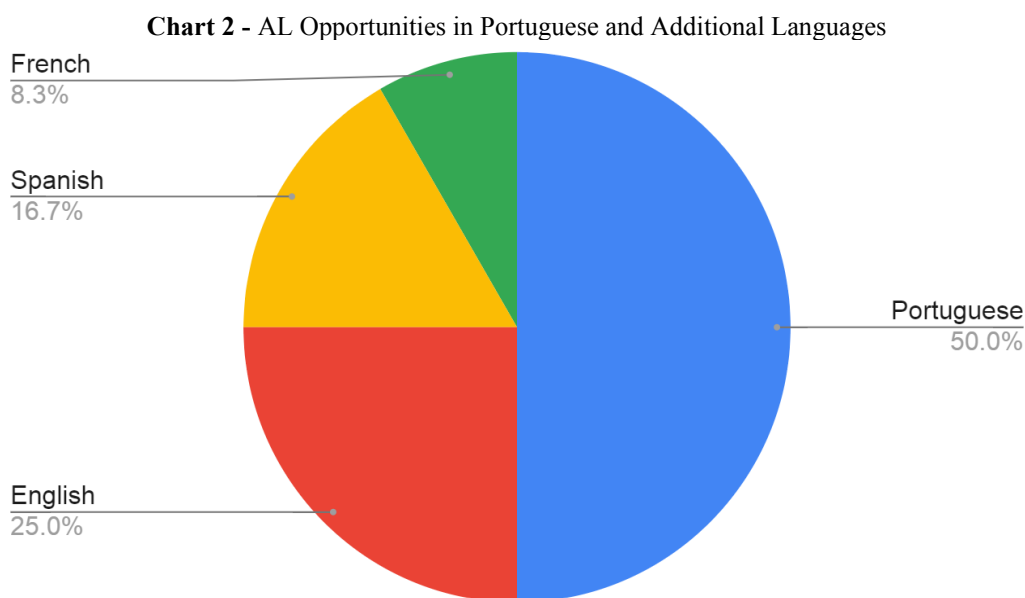
Source: the authors

From the 21 respondents only some of them had opportunities concerning AL at the RHEI. The percentage shows the number of affirmative answers regarding their development of AL in Portuguese and additional languages. From the affirmative answers 6 of them refer to Portuguese, 3 to English, 2 to Spanish and 1 to French, the remaining participants responded negatively. In relation to Portuguese, one participant from the Psychology course said that he had some input while taking the subject of Methodology but that "it was very brief and quite shallow". Two participants from the Spanish Language Teacher Education course answered that they had a subject in the first year named textual production and they learnt from summaries to essays in Portuguese. The last participant was from Economics and claims to have learnt some academic writing skills in the subject of Research Methodology while other participants also mentioned junior scientific research programmes that enabled them to be in touch with academic Portuguese. The responses were negative in concern to the opportunities for developing academic writing skills in Portuguese.

Concerning additional languages, two of the participants are from the English Language teaching course and hence have most of the four years taught in English or about English. Two participants are from the Spanish Language Teacher Education which also implies some linguistic knowledge regarding text productions in Spanish. The opportunities in French are scarce once one student from Psychology claims to have taken French lessons at the language laboratory at the RHEI. In evidence, AL development in Portuguese has been greater but considering the total number of respondents, most answered negatively opportunities in Portuguese and also in additional languages. Here we highlight the intense shortcomings as to the development of AL in the above-mentioned institution, an urgent rate. According to Prior (1998, p. xi),

> "Actually, writing happens in moments that are richly equipped with tools (material and semiotic) and populated with others (past, present, and future). When seen as situated activity, writing does not stand alone as the discrete act of a writer, but emerges as a confluence of many streams of activity: reading, talking, observing, acting, making, thinking, and feeling as well as transcribing words on paper. (PRIOR, 1998, p. xi)

Prior´s concept of writing as a literate activity matches our understanding of academic literacies reinforcing the need for engagement in different contextualized actions.

To broaden our understanding as to the opportunities and necessities in the English language teaching course, we invited students from the 4th and senior year to a focus group to discuss questions regarding their experiences with academic writing and how they felt about their learning throughout their undergraduate years. The focus group consisted of a 45-minute video conference via Google Meet (due to COVID-19 lockdown it was necessary to be done online). in which nine questions served as a guide for the discussion. It is worth pointing out that the tenth question was a draught for the participants to ask at will and openly.

As a panorama, the discussion with the participants has proven to be crucial to understand students' motifs and general thoughts about the concepts of academia and their personal feelings towards academic genres. The participant John Wazalski [14] answered that since his first year of study, he was an anxious newcomer lost in the academic world, and he would get quite concerned with the matter of the final academic paper. He would always ask his professors about specific doubts on the course's final academic research paper - such as if there was viva voice examinations by the end of the course and proper terms for handing it in. His claims reveal what other researchers and scholars have affirmed before regarding students' AL development. The anxiety and blur surrounding academic genres and the academic sphere due to lack of knowledge and preparation exists as a consequence to this inexistent space to assist students from the first moment they start their undergraduate course as can be observed in a study (ALMEIDA et al., preprint) carried out at a public university in Paraná. The investigation showed a picture of a low number of disciplines dedicated to academic writing, especially within the model of academic literacies. Due to the collaborative characteristic of LILA, Almeida et al believe the network can provide the institutions involved in the project with activities, courses, workshops and other resources to improve and increase the opportunities and spaces for the learning and development of academic literacies.

Another participant named Clara stated that this was her second undergraduate course and that she understands that there is somehow a preparation regarding academic genres in the course but she thinks there must be other improvements in the sense that we get to University quite "blank/raw/fresh" and that she feels that there is an abysm of differences from high school to University. Clara also mentioned that from her

---

[14] Most participants used chosen pseudonims.

perception, her classmates were quite shocked in the subject of "Applied Linguistics" in the first year once more complex texts are compulsory for students to read. To sum up, Clara said that there is an attempt of AL development in the course which must be improved but it is very difficult once people are not academically literate[15] at all.

The issue of being academically literate or not fosters a discussion on what is involved in such a concept. Therefore, together with Komesu and Assis (2019), we advocate that

> Social practices of academic writing should allow the language subjects to have opportunities for critical (responsive) reflection on the very process of written production in relation to the one who writes; the one that demands the accomplishment of the verbal action, in an empirical and immediate way; he who demands the accomplishment of the verbal activity, from the point of view of an institutional curricular and disciplinary formulation, of a historical order; the one who reads/will read the written production in another context, when the university student is projected as a (future) professional; but also in the relationship with the discursive objects of which these individuals are constituted, (and) made. It is the possibility of distancing these objects – without being a distancing with separation, since the conception of language taken here is radically dialogic – that allows, to the subjects, a possibility of return (to) the other with displacements, transformations and resignifications of meanings in/of language. (KOMESU; ASSIS, 2019, p.7)[16]

Grounded on the aforementioned premise, we could raise some interrogations: i) the central relation with critical thinking/reflection/reflexivity that certainly is not restricted to curricular subjects of reading and writing; ii) the resolution of enunciative projects implied in every and any activity of text production not only for academic genres; and iii) the possible (re/de/con)construction of meanings on language use. Thus, undergraduates may not recognize many activities as part of their academic literacy development process. These views may also meet the final considerations of Stephany and Alves´ study (2017), concluding undergraduates may not have clearly understood the

---

[15] The participant is aware of the term once she is part of the group "Language and Education".

[16] From the original in Portuguese: "Práticas sociais de escrita acadêmica devem (deveriam) permitir aos sujeitos da linguagem oportunidades de uma reflexão crítica (responsiva) sobre o próprio processo da produção escrita na relação com aquele que escreve; aquele que demanda a realização da atividade verbal, de maneira empírica e imediata; aquele que demanda a realização da atividade verbal, do ponto de vista de uma formulação curricular e disciplinar institucional, de ordem histórica; aquele que lê/lerá a produção escrita em contexto outro, quando da projeção do universitário como (futuro) profissional; mas também na relação com os objetos discursivos de que esses sujeitos são constituídos, (e)feitos. É a possibilidade de distanciamento desses objetos – sem se tratar de um afastamento com separação, visto que a concepção de linguagem aqui assumida é radicalmente dialógica – que permite, aos sujeitos, uma possibilidade de retorno (ao) outro com deslocamentos, transformações e ressignificações de sentidos na/da linguagem. (KOMESU; ASSIS, 2019, p.7)

concept of academic literacy, besides not feeling able to produce specific texts belonging to academic genres. Besides this, the authors (2017) draw attention to the need to evaluate to what extent the university and their professors have really been able to introduce students in their discourse community.

A third respondent called Maria Eduarda said that she agreed with what the others had said and that even though she had some preparation on writing academic genres, she still felt insecure to produce a research paper. Another participant called Ilda stated that even though there was some room for learning there was still a lack of extracurricular activities to help students in their academic development. Such a view endorses the same findings indicated by Stephani and Alves (2017) about not enough work and understanding on reading and writing academic genres at this level of education.

During the focus group one of the issues the participants mentioned was the lack of data or context to analyse or create research questions. Due to the final research paper being linked to the compulsory teaching practicum this becomes another hindrance for many of them. In terms of submission, the participants claimed not to have enough knowledge nor have they seen a submission process. Some of the participants have had other undergraduate experiences and their perspectives diverge since they declare not to be prepared about the proximity in terms of structure and social function. Maria Eduarda told us that she was afraid of not achieving the necessary requirements to the task of producing academic genres (here the research paper). Approaching the students' needs, Clara hopes the subject in the senior year would return to the basics and clarify some concepts which are still confused such as paraphrasing, quoting and so on - at this final stage the basics is not clear yet. In regard to publishing or submitting their paperwork, participant Liz does not see undergraduate paperwork as relevant for publication as she alleges that they are mostly a big reproduction and not as important as a doctoral dissertation. She also postulates not to be entirely comfortable when writing academic genres in English. John Wazalski claims to be only interested in publishing his research if he is to follow an academic career in the future. Most of them joked about the Lattes platform by saying "Lattes"[17] - as a way to say that the undergraduate research would

---

[17] The Lattes Platform is an information centre administered by the Brazilian government as a scientific, researcher, technology and innovation profile for individuals who pursue an academic career in Brazil. See more at http://lattes.cnpq.br/ - Access on November, 29th 2020.

only be a way of stuffing the academic curriculum as a matter of "status". Lastly, some of the participants do not know if they want to pursue an academic career.

Accordingly, knowledge production by undergraduate students within their own discourse community does not seem to be recognized by these undergraduates themselves as suitable. This may be tangled with the roles they play and the actual arenas they take part in as active agents and authors.

With the questionnaire and the focus group we can see that the student needs to go through academic life with little instructions; as if the students must be admitted into university knowing all these complex systems without greater assistance from the beginning. We can also perceive by what the participants said that there is a lack of understanding and awareness regarding the social role of academia and how the scientific knowledge produced in such institutions has value beyond status but needs engagement, agency and circulation (within a discourse community and, hopefully, beyond). The issue gains even more scope when this student - who is unable to produce and understand the social role of these genres, in other words, develop their AL - does not have much room at the RHEI to develop these literacies. From this perspective, some members of the research group Language and Education through the project "Pedagogical approach actions towards academic literacies", at the RHEI, proposed the creation of a laboratory to contribute to fulfill this purpose (as seen in CRISTOVÃO; VIGNOLI, 2020) in order to provide space for the students from any undergraduate and graduate courses on Campus to develop their AL through workshops, activities, engagement with scholars and so forth. This laboratory was entitled "Laboratório Integrado de Letramentos Acadêmico-científicos" or LILA for short (in English: Integrated Laboratory for Scientific-Academic Literacies) which has been accepted and it is ongoing at ten public (state and federal) universities in Paraná.

5 Conclusions

This study aimed to investigate the opportunities and shortcomings regarding AL at the RHEI by means of an online questionnaire and a focus group. The data analysed show a gap in the students' AL in Portuguese and additional languages which may imply serious consequences to these future professionals once we question to what extent AL may

contribute to the scientific, humane and empowering role in our society. The participants do not see clearly the roles of academic genres and most do not know how to produce them, to express their scientific ideas in an additional language; the shortcomings can also be seen as the inadequacy of subjects in the curriculum and lack of resources offered by the University. In order to assist the members of academia a network of researchers from Paraná implemented a laboratory for the development of AL at public universities in Paraná, regarding not only Portuguese but also additional languages called LILA. The insights gained from this study may contribute to forge the planning and offer of activities regarding AL at this network of public univeristies. It was not possible to assess a great number of students on campus; therefore, it is unknown how impactful this lack may be of reach. A natural progression of this work would be to analyse a broader set of data after the COVID-19 lockdown and/or the advances of LILA in a couple of years ahead.

Acknowledgements

Contribution

Bruno Silva Sanches: Data curation, Formal Analysis, Methodology, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing; **Vera Lúcia Lopes Cristovão**: Formal Analysis, Methodology, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

References

ALMEIDA F. S; FIGUEIREDO, G. J. S. Letramento no ensino superior: uma reflexão acerca do letramento na formação docente. **Anais do SILEL**, v. 3, n. 1. Uberlândia: EDUFU, 2013.

ALMEIA, F. V. A. et al. Letramentos Acadêmico-Científicos: o ensino da escrita na Universidade Tecnológica Federal do Paraná. **Preprint**.

BELOTI, A; Menegassi, R. J. Understanding Writing as a process in PIBID's teacher training. **Raído**, v. 12, n. 27, 2017.

BESSA, J. C. R. Sobre condições de autoria e de produção científica do jovem pesquisador. **Raído**, v. 12, n. 27, 2017.

CARRARA, S. As ciências humanas e sociais entre múltiplas epidemias. **Physis: Revista de Saúde Coletiva**, v. 30, n. 02, e300201, 2020. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1590/S0103-73312020300201.

CRISTOVÃO, V. L. L.; VIGNOLI, J. S. Ações de Didatização de Gêneros em prol de Letramentos Acadêmicos: práticas e demandas. **Horizontes**, v. 38, n. 1, e020012, 2020. DOI: https://doi.org/10.24933/horizontes.v38i1.869

CRYSTAL, D. **English as a global language**. 2. ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

EF EPI. English Proficiency Index, 2020. Available at https://www.ef.com/__/~/media/centralefcom/epi/downloads/full-reports/v10/ef-epi-2020-english.pdf. Access on 29 nov. 2020.

FARAH, B. F; SILVA, W. R. Teachers from Basic schools represented in the students writing of language training teachers. **Raído**, v. 12, n. 27, 2017.

FERREIRA, M. M; LOUSADA, E. G. Ações do Laboratório de Letramentos Acadêmicos da Universidade de São Paulo: Promovendo a Escrita acadêmica na graduação e pós-graduação. **Ilha do Desterro**, v. 69, n. 3, p. 125-140, 2016.

FERREIRA, E. C. A; ARAÚJO, D. L.; The development of writing skills in higher education: A glance at graduating students in Linguistics. **Raído**, v. 12, n. 27, 2017

FIAD, R. S. **A escrita na universiade**. UNICAMP; Abralin. 2011.

FIRPO, P. F; DORNELLES, C. Student's Protagonism in processes of Constructing Academic Literacies. **Revista da Anpoll**, v. 1, n. 49, p. 67-79, 2019.

HYLAND, K. Researching Writing. In: PALTRIDGE, B.; PHAKITI, A. (Orgs.) **Continuum Companion to Research Methods in Applied Linguistics**. London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010. p. 191-204.

KOMESU, F.; ASSIS, J. A. (Orgs.) Ensaios sobre a escrita acadêmica. Belo Horizonte: *Editora PUC Minas*, 2019. 139 p.

LEA, M. R.; STREET, B. Student writing in higher education: an academic literacies approach. **Studies in Higher Education**, v. 23, n. 2, 157-172, 1998.

LEA, M. R.; STREET, B. The Academic literacies model: Theory and Applications. **Theory into Practice**, v. 45, 2006.

NYUMBA et al. The use of focus group discussion methodology: Insights from two decades of application in conservation. **Methods in Ecology and Evolution**. British Ecological Society. 2018.

OLIVEIRA, H. A. G; ARAÚJO, D. L. de. The writing in undergraduate in modern languages: challenges and representations. **Raído**, v. 12, n. 27, 2017.

PRIOR, P. A. **Writing/Disciplinarity**: A Sociohistoric Account of Literate Activity in the Academy. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1998.

STEPHANI, A.D.; ALVES, T. C. A escrita na universidade: os desafios da aquisição dos gêneros acadêmicos. **Raído**, v. 11, n. 27, 2017.

Bruno Silva Sanches
E-mail: brunovon.sanchez@uel.br
ORCiD: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7875-6930

Vera Lúcia Lopes Cristovão
E-mail: cristova@uel.br
ORCiD: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7875-6930