

## RECONTEXTUALIZATION OF DISCOURSES ON LANGUAGE IN CURRICULAR DIRECTIVES FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

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**Abstract:** The aim of this paper is to discuss the process of recontextualization of discourses within language teaching in the school context. I examined how the concept 'language' is recontextualized in four Curricular Directives (CDs): *Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais – Ensino Fundamental* (PCN), *Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais – Ensino Médio* (PCNEM); *Orientações Curriculares Nacionais* (OCNEM) and *Lições do Rio Grande* (LRG). The results show there are more definitions of 'language' in PCN and PCNEM than in OCNEM and LRG. The qualitative analysis indicates CDs recontextualize the contemporary debates in Applied Linguistics, because most of the occurrences are related to 'social practice' or 'social phenomenon'.

**Keywords:** Curricular directives; Language; Science popularization

**Resumo:** O objetivo deste trabalho é discutir o processo de recontextualização dos discursos do ensino de línguas no contexto escolar. Eu examinei como o conceito de 'linguagem' é recontextualizado em quatro Diretrizes Curriculares (DCs): *Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais – Ensino Fundamental* (PCN); *Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais – Ensino Médio* (PCNEM); *Orientações Curriculares Nacionais* (OCNEM) e *Lições do Rio Grande* (LRG). Os resultados mostram que há mais definições de 'linguagem' em PCN e PCNEM do que em OCNEM

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e LRG. A análise qualitativa indica que as DCs recontextualizam os debates contemporâneos de Linguística Aplicada, porque a maior parte das ocorrências está relacionada com “prática social” ou “fenômeno social”.

**Palavras-chave:** Diretrizes curriculares; Linguagem; Popularização da ciência.

## 1. Introduction

Since the implementation of the *Lei de Diretrizes e Bases Nacionais da Educação* (LDB) (BRASIL, 1996)<sup>2</sup>, the Brazilian Educational System has undergone several changes in order to establish more explicit links among contemporary, educational and social practices. With the advent of the so-called globalized society, foreign language classes assumed a new relevance in LDB and thus became mandatory in Elementary and High schools (BRASIL, 1996, p. 11).

Although LDB was issued as an attempt to establish guidelines to help improve the Brazilian Educational System as a whole, the foreign language area has been losing ground when compared with other fields of knowledge pertaining to the school system (STURM, 2011, p.74). Evidences of this devaluation (BRASIL, 2007)<sup>3</sup> are the lack of teachers with a language major and the fewer hours reserved for classes of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in the weekly schedule in comparison with other courses, such as Math or Chemistry.

As a contribution to the solution of these problems, the Brazilian Ministry of Education (MEC) issued official documents such as the National

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2. Law of Directives and Bases of National Education: <http://portal.mec.gov.br/arquivos/pdf/ldb.pdf>

3. Todos pela Educação – Estudo conduzido pelo Conselho Nacional de Educação – <http://www.todospelaeducacao.org.br/arquivos/biblioteca/492cca46-d003-4418-a5f9-33fed56638aa.pdf>

Curricular Parameters-Elementary School (PCN) (BRASIL, 1998), the National Curricular Parameters-High School (PCNEM) (BRASIL, 2000) and National Curricular Orientations (OCNEM) (BRASIL, 2006) to supplement LDB. In the regional context, the document is Rio Grande Lessons (LRG) (RIO GRANDE DO SUL, 2009), organized by the Secretary of State for Education of Rio Grande do Sul (SEDUC-RS).

This paper focuses on the discourse of Language Science presented in 'Language, Codes and their Technologies' CDs. Considering the aim of these CDs in parameterizing EFL teaching, based on theories and principles originated in the scientific contexts, CDs integrate a system of genres of science popularization (SP) in the educational field together with pedagogical feature articles (PINTON, 2012) and EFL textbooks (ARNT, 2012).

SP can be initially defined as a process of recontextualization of discourses in genres from their primary scientific context (including laboratories and scientific journals) to a secondary non-specialized context (MOTTA-ROTH, 2009, p. 135), such as the media or primary education. Recontextualization can help us understand "how the discourse of one social practice is recontextualized in another" (FAIRCLOUGH, 2003, p. 222).

As a recontextualization of scientific discourse and genres, SP process is associated with three basic social functions: to inform, to teach and to sensitize (PEREIRA, 2003, p. 60-61) about the relevance of science knowledge. This paper is part of the umbrella project entitled *Análise crítica de gêneros discursivos em práticas sociais de popularização da ciência* (MOTTA-ROTH, 2010b), in which we adopt the view that all knowledge is science (MOTTA-ROTH, 2010a). Therefore Language science is a taxonomic term placed at the same level as Biological science, Mathematical science or Musical science. This is an attempt to dismantle the traditional dichotomy between the so-called technical, "scientific" areas and the Social or Humanities areas such as Philosophy, Applied Linguistics, Arts, or History, which are usually devalued as human knowledge less worthy of teaching at

school (MOTTA-ROTH, 2012, comunicação pessoal). We consider that the discourse of Applied Linguistics (Language science) involves a very large set of scientific concepts and principles regarding description and analysis of language in use, language teaching and learning, and language teacher education (MOTTA-ROTH; MARCUZZO, 2010).

Our aim is to discuss the process of recontextualization of discourses within language teaching in the school context. We focus on one basic concept in the scientific discourse currently performed in Applied Linguistics: 'language' and how it is recontextualized in the school context by Language, Codes and their Technologies CDs. I organize my discussion in four sections: 1) Literature Review; 2) Methodology; 3) Results and Discussion and; 4) Final considerations.

## **2. Literature review**

In this section, key concepts for the development of this paper are discussed. The SP process and the discursive strategies involved in this process and CD as a SP genre are discussed in section 1.1. Then debates on Language as Genre are presented in section 1.2.

### ***2.1 The social and discursive process of science popularization***

SP process is social and discursive. It can assume different forms in different genres in magazines, newspapers or TV shows addressed to a non-specialist audience in a given field (MYERS, 2003, p. 266). This process offers an opportunity to "see science not as a discourse, a single set of social practices around one thing, but as an order of discourse, a terrain of competing discourses and practices" (FAIRCLOUGH, 1992 *apud* MYERS, 2003, p. 267). It is also a way to perceive SP "not just as a category of texts, but

as a process that opens up questions about actors, institutions, and forms of authority involved” (FAIRCLOUGH, 1992 *apud* MYERS, 2003, p. 267).

Thus, SP is a process by which versions of a core message travel to or are adapted for different contexts (FAHNESTOCK, 2004, p. 8), that is, the core of an argument of science is presented in a different version depending on the context in which SP texts are distributed and consumed. Consequently, popularizing is placed in social participation and dialogues with social movements (GERMANO; KULESKA, 2006, p. 20 *apud* SOCOLOSKI, 2011, p. 25), because it involves people. Thus, the role of SP and its audience vary, because the process can be directed to educational and/or civic and/or popular mobilization purposes (SOCOLOSKI, 2011, p. 26).

CD can be considered as a SP genre because it recontextualizes scientific discourses from research centers into the school context (embodied by teachers, students, parents and society in general). PCN, PCNEM, OCNEM and LRG illustrate how a CD functions as a SP genre because they indicate pedagogical issues for education based on debates from research institutes. These CDs are organized in sections or volumes concerning the different areas of knowledge, so our analysis is focused on the section of the Languages, Codes and their Technologies, specified in Foreign/Additional Language.

These CDs can be considered as SP genres because the core of the scientific discourses about ‘language’ is adapted for the non-specialized audience. The CDs propose that their audiences are school communities, teachers, parents and society (BRASIL, 2000, p. 5; BRASIL, 2006, p. 8; RIO GRANDE DO SUL, 2009, p. 19). As the audience is expanded beyond the teachers that are specialized, the school community becomes a non-specialized audience involving students, parents and society in general.

Internationally, Beacco et al. (2002) and Moirand (2003) offer evidence of the role played by SP media and of how specific linguistic configurations are connected to certain social practices. Considering SP

as a circular process that involves different people, Beacco et al. (2002, p. 280-282) analyze SP media for the presence of different enunciative roles such as the scientist, the journalist, the politician, the citizen, etc, in texts and explain that these voices are placed within texts using strategies such as reported speech. Moirand (2003, p. 182) also presents some strategies in SP such as the use of indirect speech, the presence of references and segments of direct speech.

More locally, research about SP genres has offered further evidences of how science is recontextualized in genres that are not strictly scientific. Studies at LABLER/UFSM have examined SP genres, such as news texts in English and Portuguese (MOTTA-ROTH; LOVATO, 2009; LOVATO, 2010; SCHERER, 2010; SILVA, 2010; GERHARDT, 2011; MARCUZZO; 2011; NASCIMENTO, 2011; MOREIRA, 2012), pedagogical feature articles (PINTON, 2012) and English textbooks (ARNT, 2012; ROSSI, 2012).

These studies have indicated how SP genres function to recontextualize scientific discourse from the original context to a new non-specialized context, adapting language by means of discursive strategies, such as definition and elaboration.

Definition is a process of conceptualization of a term by identifying, classifying or characterizing it. The term definition comes from the Latin word *definio*, which means “to limit or bound, to interpret ideas or words in terms of each other: to understand one thing by another” (SWALES; FEAK, 2007, p. 49). According to Swales & Feak (2007, p. 50-57) the ways to define include: 1) short definitions or “glosses”; 2) sentence definitions; and 3) extended definitions. Table 1 presents examples of each way to define.

**Table I** – Examples of the ways of definition  
(SWALES; FEAK, 2007, p. 55-57)

	Examples	Ways of definition (identification, classification, characterization)
<b>Short definitions</b>	Dalle de verre, <b>commonly referred to as faceted glass</b> , is thick modern cast glass.	Identification
<b>Sentence definitions</b>	A disinfectant <b>is the agent</b> capable of destroying disease-causing microorganisms.	Identification
	A disinfectant <b>is an agent</b> capable of destroying disease-causing microorganisms.	Classification
<b>Extended definitions</b>	A simple microscope <b>consists of a double convex lens and a magnifying glass</b> .	Characterization

Short definitions or “glosses” are pieces of information about a term in a word or phrase that are placed within either parentheses or commas in a sentence or signaled by phrases, such as *known as*, *defined as*, *referred to*,

and *called* (SWALES; FEAK, 2007, p. 50). This kind of definition is classified by identifying a term, because the processes (*known as*, *defined as*, *referred to*, and *called*) used can be understood as relational processes (*is/are*).

Sentence definitions are brief and somewhat similar to a dictionary definition. This kind of definition can be classified by identifying and classifying. For identifying, the sentence definition is signaled by the use of phrases (similar to short definitions) or the use of relational processes, such as *is* or *are*, followed by a definite (*the*) or zero article. For classifying, the definition is signaled by the use of a relational process, such as *is* or *are* followed by an indefinite article (*a/an*) (SWALES; FEAK, 2007, p. 51-57).

Extended definitions are longer and more detailed than definitions found in dictionaries. This kind of definition usually begins with a general, one-sentence definition, and then becomes more specific as additional information is provided. Extended definitions focus on such aspects as components, types, applications, history or examples of a given term (SWALES; FEAK, 2007, p. 67). Due to this focus, these definitions are classified by characterizing. Extended definitions are signaled by the use of material and relational processes followed by nominal groups (adjectives, adverbs and nouns) that offer characteristics of a term.

Another discursive strategy commonly found in SP news is elaboration. Motta-Roth & Lovato (2009) point out that SP genres are characterized to explicate terms and ideas to facilitate the reader's comprehension using the strategy of elaboration. The elaboration can occur through expansion or delimitation of certain principles. Expansion is constituted by the reaffirmation of a given idea amplifying it by means of explanation or implication (LOVATO, 2010, p. 34). According to Hyland (2007, p. 274), expansion offers specific clarifications to elaborate the meaning of a precedent term or expression. Delimitation, on the other hand, is constructed by means of paraphrase, specification or exemplification (LOVATO, 2010, p. 35; GERHARDT, 2011, p. 54). Delimitation (HYLAND, 2007, p. 268) refers to



the resources that provide additional information to paraphrase, explicate or elaborate what was said in order to help the reader to recuperate the meaning. In sum, elaboration has a role in explicating or delimitating the information of a text, supporting the reader in interpretation (COLUSSI, 2002 *apud* ROSSI, 2012, p. 60).

These discursive strategies have been relevant to understand the SP process in news texts in English and Portuguese, English textbooks and pedagogical feature articles, and were also productive to analyze CDs.

## ***2.2 Debates about the concept of Language as Genre***

By considering Language as Genre, a theoretical and methodological approach has been developed – Critical Genre Analysis (CGA) – with reference to three main socio-historical-cultural theories: Sociorhetorics (MILLER, 1984; BAZERMAN, 2005), Critical Discourse Analysis (FAIRCLOUGH, 1989; 2003), and Systemic-Functional Linguistics (HALLIDAY, 2004).

CGA is based on the three dimensions of the discourse: (1) [discourse] produces and reproduces knowledge through different ways to represent reality; (2) [discourse] establishes social relations; and (3) [discourse] creates, reinforces and reconstitutes identities (FAIRCLOUGH, 2003, p. 3-4). Discourse is widely used in social theory and analysis to refer to different ways of structuring social practices through language use (FAIRCLOUGH, 2003, p. 3). In this sense, genres are the instantiation of discourse in institutions. Genres typify many things besides textual form and they are part of the way people organize social activities (BAZERMAN, 2005, p. 31).

In Systemic Functional Linguistics, language is considered as a system that creates and expresses meaning (HALLIDAY, 2004, p. 19). Halliday & Hasan (1989, p. 56-57) state that language forms are shaped by key features

involving the social context as *field* (the activity going on), *tenor* (the relationships between participants) and *mode* (the channel of communication). Language plays a fundamental role in the human development, considering that it expresses, organizes and regulates the actions of human interactions by means of genres.

Furthermore, CGA considers genres as language use associated with social activities that are recurrent and thus have some degree of stability in form, content and style (MOTTA-ROTH, 2008, p. 350). Genres refer to relatively stable types of utterances (BAKHTIN, 1992, p. 279) and are used for specific purposes in a given social group. In addition, genres are social processes that lead to recognizable and shared conventions and expectations (GRABE, 2002, p. 250 *apud* MOTTA-ROTH, 2008, p. 351).

Within the debates about Language as Genre, we have adopted the perspective of genre as discourse, which has been discussed mainly by Michael Bakhtin and later on by John Swales, Charles Bazerman, Carolyn Miller and Norman Fairclough at different points in time.

Michael Bakhtin moves away from the sentence as the basic analytical unit towards the utterance as the verbal communication unit (CARVALHO, 2005, p. 131). Rodrigues (2005, p. 163) explains the definition of genre by Bakhtin

Bakhtin opta pelo termo gêneros do discurso [...]. Essa é a natureza verbal comum dos gêneros a que o autor se refere, isto é, a relação dialética que estabelece entre os gêneros e os enunciados, ou seja, olha os gêneros a partir da sua historicidade (eles não são unidades convencionais) e lhe atribui a mesma natureza dos enunciados (natureza social, discursiva e dialógica), ao tomá-los como seus tipos históricos.

This way, Bakhtin relates genres to the different spheres of human activities, more specifically the interactional situations within a social sphere

(daily; work; scientific; religious spheres...), because genre is constituted by its link with a social interactional situation (RODRIGUES, 2005, p. 164).

Fairclough (2003, p. 26) states that genres are different ways of interacting discursively. So, it is by means of language in use, that is discourse, that a genre functions, for example, a job interview.

From these discussions, the concept of genre is situated beyond lexico-grammar extending to the social context, discourse and ideology (MOTTA-ROTH, 2008, p. 351). Consequently, CGA proposes a kind of genre analysis to consider the conditions of production, distribution and consumption of texts to interpret the social practice of which the text is part (MOTTA-ROTH, 2008, p. 362).

In sum, the key concepts presented in this Literature Review are expected to collaborate in the organization of analytical categories in the Methodology section and the discussion of the results of the data analysis in section 3.

### **3. Methodology**

The analysis reported in this paper consisted of quantitative and qualitative procedures. We developed a CGA (as explained in section 1.2 of the Literature Review) of CDs in order to examine the recontextualization of Applied Linguistics' concept of 'language' within the PCN, PCNEM, OCNEM and LRG.

Table 2 shows the four CDs that compose the corpus of analysis, along with their date of publication, target audience and the governmental department that issued the document.

**Table 2** – Corpus of analysis

<b>Title / Information</b>	<b>Year of publication</b>	<b>Target Audience</b>	<b>Authors / Editors</b>
<b>PCN</b>	1998	Brazilian Elementary School community	MEC
<b>PCNEM</b>	2000	Brazilian High School community	MEC
<b>OCNEM</b>	2006	Brazilian High School community	MEC
<b>LRG</b>	2009	Rio Grande do Sul Elementary and High School community	SEDUC/RS

In order to quantify the frequency of occurrences of the term in the corpus the PDF tool called “PDF full search” was used. This PDF tool promotes the visualization of the occurrence of the term in its contexts (the complete sentences where it appears). With the help of this tool, it was possible to identify the main occurrences, excluding the occurrences in titles, subtitles, charts, tables and repeated expressions.

The analysis combined quantitative and qualitative procedures. The quantitative procedures involved the counting of occurrences of:

a) the search term 'language'; and b) the discursive strategies used in the recontextualization of the term (as explained in detail in section 1.1): *definition* (SWALES; FEAK, 2007) and *elaboration* (LOVATO, 2010; GERHARDT, 2011). The discursive strategy of elaboration was only used in the identification definitions, because this kind of definition can be a gloss. These categories were used to identify the linguistic resources used to recontextualize the discourse of Applied Linguistics in these CDs.

The qualitative procedure refers to the interpretation of the data obtained in the quantitative analysis. It focused on how these discursive strategies appear in the corpus. Thus the qualitative analysis intended to answer the following questions: *Are the contemporary debates in Applied Linguistics about 'language' recontextualized in each CD? How? If not, is this notion recontextualized at all? How?* The analysis aimed at verifying to what extent we could find a pattern in terms of the recontextualization of Applied Linguistics discourse on 'language' and the use of the discursive strategies that collaborate for that.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

In order to have a general idea about how the discourse of Applied Linguistics on 'language' (*linguagem*) is recontextualized in the section of Foreign Language in each CD, the occurrences of the term 'language' was noted. Due to the great number of total occurrences of the concept analyzed, only the main occurrences were considered.. The occurrences of 'language' in titles, subtitles, tables, charts and references were not considered. Table 3 presents the quantities of total and the main occurrences analyzed and discussed in this paper.

**Table 3** –Total and main occurrences of the term ‘language’

Concept	Total occurrences	Main occurrences
CD		
PCN	75	11
PCNEM	41	7
OCNEM	104	8
LRG	20	2
Total	240	28

The discursive strategies (definitions and elaboration) used in the recontextualization of discourses on language were identified as linguistic resources mobilized in SP genres. In general, ‘language’ is more frequently defined in CDs by identification than classification or characterization. Moreover, ‘language’ is recontextualized in CDs, but it is not clearly defined, consequently, the choice of pedagogical approaches becomes difficult for EFL teachers.

Table 4 presents the frequency of occurrence of the definitions for ‘language’ in each CD and the discursive strategy (identifying, classifying or characterizing) used to define it.

**Table 4** – Definitions of ‘language’ in the corpus

Discursive Strategy for Definition	Identifying	Characterizing	Classifying	Total
CD				
PCN	4	4	2	11
PCNEM	4	2	1	7
OCNEM	1	3	0	4
LRG	1	0	1	2
Total	10	9	4	25

Most of these occurrences of ‘language’ are associated with definitions by identification. According to Swales & Feak (2007, p. 55-57), identification is a formal definition, because the term defined is first assigned to a class or group to which it belongs and then distinguished from other terms in the class. The class or group word is a category word, such as method, process, device and system (PEARSON, 1998 *apud* SWALES; FEAK, 2007, p. 56) and then this class word is differentiated from other words in the same class with the use of nominal groups, elaborations or circumstances, as explained further below. Table 5 presents some excerpts retrieved from the CDs where the term ‘language’ is defined by identification.

**Table 5** – Definitions of ‘language’ by identification in the corpus

Lexical choices	Excerpt
<i>Language is (the)...</i>	[PCN#6] <b>A linguagem é o meio</b> pelo qual uma vasta gama de relações são expressas, e é indiscutível o papel que ela desempenha na compreensão mútua, na promoção de relações políticas e comerciais, no desenvolvimento de recursos humanos (p. 38-39).
	[PCNEM#2] <b>Ela [a linguagem] é a roda inventada</b> , que movimenta o homem e é movimentada pelo homem (p.5).
	[PCNEM#3] [...] <b>[a linguagem é] o produto e produção cultural</b> , nascida por força das práticas sociais (p.5).
<i>Language as... (Language is considered as = Language is understood as = Language is)</i>	[PCN#7] [...] <b>a linguagem como prática social</b> , como possibilidade de compreender e expressar opiniões, valores, sentimentos, informações, oralmente e por escrito (p.54).
	[PCNEM#4] [...] <b>a linguagem como interação social</b> (p. 10).
	[OCNEM#1] <b>[a linguagem] como ferramenta para a interação na sociedade</b> , para a participação na produção da linguagem dessa sociedade e para a construção de sentidos dessa linguagem (p.97-98).



Although all excerpts in Table 5 illustrate definitions by identification, the lexical choices were different. The excerpts in PCN#6; PCNEM#2 and #3 identify the term language with the use of the relational process “is” followed by the definite article “the”. The excerpts in PCN#7; PCNEM #4; and OCNEM#1 are constructed using the conjunction “as”, which, in this case, is a metaphor of the relational process “is/are”, because it identifies to what group the term language belongs: *prática social, fenômeno social, possibilidade, interação social e ferramenta*.

There is also one occurrence of a definition suggested by Swales & Feak (2007, p. 52) as being more associated to academic writing for terminological explanations in comparison to the use of the connector “as” and the relational process “is”. It is the case of “directed to”:

[LRG#1] [...] o efetivo uso da **linguagem direcionada à ação social** (p. 148).

The expression “language is directed to” can be understood as equivalent to “refers” or “is related to”, as a case of definition by identification. Considering that the CD genre is written to be potentially consumed in the school context by audiences with different levels of specialization such as teachers and society in general, the lexicon must be carefully chosen to be accessible to all potential participants in any debate about CDs.

Definition by identification is more recurrent in the CDs when referring to the term ‘language’ in comparison with the term ‘genre’. This way to define is more related to tutor or instructor writing (SWALES & FEAK, 2007, p. 51). The use of the tutor or instructor writing in CDs projects a non-specialized audience who reads this CD with the objective of amplifying and deepening the educational debate in society (BRASIL, 2000, p. 5).

Besides definition, an additional discursive strategy is provided in these CDs in order to construct a more precise idea for the concept of

'language'. Elaboration is provided in the form of additional information between commas that follows a definition. It was found four elaborations for the term 'language' in association with definitions by identification (the most recurrent). Table 6 presents the uses of elaboration associated with definitions by identification.

**Table 6** – Elaboration of 'language' in association with definitions by identification

Classification (expansion / delimitation)	Excerpts
<i>Expansion</i>	[PCNEM#2] Ela [a linguagem] é a roda inventada, <b>que movimenta o homem e é movimentada pelo homem</b> (p.5).
<i>Delimitation</i>	[PCN#5] [...] linguagem como fenômeno social, <b>o que é caracterizado aqui como a natureza sociointeracional da linguagem</b> (p. 35).
	[PCNEM#1] A linguagem é considerada aqui como a capacidade humana de articular significados coletivos e compartilhá-los, <b>em sistemas arbitrários de representação, que variam de acordo com as necessidades e experiências da vida em sociedade</b> (p.5).
	[PCNEM#3] [...] [a linguagem é] o produto e produção cultural, <b>nascida por força das práticas sociais</b> (p.5).

In order to distinguish terms of the same class, PCNEM#1, #2, #3 and PCN#5 use elaboration. PCNEM#2 identifies language as *roda inventada* and expands this identification with an expansion by explanation *que movimenta o homem e é movimentada pelo homem*, which reaffirms the idea of “roda inventada”, amplifying it by means of an explanation that offers specific clarification (HYLAND, 2007, p. 274; LOVATO, 2010, p. 34).

PCN#5, PCNEM#1 and #3 also identify language, but delimitates these identifications by specification (LOVATO, 2010, p. 35; GERHARDT, 2011, p. 54). PCN#5 identifies language as *fenômeno social* and delimitates this identification with the use of the specification *o que é caracterizado aqui como a natureza sociointeracional da linguagem* in order to explicate the meaning of another complex expression. PCNEM#1 identifies language as *a capacidade humana de articular significados coletivos e compartilhá-los* and delimitates the space where these meanings will be shared with the specification between commas *em sistemas arbitrários de representação*. PCNEM#3 identifies language as *o produto e a produção cultural* and specifies its origin with other specification *nascida por forças das práticas sociais*. These passages add information to explicate what was said in order to help the reader to elaborate the meaning associated with the term in question (language) (HYLAND, 2007, p. 268).

Besides definition by means of identification, definitions by characterization of a concept were also found in the corpus. Swales & Feak (2007, p. 67) identify this kind of definition as extended (discussed in section 1.1). In addition, the authors explain that a definition by characterization can be preceded by identification. To characterize a term, the sentences use material and relational processes followed by nominal groups. Table 7 presents all excerpts in CDs that define ‘language’ by means of characterization.

**Table 7** – Definitions of ‘language’ by characterization in the corpus

Lexical choices	Excerpt
<i>Material and Verbal processes and nominal groups</i>	[PCNEM#5] A linguagem <b>permeia</b> o conhecimento e as formas de conhecer, o pensamento e as formas de pensar, a comunicação e os modos de comunicar, a ação e os modos de agir (p.5).
	[OCNEM#2] [...] há diversas maneiras de <b>organizar [M]</b> , <b>categorizar [M]</b> e <b>expressar [V]</b> a experiência humana e de <b>realizar [M]</b> interações sociais por meio da linguagem (p. 92).
<i>Relational processes, the exemplification conjunctions and/or nominal groups</i>	[PCN#10] [...] a linguagem <b>é central</b> na determinação das relações humanas e da identidade social das pessoas. (p.48).
	[OCNEM#3] [...] tanto a linguagem [como a cultura] <b>se manifesta</b> [m] não como totalidade[s] global[is] homogênea[s], mas como variante[s] local[is] particularizada[s] em contextos específicos (p.103).

The use of the material processes followed by nominal groups in PCNEM#5 and OCNEM#2 indicate the characterization of the term language by the use of material processes, indicating the actions that the term ‘language’ performs, such as “permeate”, “organize”, “categorize” and “realize”. The use of these material processes may be also related to the language’s applicability in the world. Moreover, the use of relational processes followed by nominal groups in PCN#10, and OCNEM#3 also offers additional and specific details to the term ‘language’. PCN#10 is

constructed by the use of attributive relational process followed by adjective “central”. This characterization provides details about the term ‘language’ in terms of its types.

Another way to define a concept is classifying it. Swales & Feak (2007, p. 57) explain that the use of relational processes (is/are) or the conjunction “as” followed by the indefinite article (a/an) indicates the classification of a term. Table 8 presents some excerpts in CDs that define ‘language’ by means of classification.

**Table 8** – Definitions of ‘language’ by classification in the corpus

Lexical choices	Excerpt
<i>Language is a/an...</i>	[PCN#11] [...] <b>a linguagem é uma prática social</b> , ou seja, envolve escolhas da parte de quem escreve ou fala para construir significados em relação a outras pessoas em contextos culturais, históricos e institucionais específicos é submeter todo texto oral e escrito a sete perguntas: quem escreveu/falou, sobre o que, para quem, para que, quando, de que forma, onde? (p.43)
<i>Language as a/an...</i>	[LRG#2] [...] <b>linguagem como um conjunto de práticas sociais</b> , historicamente construídas e dinâmicas, através das quais agimos no mundo, participando em interações com os outros e construindo com eles o nosso fazer cotidiano (CLARK, 1996/2000) (p. 147).

Definition of the term ‘language’ by classification is the least recurrent in the corpus. PCN#11 illustrates the classification of the term ‘language’

by means of “is a social practice”. LRG#2 also illustrates the classification of the term ‘language’ with the use of the connector “as” followed by the indefinite article “a/an” – “as a set of social practices”. Classifying a term is to present a class or a group to which a given term belongs. The indefinite article before a specific term conveys the meaning that any representative of this term will fit the assigned class (SWALES; FEAK, 2007, p. 57).

The definitions in the corpus are commonly used to identify, explain, classify and characterize the term ‘language’. Specifically, the use of the identification definitions in CDs will make it easier for teachers to understand what the term ‘language’ is or how ‘language’ should be conceived in order to be taught adequately from the point of view presented in current Applied Linguistics literature. The objectives of the CD genre are to amplify the educational debate (BRASIL, 2000, p. 5) and to discuss what teachers will teach in their classrooms and what teachers need to know in order to teach (RIO GRANDE DO SUL, 2009, p. 19). Both PCN and PCNEM make a special effort in presenting different facets of language as a complex concept.

[PCN#4] [...] **a linguagem como prática social, como possibilidade** de compreender e expressar opiniões, valores, sentimentos, informações, oralmente e por escrito (p.54).

[PCNEM#1] **A linguagem é considerada aqui como a capacidade humana** de articular significados coletivos e compartilhá-los, em sistemas arbitrários de representação, que variam de acordo com as necessidades e experiências da vida em sociedade (p.5).

Both offer definitions that evoke other complex expressions such as ‘social practices’ (*prática social*) and ‘human competencies and abilities’

(*capacidade humana*) in producing meaning (*compreender e expressar*) in situated (*variam de acordo com as necessidades e experiências da vida em sociedade*) semiotic systems (*sistemas arbitrários de representação*). Although PCNEM#I presents an elaboration to explicate the complex expressions, it is not enough for the readers to understand what 'language' is and how 'language' can be dealt with in EFL classrooms.

In view of the complexity of the concept, the few definitions provided by OCNEM (four) and LRG (only two) for the term 'language' are helpful to EFL teachers. Nevertheless, in order to offer sufficient scaffolding for an adequate didactic transposition of EFL teaching, these CDs would need to be even more explicit and articulated in combining tokens, attributes, material actions, etc, in association with the concept of 'language'. OCNEM#I presents an identification definition in order to help EFL teachers understand the term 'language':

**[OCNEM#I] [a linguagem] como ferramenta para a interação na sociedade**, para a participação na produção da linguagem dessa sociedade e para a construção de sentidos dessa linguagem (p.97-98).

Although OCNEM#I defines the term 'language' and offers an elaboration for this identification (*para a participação na produção da linguagem dessa sociedade e para a construção de sentidos dessa linguagem*), it also is not enough for readers to understand the complexity of this term.

Specifically the LRG seems to convey less information than teachers would need, if we consider teachers that have recently graduated and are still struggling to understand the teaching process in the school context.

**[LRG#2] linguagem como um conjunto de práticas sociais**, [a] historicamente construídas e [b] dinâmicas, [c] através

das quais agimos no mundo, [d] participando em interações com os outros e [e] construindo com eles o nosso fazer cotidiano (CLARK, 1996/2000) (p. 147).

This definition brings 'language' as a set of social practices associated to several characteristics, signaled in the excerpt by the letters from [a] to [e]. In the case of LRG, the most recent document, a less than clear cut definition of language in the document makes it easier for teachers to stick to the traditional teaching of lexico-grammar, to which they are used to and for which they are prepared by years of characteristically non-reflexive teaching. In order to develop a new, more socially oriented concept of language and to formulate a language pedagogy that fosters students' competencies and abilities to act in society by using language in concrete and real-life interactions, teachers would need richer, more precise and complex definitions of language throughout the document. One specific context seems of essence in the current context of EFL teaching - that of genre, as discussed in the following subsection.

## **5. Final considerations**

PCN and PCNEM present more definitions and elaborations for the term 'language' than OCNEM and LRG, maybe because PCN and PCNEM were published firstly, just after LDB/96. On the other hand, in OCNEM and LRG, the recurrence of the term 'language' is more related to theoretical approaches, signaled by the use of references throughout the texts. Consequently, OCNEM and LRG were developed as attempts to decrease the distance between what is said in the literature about 'language' and what is done in EFL classrooms. Nevertheless, there is a rupture between PCNEM and OCNEM: in less than 10 years, two different CDs



were developed and EFL teachers might get confused about theoretical and pedagogical approaches (ALMEIDA, 2012, p. 344).

In general, the term 'language' is recontextualized in CDs, however, it is necessary more discussion and reflection in the school context about these CDs and the association between theory and practice in EFL classrooms. By considering CD as a SP genre, the process of recontextualization of discourses presented is directly related to the target-audience. The main target-audience of this genre is the school teachers and the school community, but in these groups, we have different levels of specialization in the specific area of knowledge (this case, language). For developing in language classes the concepts and the theories proposed by CDs, the language school teachers need to not only read the CDs, but they need to reflect on and discuss these contemporary concepts and theories.

Although CDs are mostly developed with the aim of clarifying EFL practices to teachers in terms of the relation between theory and practice, the school community must be responsible for offering spaces for teachers to read, discuss and construct alternatives in terms of EFL teaching-learning processes.

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