A CONCEPT-BASED APPROACH TO WRITING INSTRUCTION:
FROM THE ABSTRACT CONCEPT TO THE CONCRETE PERFORMANCE

A Thesis in
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by
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigates the development of theoretical thinking, writing improvement and the meaning-making process of ESL freshman composition students in a North-American university and reports an innovative ESL writing course which combined a systemic-functional linguistics view of genre and an activity-based pedagogy entitled “the movement from the abstract to the concrete”.

The course designed for this dissertation aimed to develop students’ theoretical thinking through a theoretical conceptualization of genre, to improve their writing and to promote their meaning-making processes. The course comprised of three units that taught the genres of announcements, cover letters and argumentative texts to 14 ESL students, who were mainly from Asia and from Central America.

To investigate their development of theoretical thinking, students’ models of genre, their answers to problem-solving tasks, and their answers to the problem situation question of the course were analyzed. Out of the 14 students who had their theoretical thinking investigated, 6 students had their pre-tests and post-tests on cover letters and argumentative texts analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. The qualitative analysis focused on the moves performed by the students while the quantitative analysis ran the Wilcoxon Ranks Test in the scores assigned by raters to the tests. The meaning-making process of the 14 students were grasped by the content analysis of the logs they kept during the course. The instructor asked them to comment about what they learned and their impressions about the course.
The analyses of the data indicate that: a) students thought mainly empirically and occasionally revealed some signs of theoretical thinking; b) the students significantly improved in writing cover letters but not argumentative texts; c) overall students improved in some aspect or another in both genres but most of them did not abandon the five-paragraph format; d) most of the students did not actively engage in making sense of the course and when they did so, their perceptions were highly affected by their past educational experiences.

This dissertation highlights the need for education to focus more on the development of theoretical thinking and to engage students in more meaningful meaning-making processes, where they could engage actively in dealing with the dialectical relationship of personal senses and external meanings. This study also offers insights to the following areas: genre-based instruction, the application of the ‘movement from the abstract to the concrete’, and to writing assessment. This study also suggests potential contributions of sociocultural/activity theories to Applied Linguistics.

Keywords: sociocultural theory – activity theory – the movement from the abstract to the concrete – theoretical thinking – empirical thinking – writing instruction – writing assessment – genre-based pedagogy – systemic functional linguistics – meaning-making process
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES ............................................................................................................. xii

LIST OF TABLES ................................................................................................................. xiv

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .................................................................................................. xvi

Chapter 1 Introduction ........................................................................................................ 1

Chapter 2 Approaches to L2 writing instruction ............................................................... 12
  2.1 The product-focused approach ............................................................................. 13
  2.2 The process-focused approach ............................................................................. 14
  2.3 The social approach to writing instruction ......................................................... 19
    2.3.1 Social critique of process writing ................................................................. 19
    2.3.2 The definition of the concept of genre ......................................................... 21
      2.3.2.1 The EAP and the new rhetoric perspectives .............................................. 21
      2.3.2.2 The Australian School ........................................................................... 22
    2.3.3 The gap in the genre-based pedagogies ....................................................... 33
  2.4 Concluding remarks ............................................................................................... 35

Chapter 3 Activity theory based pedagogies ................................................................ 37
  3.1 The philosophical concept of activity ................................................................. 37
  3.2 Leontiev's activity theory ..................................................................................... 39
  3.3 Galperin's pedagogical approach: systematic formation of mental actions and
     concepts ..................................................................................................................... 42
3.4 Davydov's approach: the movement from the abstract to the concrete…46
  3.4.1 Theoretical thinking and empirical thinking…………………..55
3.5 A comparison between Galperin and Davydov…………………….58
3.6 Criticisms of Davydov’s approach-------------------------------63
3.7 Application of Davydov's approach……………………………66
3.8 Concluding remarks ..........................................................71

Chapter 4  The movement from the abstract to the concrete in an ESL freshman composition course ……………………………………………………………………………………72
  4.1 The movement from the abstract to the concrete in the ESL freshman composition course………………………………………………………………………………………73
    4.1.1 Learning action 1: the problem situation question…………74
    4.1.2 Learning action 2: modeling……………………………………76
    4.1.3 Learning action 3: modifying models…………………………81
    4.1.4 Learning action 4: applying the models……………………82
    4.1.5 Learning actions 5 and 6: monitoring and evaluation……83
    4.1.6 Learning action 7: social interaction……………………….85
  4.2 The course syllabus…………………………………………………86
    4.2.1 Tasks that aimed to develop theoretical thinking……………..90
    4.2.2 Tasks that aimed to improve writing…………………………90
    4.2.3 Reading tasks…………………………………………………..91
    4.2.4 The linguistic analysis tasks………………………………….92
    4.2.5 Major writing assignments…………………………………94
    4.2.6 Writing reports………………………………………………95
4.2.7 Teacher-student writing conferences........................................96
4.2.8 Overview of the grading criteria used in the course.................97
4.3 Concluding remarks.........................................................................97

Chapter 5  Methodology of the study ..........................................................99
5.1 The context of the research.................................................................99
5.2 Research question 1 (the development of theoretical thinking........101
  5.2.1 Methodology of data collection.................................................101
  5.2.2 Methodology of data analysis..................................................105
5.3 Research question 2 (writing improvement).................................107
  5.3.1 Methodology of data collection.................................................107
  5.3.2 Methodology of data analysis..................................................111
5.4 Research question 3 (meaning-making process).........................111
  5.4.1 Methodology of data collection.................................................111
  5.4.2 Methodology of data analysis..................................................114
5.5 Concluding remarks.........................................................................115

Chapter 6  Analysis of students' theoretical thinking (part 1).............116
  6.1 Analysis of the students' germ-cell models for genre.................117
  6.2 Discussion of Fr's, Chg's and J's models.................................131
  6.3 Discussion....................................................................................144
  6.4 Concluding remarks.....................................................................147

Chapter 7  Analysis of students' theoretical thinking (part 2).............149
### Chapter 7

7.1 Analysis of the development of theoretical thinking in the performance phase

- 7.1.1 Analysis of the wedding invitation task
- 7.1.2 Bhatia's exercise
  - 7.1.2.1 Analysis of part 2 of Bhatia's exercise
  - 7.1.2.2 Analysis of part 3 of Bhatia's exercise
- 7.2 Analysis of the obituary exercise, part 2
- 7.3 Discussion
- 7.4 Analysis of theoretical thinking in the evaluation phase
  - 7.4.1 Analysis of the answers to the problem situation question of the course
- 7.5 Discussion
- 7.6 Development of theoretical thinking across the modeling, performance, and evaluation phases
- 7.7 Concluding remarks

### Chapter 8

8.1 The quantitative analysis
8.2 Discussion of the quantitative analysis
8.3 The quantitative analysis of cover letters
  - 8.3.1 Pre-test cover letters
  - 8.3.2 Post-test cover letters
8.3.3 Discussion of students' writing improvement from the pre-test to the post-test cover letters………………………………………………………………….227

8.4 The qualitative analysis of students' argumentative texts………………232

8.4.1 The analysis of the pre-tests…………………………………….233

8.4.2 The analysis of the post-tests……………………………………239

8.5 Discussion…………………………………………………………………244

8.6 Concluding remarks………………………………………………………247

Chapter 9  Students' meaning making process in the genre-based course.................254

9.1 The relationship between the meaning-making process and development..254

9.2 Analysis of the data……………………………………………………….260

9.2.1 The three genres…………………………………………………260

9.2.2 The ACP…………………………………………………………265

9.2.3 The classes………………………………………………………275

9.3 Discussion of students' meaning-making process…………………………277

9.4 Concluding remarks……………………………………………………….282

Chapter 10  Conclusion..................................................................................................279

10.1 Summary of the study……………………………………………………279

10.2 Contributions of the study……………………………………………….280

10.3 Evaluation of the implementation of the genre-based course…………….283

10.4 Limitations of the study……………………………………………………288

10.5 Directions for future research……………………………………………291

10.6 Concluding remarks……………………………………………………..296
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1 The 1989 DSP Curriculum Model.................................24
Figure 2.2 1992 DSP Primary Curriculum Model............................25
Figure 2.3 1994 DSP Secondary Curriculum Model.........................26
Figure 2.4 Language in relation to ideology, genre and register...........28
Figure 4.1 The germ-cell model of the course – version 2...............77
Figure 4.2 The germ-cell model of the course – version 3...............78
Figure 4.3 The germ-cell model of the course – version 4...............79
Figure 4.4 The scientific work board...........................................81
Figure 6.1 Chg’s concrete (empirical) model................................123
Figure 6.2 Chl’s transitional model (empirical and theoretical but not relational).................................................................124
Figure 6.3 K’s transitional model (empirical and theoretical and relational)...........................................................................125
Figure 6.4 D’s transitional model (theoretical but not relational) .......126
Figure 6.5 Cho’s abstract (theoretical) model.................................127
Figure 6.6 Fr’s model 1.................................................................134
Figure 6.7 Fr’s model 2.................................................................135
Figure 6.8 Fr’s model 3.................................................................136
Figure 6.9 Fr’s model of the argumentative text ................................. 137
Figure 6.10 Chg’s model 2 ..................................................................... 139
Figure 6.11 Chg’s model 3 ..................................................................... 140
Figure 6.12 J’s model 1 ........................................................................ 142
Figure 6.13 J’s model 2 ........................................................................ 143
Figure 6.14 J’s model 3 ........................................................................ 144
Figure 7.1 Students’ development of theoretical thinking across tasks .... 202
Figure 7.2 Students’ development of theoretical thinking across tasks .... 203
Figure 8.1 Theoretical knowledge of the genre cover letter .................. 229
# LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1 Problem situation questions in the course………………………75  
Table 4.2 Self-appraisal/control questions in the course…………………..83  
Table 4.3 Linguistic analysis chart - version 1………………………….92  
Table 4.4 Linguistic analysis chart - version 2…………………………..93  
Table 6.1 Development of theoretical thinking in the students' models for genre..................................................................................................128  
Table 7.1 The development of theoretical thinking in the wedding invitation task..........................................................................................152  
Table 7.2 Detailed students' development of theoretical thinking in Bhatia's exercise.........................................................................................175  
Table 7.3 Students' overall development of theoretical thinking in Bhatia's exercise.........................................................................................177  
Table 7.4 Students' development of theoretical thinking in the obituary exercise.........................................................................................184  
Table 7.5 The development of students' theoretical thinking in the answers to the problem situation question of the course............................191  
Table 7.6 The student's development of theoretical thinking across the modeling, performance, and evaluation phases..............................199  
Table 8.1 Scores given by raters................................................................209  
Table 8.2 Final scores for the pre-tests and post-tests............................210  
Table 8.3 Presence of the moves in the pre-tests.................................213
Table 8.4 Students' performance on the post-test cover letter .................................................................218

Table 8.5 Students' performance on the argumentative text pre-tests ......233

Table 8.6 Students’ performance on the argumentative text post-tests .................................................................259
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The establishment of freshman composition courses by Harvard University in the 19th century reveals the relevance of writing instruction for North American tertiary education. This program was established to address their students’ poor quality of writing. During the past decades this concern for improving the writing skills of college students has become more prominent due to the increased number of international students who have come to the USA to study in its universities. This situation has created a need to develop academic writing courses for newcomers to the university educational system and to the culture of the new country.

Among the most salient problems facing international students in the American higher educational system relates to language, including adaptation to cultural rhetorical patterns of academic discourse(s)\(^1\) (Land & Whitley, 1998) and the university instructors’ interpretations of the ESL students’ performance, which commonly conflates language deficiency with intellectual deficiency (Zamel, 1998b, p.250).

The product-focused approach to writing instruction, which highlighted sentence-level grammar, proved to be ineffective to meet the expectations of tertiary education. Process writing also faced criticisms for not being an effective approach for ESL students and minorities (Delpit, 1988; Inghilleri, 1989). Lately, genre-based writing instruction has achieved importance, especially for graduate students, through the work of researchers such as John Swales, Ken Hyland, Tony Dudley-Evans and Christine P.\(^1\)

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\(^1\) See Elbow (1998) where he argues that academic discourse is not monolithic.
Casanave. There are three perspectives on genre studies: systemic functional linguistics (also called the Australian or Sydney School), the EAP (English for academic purposes) approach, and the new rhetoric. The first two also provide genre-based writing instruction unlike the new rhetoric perspective which does not believe genres can be taught (see chapter 2 for details). Usually the EAP approach is employed in graduate writing courses, where students pursue a major, whose discourse community will regulate the insertion of these students in the community through writing conventions. The Australian pedagogy is mainly utilized in elementary and secondary schools and, more recently, at the undergraduate level in Georgetown University German department.

To deal with the problem of ESL freshman composition, a debate between humanities-based, general composition courses (Spack, 1988, Zamel, 1998 a and b) and EAP, genre-based, content-related courses (Johns, 1995, 1997) emerged in the late 80s and 90s. Teaching (academic) writing linked to a certain content or subject matter and through specific genres demanded by the educational, social environment in which the students live became more relevant than just the concern for the writer’s expressivism. The teaching principles of the department which offers the ESL freshman composition course studied in this dissertation rely on Spack and Zamel’s recommendations: to provide a general writing course where “points of commonality” (Zamel, 1998a, p. 194) and “features of writing that transcend boundaries” (p.194) are the focus of pedagogical attention.

There are basically two types of students in the ESL writing courses offered by the university where this study was conducted: a) immigrant ESL students, first generation college students, whose parents immigrated to the United States, who are
supported by the CAMP\textsuperscript{2} program of the university and who have had mainly English instruction in American schools; b) non-immigrant ESL students, who come to this country in order to receive tertiary education, who usually pay for their own education and have had EFL classes in their home country. Despite their financial and educational differences, both types of students need to improve their academic writing. Usually the difference between these two types of students becomes more pronounced in the first level of the academic writing courses, where they end up enrolling in different sections. Based on my previous experience when I taught these two sections simultaneously, I noticed that the section with most EFL students had fewer language problems, and consequently wrote slightly better, than the section composed of ESL students.

However, these two types of students have the same limitations identified in the literature by both process writing advocates (Elbow, 1998; Spack, 1998; Zamel, 1998 a and b) and non-process writing proponents (Atkinson & Ramanathan, 1995; Inghilleri, 1989; Ramanathan & Kaplan,1996). The students are unaware of academic discourse and rhetoric required by North-American universities. For example, they might have difficulties in writing in the direct approach (with a thesis statement in the introduction of the argumentative text) and even in understanding what a thesis statement is and its role in academic genre.

Applied Linguistics is about solving problems, acting upon the world, helping to improve life conditions of people regarding language related issues. This dissertation moves in this direction as it is about application, about education\textsuperscript{3}, about seeking solutions to problems by adopting a conventionalist view of science and a dialectical

\textsuperscript{2} College Assistant Migrant Program.
\textsuperscript{3} This does not mean that I conceive Applied Linguistics as Linguistics applied or just concerned with the teaching and learning of languages.
perspective of the world. Conventionalism is a conception of science which assumes that “scientific statements/theories are not descriptions of an external reality, and as such either true or false. Rather, they are ‘artificial creations’ or constructions devised by the scientist” (Walker, 2001, p. 119). Conventionalists do not deny the empirical but unlike the empiricists, they do not overestimate the value of the experience (Kolakowski, 1972 cited in Walker, 2001, p. 119). Dialectics (whether Hegelian or Marxist) conceives the world to be in constant change, movement, and contradiction.

The problem the dissertation addressed was how to help students to more fully develop their ability to produce sophisticated written texts in accordance with university expectations. The context for the study comprised a freshman writing course in a large public North American research university. The community affected by the problem was ESL immigrant freshman students. The solution attempted consisted of designing and implementing a writing course based on activity theory (Davydov, 1988a, b, c, d, 1999c; Leontiev, 1978, 1981; Vygotsky, 1979) and systemic functional linguistics that could foster both learning (writing proficiency) and psychological development (theoretical thinking) in students by teaching the concept of genre as a manifestation of the abstract communicative principle (ACP) - LANGUAGE CONTEXT. In systemic functional linguistics this principle is represented through two constructs: context of situation (register along with its variables field, tenor, and mode) and context of culture (genre). This dissertation reports both on the implementation of the new syllabus, specifically with regard to the following research questions: a) Did the genre-based course promote theoretical thinking in students?; b) Did the genre-based course promote improved
performance in students’ students’ writing ability?; c) How did the students make sense of the genre-based course?

This dissertation is not intended as a critique of current practices based on process writing but instead it proposes an alternative approach to writing instruction grounded in a theory of learning and development that argues for explicit instruction about language functioning realized in concrete types of genre. This more explicit instruction on language seeks to improve students’ command of English and at the same time facilitate the students’ acquisition of the rhetorical patterns required by academic genres.

In addition to the concern with the ESL freshman students’ writing needs, educational psychologists (Davydov, 1988c and Hedegaard, 2002) remark that traditional education privileges empirical thinking that can lead to a distorted view of the world. Schooling should provide a type of thinking that can lead to the acquisition of scientific concepts. Moreover, Newman & Holzman (1993) draw our attention to the dangers of restricting Vygotsky’s concept of ZPD (zone of proximal development) to mere interactions between a more competent person and a less competent one. This perspective of ZPD cannot achieve what the authors consider Vygotsky’s goals for education: learning that leads to development. Instead, what prevails in education is learning for the sake of learning (and of grades) and students being encapsulated in zones of stagnation rather than blooming in zones of development. In the zone of stagnation the individual accepts and reproduces external meanings and does not engage or feel the need to engage in making sense of these meanings and converting them into personal senses.

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4 Scientific concepts are defined as true concepts (acts of generalization) that are acquired through proper instruction. Unlike these concepts, everyday (spontaneous) concepts are learned through experience. Both are dialectically related. (see Vygotsky 1987, chapter 5, for a full discussion).
In order to address these problems – the limited writing improvement of ESL students, the absence of theoretical thinking in schools, students’ non-engagement in meaning making processes – I designed a course to promote learning-leading-to-development (Vygotsky, 1978, 1987), that would foster theoretical thinking which would in turn result in writing improvement among freshman ESL students. The major premise underlying the design of the course was that form and meaning could be approached dialectically through systemic functional linguistics (SFL). By teaching the students the concepts of field, tenor, and mode, I expected to help the students improve their understanding of language functioning, and consequently to have them apply this knowledge to write more appropriately in English. To promote the development of theoretical thinking in the students, I utilized Davydov’s pedagogical approach entitled ‘the movement from the abstract to the concrete’ (MAC). To make students engage in meaning making processes, I asked them to keep a log during the course.

In combining SFL and MAC this dissertation addressed issues that either of the approaches alone did not undertake: a) to approach the learner’s psychological development in a SFL genre-based pedagogy, b) to apply MAC to teach genre in writing courses in the western world, which has apparently not happened yet, c) to apply MAC to investigate development in late adolescents and young adults (18 years old), d) to explore how these students, who had been exposed to more traditional forms of learning activity for a lengthy period of time (i.e., at least 12 years of education), make sense of MAC.

The results were not what I anticipated (as a group students did not substantially develop theoretical thinking, nor did they improve their writing noticeably, especially in
argumentative texts, and did not engage actively in making sense of the course) and I encountered several restraints such as time constraints, my inexperience with the approach, students’ resistance to the approach because of their history as empirical learners. Nevertheless, I believe that the implementation of this course and the analysis of students’ theoretical thinking, writing improvement and meaning making process can offer insights to writing instruction and assessment, and to the construction of zones of proximal development as zones of social development. Also, this study suggests potential contributions of sociocultural/activity theory to Applied Linguistics.

Applied Linguistics can be understood as the area concerned with language learning and teaching, especially second language, and more specifically English; application of linguistic theories to other areas of language use (Kaplan & Widdowson, 1992); or to education in general (Corder, 1973). These views represent the narrow scope of Applied Linguistics. A broader and more recent perspective considers Applied Linguistics an area of inquiry which focuses on the language problems faced by society. This shift in focus dismisses the dependence of the field on solely linguistic theories to account for the issues addressed and expands Applied Linguistics interests beyond (second) language learning and teaching.

Lantolf (2002a, p.25) considers Applied Linguistics as “the human science that is interested in the theoretical as well as the empirical study of people as linguistic beings”. Thus, the field basically has two interrelated concerns regarding the focus of study: language problems and people as linguistic beings. People speak languages and are constituted by them and languages also do not exist apart from their speakers. Hence,
Applied Linguistics deals with two very complex objects of study\(^5\), which can only be approached by an epistemological view different from rationalism.

A rationalist view of Applied Linguistics is held by Gregg et al (1997), Beretta (1991; 1993), and Beretta & Crookes (1993) who advocate that SLA should have a limited number of theories with huge explanatory power. These authors propose that the field of SLA (and by extension Applied Linguistics) should follow the rationalist paradigm of science, which along with empiricism, successfully worked with the natural sciences. This proposition originated a heated debate regarding the scientific status and the epistemological grounds of SLA and Applied Linguistics (Block, 1996; Gregg, 2000, 2002; Lantolf, 1996, 2002b; van Lier, 1994). The debate, which originally was restricted to the field of SLA, led to a revisiting of the epistemological grounds of Applied Linguistics.

As can be seen from Lantolf’s definition quoted above, Applied Linguistics constitutes a field of inquiry that deals with people and language; and, consequently, cannot be conceived and investigated within an exclusively rationalist-empiricist view of science. Human beings are not chemical elements or atoms that will behave in exactly the same way on repeated iterations of an experiment\(^6\) and the full complexity of their behavior cannot be accounted for through a single psychological theory. Vygotsky insightfully identified this complexity of human beings and proposed a cultural historical psychology based on the Marxist material dialectic to properly account for human

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\(^5\) Dealing with two complex objects of study, such as people and language, explains the difficulty of defining the domain, pointed out by Davies (1999), Lantolf(2002.), Pennycook (2001) and Widdowson (2000).

\(^6\) See Lantolf (2002b) for a discussion on how hard sciences and humanities behave similarly by using language to mediate their making sense of the world; in other words, by using interpretation to do science rather than by searching for a definitive truth out there.
cognition. Language constitutes a socio-cognitive tool for individuals who live and develop in activity (Vygotsky, 1979; Leontiev, 1978, 1981). And, activity is determined by motives organized by the collective and adopted by the individual and based on personal senses assigned to the experience. Thus, the principle of activity that sustains human functioning and development is based on an ever changing, ever unfolding process. For such an object of study (human beings using language in activity), a limited set of theories, immutable laws, and principles of falsifiability and replication are not suitable (Block, 1996).

The object of study of Applied Linguistics demands a conventionalist conception of science and a dialectical view of the world. A conventionalist conception of science views science as a social activity which does not possess a definite truth out there to be discovered and explained by a limited number of theories but which conceives theories as social constructs that account for reality in an interpretative way. A conventionalist stance would privilege science as “artificial creations or constructions devised by the scientist” (Walker, 2001, p.119), while an empiricist stance would conceive the empirical as the primary explanation of the reality, of the truth to be discovered out there, and the rationalist would consider reason as the ultimate explanatory principle of reality and the source of truth. Although conventionalism does not deny the empirical, it does not assume that experience is the primary source of explanation for reality: the empirical blueprints reality but theories, explanations of this reality are also social constructs which vary across time and end up constituting the reality as well. In other words, the reality is
not constituted only by the raw data collected (the empirical) but also by the researcher’s interpretation of this data.

A dialectical perspective of humans and their world allows Applied Linguistics to jettison Cartesian dualisms that narrow the understanding of phenomena. Dualisms such as langue vs parole, competence vs performance, form vs meaning, native-speaker vs non-native speaker, and theory vs practice have highly influenced the field of SLA, and consequently of Applied Linguistics, inhibiting a formation of a complete picture of humans as linguistic beings and the problems that arise with regard to acquisition and use of their primary cultural artifact—language.

This dissertation is organized as follows: chapter 2 discusses three main approaches to writing instruction (product-focused, process writing and genre-based) while chapter 3 addresses in detail activity-based pedagogies, specifically those devised by two leading proponents of Vygotsky’s theory, P. Galperin and V. Davydov. Chapter 4 describes the design of the course and chapter 5 reports the research methodology used to analyze the data that address the three research questions presented above. In chapter 6 I analyze the students’ models of their understanding of the concept of genre and in chapter 7 I discuss students’ written answers to problem solving tasks and to an assessment question given at the end of the course. The models and answers comprise the data on which the investigation of students’ development of theoretical thinking is based. In chapter 8 the students’ pre-tests and post-tests are analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively in order to fully evaluate any improvement in their writing during the course of instruction. In chapter 9 I investigate how students made sense of the genre-

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7 It is interesting to observe how concepts of hard sciences such as time changed according to different paradigms of physics: Newtonian and Einsteinian.
based course through an analysis of the logs they kept throughout the course Finally, chapter 10 provides some concluding remarks in which the shortcomings and limitations of the study are considered along with proposals for future research.
CHAPTER 2

APPROACHES TO L2 WRITING INSTRUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce three influential approaches to L2 writing instruction: the traditional (product-focused) approach, the process writing approach, and the social approach. The product-focused approach still influences somewhat how students and teachers conceive of writing despite the fact that it is no longer mainstream. Process writing has been extremely relevant for freeing learners and teachers from a traditional view of writing instruction as just grammar instruction, promoted by the product-focused approach, and for providing invaluable techniques for writing instruction such as the production of multiple drafts and conferences. The social approach, in its main form, genre-based pedagogy, addresses issues overlooked by process writing such as the social aspects of writing and explicit instruction on language forms involved in a particular genre. This approach contextualizes writing as a social activity, rather than as an individual cognitive process.

These three approaches are relevant for the study to be reported on here. The product-focused approach assisted the students’ analysis of their writing since it was found that this approach had affected the students’ history in writing instruction education. And, process writing provided the genre-based course with its techniques to improve writing, including drafts and conferences.

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Sociocultural theory does not provide a pedagogy for writing instruction as process writing or traditional pedagogy do. Instead, it inspires literacy studies through its premises; for example, see Smagorinsky and Lee (2000) and Moll (1989, 1990).
Given that the course analyzed in this dissertation integrated the linguistic approach developed by the Australian school of writing instruction, this chapter will focus most of its attention on discussing the features of this approach. Although the Australian School represents a productive social approach to writing, it still does not address students’ psychological development related to this activity. This dissertation aims to begin redress this gap by combining the Australian view of genre and the activity-theory based pedagogy developed in large part by V. Davydov and his colleagues. This approach is known for its concern with “movement from the abstract to the concrete”.

2.1 The product-focused approach

The traditional or product-focused approach was strongly influenced by behaviorism (Zamel, 1976), which is a psychological theory that highly influenced learning pedagogies in the 1960s and 1970s. It assumes that the learner is a ‘tabula rasa’ to whom everything should be taught through correct stimulus to achieve good habit formation. This view holds that any form of undesirable behavior should be eliminated to avoid its interference with the learning process. From this psychological theory the following assumptions emerged with regard to the traditional approach: (a) writing is habit formation (imitating text models), (b) writing is an unteachable skill (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996), and (c) grammar proficiency will automatically lead to good writing (Zamel).

In the traditional approach, the ‘good’ behaviors to be learned consisted of imitating the sentence structure or the styles of model texts. For this reason, errors had to
be corrected and avoided to prevent reinforcement of bad habits. Writing instruction emphasized the resources that led to the production of a perfect text: correct grammar and spelling, the reworking of problematic sentences, the transformation of shorter sentences into more complex ones, and the focus on the topic sentence at the paragraph level and on the patterns for the construction of the introduction, body, and conclusion of the essay. The emphasis was on the well-formed text rather than on how the writers would construct it. This writing method was imposed on students by offering them good model texts to imitate (Silva, 1990). Writing was mainly an occasion for grammar practice and for display of grammar knowledge. Although this kind of instruction can still be found today in both the classroom and the textbooks, the product-focused approach was mainly used from the 1940s to the 1960s (Kern, 2000).

2.2 The process-focused approach

Following a visit to British schools in the sixties, Squire and Applebee (1969) identified the tenets of what later would be called process writing in the United States. Its principles are the following: (a) focus on creativity and personal expression of ideas rather than on rhetoric or form (for example, in the form of logs or journals), (b) topics of students’ interest, (c) allowance for free flow of ideas and emotions, (d) rejection of artificial exercises in rhetorical textbooks, (e) focus on poetry, (f) great stimulation for students to write, (g) indirect (implicit) instead of direct (explicit) instruction², (h) the

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² “Sequential programs introducing young people to the basic principles of rhetoric and fundamentals in written expression are nowhere to be found in the schools of England” (Squire & Applebee, 1969, p. 138).
absence of the teacher’s intervention in the students’ writing, (i) no rewriting after the teacher’s correction or comments\(^3\), (j) an audience constituted of the public sphere rather than of the teacher-student interaction, and (k) teacher-student conferences in which more focus on form, rhetoric, and rephrasing takes place.

Although Squire and Applebee (1969) highlighted the successful writing experience in the British school system, Emig (1971) showed the limitations of the American system for the teaching of writing. Emig’s groundbreaking study investigated students’ composing process and employed what would become the classical methodologies in process writing research: case study and think-aloud protocols. Emig identified the pervasive influence of school instruction on students’ conception of writing and their composing behaviors. She found that composition instruction in the United States was limited and limiting because of the focus on product rather than on process, because it did not allow time for planning and pre-writing strategies and because it failed to foster students’ imagination and creativity, obliging them instead to write in a fixed mode of five paragraphs.

Process writing then emerged as a reaction to this product-oriented instructional method. Accordingly, writing should not focus on the product (the text) anymore but on the writer and on his/her ability to express him/herself freely on paper. As a consequence of Emig’s work, researchers—especially of freshman composition (Pianko, 1979; Perl, 1980; Rose, 1980; Sommers, 1982)—focused on students’ writing behaviors and

\(^{3}\) “Concerned with developing the expressiveness of their pupils, they are convinced that young people will ultimately learn to write on their own without teacher intervention through either preliminary instruction or subsequent correction” (Squire & Applebee, 1969, p. 146).
simultaneously proposed pedagogical interventions based on their findings. Hence, process writing followed two forms: expressivism and cognitivism. The former, advocated by Elbow (1981) and Murray (1968, 1980, 1985), asserts that students should express their own voice and that the writing classroom should constitute a good environment for this free creative expression of thoughts. The latter was influenced by the work of Flower and Hayes (1977, 1980, 1981), who developed a cognitive model of writing process based on think-aloud protocol research. This model represents an attempt to construct a cognitive theory of writing through the study of writers’ thinking processes and contains three elements: the task environment, the writer’s long term memory, and the writing process. While expressivism is more concerned with the practice of free and creative writing, cognitivism attempts to explain this creativity through cognitive processes.

ESL writing research shared these L1 writing research assumptions, methodologies, pedagogical concerns, and findings regarding the process focused approach. For example, Zamel (1982) corroborated L1 writing research as a recursive process. For this reason, teaching ESL writing implies the following: (a) pre-writing strategies and invention techniques should be taught to less proficient learners (Zamel, 1982, p. 203); (b) topics of interest to students should be introduced in class; (c) revision and conferences with students should guarantee that feedback is given during the process of writing and not just for its final product. In other words, this approach assumes that drafts, revisions, and conferences with students will lead to a well-written product.
Zamel (1983) proposed several changes in writing instruction. Learners should write about topics of interest and have the opportunity to develop their ideas for them. Lists or notes should replace outlines to modify thoughts. Regarding assignments, tasks that allow the organization and development of ideas should be substituted for rhetorical models. Techniques to elicit topics must be employed with the less skilled students. Teachers should intervene in an effort to elicit opinions from them and to find the best way to organize texts from students rather than just provide grammar corrections. This intervention can occur by means of teacher-student conferences and pair work. Through this pedagogy, students provide teachers with information about what they need to be taught, and thus the teachers can imbue the students with a sense that writing is a recursive and creative process. Correction of specific language problems should receive attention during the late stages of the process. Gradually, process writing developed a set of techniques that differed from the traditional and product-oriented approaches. This led to a second phase of research with the goal of investigating the effectiveness of the new techniques. Spack (1984) studied invention techniques\(^4\); Zamel (1985) and Ferris (1997) investigated teachers’ comments on students’ drafts, and Goldstein and Conrad (1990) analyzed teacher-student conferences.

To summarize, process writing has two lines of research: a first phase, which focuses on the student’s composing process and a second phase, which assesses the effectiveness of these strategies. This approach, based on expressivism, assumes that the

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\(^4\) Invention techniques are strategies to aid students in generating their own ideas before and during the process of writing such as answers to wh questions, organizational charts, daily journals, systematic questioning, and free writing.
writer is ready to write, knows all aspects of the language, and thus only needs an optimal environment in which to channel the expression of his/her thought (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996, p. 89). For this reason, process writing was more successful with mainstream students than with minorities (e.g., Latinos, African Americans, and ESL students), presumably since the latter were not as familiar with standard varieties of the language. But it was assumed that in process writing, grammar issues would be figured out in the process, and that an indirect approach to learning is more efficient than its direct counterpart (Kern, 2000, p. 181). The process approach also adopts a mainstream view of cognition as asocial (see also, Flower & Hayes, 1977, 1980, 1981).

However, process writing has its drawbacks. It does not pursue the social reasons for the inappropriate behaviors detected. Both lines of research focus on the process of composing but not on its genesis. Moreover, the social and political components of writing are not addressed, except for L1 writing research based on ethnographic accounts of the classroom (Calkins, 1983, 1986; Graves, 1983, 1984; Kantor, 1984; Sola & Bennett, 1985). As a consequence, the picture of L2 writing instruction is incomplete, intending to be neutral and to avoid cultural issues. In fact, this asocial stance constitutes the core of the criticism of process writing, which I will discuss later in this chapter.

To conclude, the process writing approach misses important components of the process of writing, such as the teacher’s instruction, the discourse used in the classroom, the link between students’ previous history of writing, and the actual behavior manifested by students in the investigation of the composing process. Also, there is no concern for the social aspect of the writing process or of social background of the writer. The
research on writing does not question issues of cultural differences and patterns of ESL students’ learning, nor the political-ideological implications of academic writing. The learner is treated as part of a homogeneous group, as an asocial being whose cognition resides solely in the mind and who employs universal composing strategies.

2.3 The social approach to writing instruction

2.3.1 Social critique of process writing

Reacting to the asocial stance of early process writing, the post-process writing view, represented especially by Trimbur (1994), recognizes and questions the social, ideological and cultural issues involved in writing and its instruction. In addition, process writing is also criticized for making writing simpler than it is, for trying to eliminate the teachers’ authority as well as institutional power (Bizzel, 1992), and for being unable to deal with non-mainstream students (e.g., African-Americans, immigrant ESL learners) (Delpit, 1988; Inghilleri, 1989).

To Atkinson (2003), post-process writing is not a substitute for process writing, or even a paradigm shift; rather he sees it as an improvement in L2 writing pedagogy because it adopts a more social view of literacy (p. 11). According to Atkinson, L2 writing should be conceived of not as a set of cognitive skills (as process writing is) but as a socially embedded activity (p. 60).

Systemic functional linguistics also criticizes process writing (Kalantzis & Cope, 1993). Despite its emphasis on students’ expression of their voices, on teachers’

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5 Here it is identifiable the Cartesian dualism of mind (cognition) versus external word (socially embedded activity).
reduction of their authority in the classroom, on a pedagogical approach to learning as a self-discovery process, process writing privileges and imposes a cultural pattern that emerges from the White middle class, and in this way maintains educational inequality (Kalantiz & Cope, p. 58). Moreover, Kalantiz and Cope argue that process writing lacks a theory of language that could explicitly convey to students how language is employed to make meaning (p. 60).

Possessing a clear theory of language that teaches grammar linked to the social context, systemic functional linguists strongly criticize process writing for “turn[ing] its back on language” (Martin et al., 1987). Also, Martin and colleagues claim that process writing, in fact, offers no choice at all for students even though it allows them to choose their own writing topics. Thus, students with their limited experience end up selecting the same topics related to their experience that usually demand the same type of oral genres (Martin et al., p. 77).

Additional criticism of process writing originates from activity theory (Engstrom, 1987, 1993) and EAP (English for academic purposes). Russell (1995, 1997, 1999) proposes that the process of writing should be studied in relation to other organizations (activity systems) beyond the classroom. Proponents of EAP criticize process writing for not adequately preparing students for writing in academia (Horowitz, 1986).

In general, process writing has been criticized on several counts. As we will see in the next section, the response to a more social stance in writing comes with the genre-based pedagogies. According to Hyon (1996), there are three approaches to this concept of genre: the ESP (English for specific purposes) approach, represented mainly by John
Swales’ work; the new rhetoric studies perspective (Coe, 1994; Freedman & Medway, 1994), and the systemic functional linguistics approach (Martin, 1989; 1993).

2.3.2 The definition of the concept of genre

2.3.2.1 The EAP and the new rhetoric perspectives

Swales (1990) defines genre as “a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community, and thereby constitute the rationale of the genre” (p. 58). The notion of discourse community and its role in molding the genre comprises the central issues in this perspective. As academia offers a well established discourse community, which rules the several academic genres, Swales and colleagues have been focusing extensively on studying the forms of academic genres such as science dissertations, introductions to research articles, and university lectures. Their approach aims to initiate students into the discourse community of these genres and to prepare them to write according to the rules established by the relevant discourse communities. Hence, the ESP approach highlights the pedagogy and the form of the genres taught rather than the social action surrounding the creation and maintenance of these genres (Hyon, 1996 p. 695). Nevertheless, ESP does not provide as well structured a methodology as the Australian view does; instead it focuses on producing pedagogical materials (see: Swales and Feak, 1994 and Bhatia, 1993).

Benesch (2001) applies critical pedagogy to ESP. Her theoretical framework derives from the work of Paulo Freire, Michel Foucault, and the feminist theorists. She
proposes that ESP courses linked to content courses – the optimal condition for writing instruction – should go beyond the traditional pragmatism of ESP. In order to overcome this drawback of ESP, Benesch adopts Freire’s belief that education should be practiced with the hope of achieving social equality, Foucault’s notion of resistance as a way to change power distribution, and feminist theorists’ problematization of assumed universalized concepts such as oppression, authority, democracy, and gender. Through “right” analysis – rather than through needs analysis – Benesch attempts to make students aware of the academic status quo and empower them to act against it. Her reports about her teaching experiences with paired ESP-content courses (anthropology, social sciences, psychology) are examples of the extension of her critical pedagogy to ESP.

The new rhetoric studies view argues that genre should be “centered not on the substance or the form of discourse but on the action it is used to accomplish” (Miller, 1984, p. 15). As Hyon (1996) points out, this perspective privileges the social context of genre and its social purposes related to its linguistic aspects. No pedagogical approach to teach genre in schools is offered because the new rhetoric perspective does not believe genres can be taught; instead, it argues they should be experienced in the social action involved in their constitution and establishment.

2.3.2.2 The Australian school

The Australian view of genre, which is based on a systemic functional view of language, defines it as “staged-goal oriented social processes” (Martin, 1993, p. 142). For Martin (1989, p. 17), genre is the purpose of a text – to describe, to tell a story, to
complain, to argue – that can be realized in different types of text. For this reason, stories, recounts, reports, or expository texts are considered genres according to this perspective, but not necessarily in others. For instance, the school genre essay, usually written in the form of an argumentative text, is considered a pre-genre by Swales (1990), whereas in the Australian view, it is a form of genre. The systemic functional linguists consider these texts to be a genre due to the history of this approach. In the 1970s, Martin and colleagues established a new English teaching program based on the systemic functional linguistics (SFL henceforth) theory of language. The first phase of their research program was to study the type of writing required by Australian elementary and secondary schools. As the school system mainly required narratives, recounts, procedures, and expository texts, Martin and colleagues (Frances Christie, Joan Rothery, Jennifer Hammond) developed a methodology to teach these to children.

The pedagogical approach evolved, especially influenced by the critical theorists Freedman and Medway (1994), Lee (1996), and Luke (1996), towards a model with a more critical stance. The models are called by Martin (1999) curriculum models. Figure 2.1 represents their first curriculum model and consists of three phases: (a) the modeling, (b) the joint construction of a text, and (c) the independent construction of a text. In the

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6 Both definitions are widely employed in the field, but due to its linguistic origins, the perspective investigates more extensively the purpose of texts and their forms rather than the social process involved with the genre. An exception is Christie and Martin (1997) where text analysis and its relationship with institutions are focused.

7 Cope and Kalantzis (1993) explain these genres as follows. “Narratives are texts set out to amuse, to entertain or to instruct . . . . Recounts retell events for the purpose of informing or entertaining (diaries, personal letters). . . . Procedures are factual texts designed to describe how something is accomplished through a series of actions or steps”(p. 9).

Martin (1989) classifies the expository text in two types: the hortatory and the analytical. The former aims to use argumentation to lead the audience to take some action while the latter just supports a thesis statement.
first phase, students are exposed to samples of a genre and to explicit instruction on the
goal of the genre, on how this goal is achieved through the stages of the genre (schematic
structure or generic moves), and on its lexical grammatical aspects. This is followed by
the teacher and students collaboratively constructing a text, and, finally, the learner alone
writing his/her own text.

Figure 2.1. The 1989 DSP Curriculum Model (Callaghan & Knapp, 1989, p. 10)
The second model (see Figure 2.2) in the modeling phase has been split into negotiating the field and deconstruction. In negotiating the field, the teacher elicits from the students what they know about the social context surrounding the genre to be taught (Martin, 1999, p. 130). The deconstruction refers to more explicit instruction about this social context and about the genre’s schematic structure.

*Figure 2.2. The 1992 DSP Primary Curriculum Model (Murray & Zammit, 1992, p. 7)*
The third model also has three phases: (a) deconstruction, (b) joint construction, and (c) independent construction (see Figure 2.3). Discussion of the social context of the genre is present in all phases of the newest model (Martin, 1999, p. 130).
As the models developed a more critical stance towards language and genres and towards empowering the non-mainstream students was incorporated. Thus, ideology is quite pervasive in this genre perspective (Hyon, 1996, p. 701). In addition, explicit instruction about language and genres constitutes a recurrent feature of the approach across the three models.

To conclude, SFL pedagogy, used to teach genre, values social group relations rather than individual relations (i.e., individual cognition) and explicit development of knowledge instead of the inductive approach of process writing. The Australian approach was also strongly influenced by sociocultural theory (Vygotsky & Bruner), especially with the concept of scaffolding that theoretically supports the joint construction phase of the models. This chapter later discusses the relationship between Vygotsky and Halliday, and the former’s influence on the SFL models for genre pedagogy.

Eventually, a need to integrate the notions of genre and register arose. In order to be more in tune with the critical approaches to language, Martin (1993) modified Halliday’s register theory model, which involves the contextual variables of field, tenor, and mode and its realization in language. He inserts the notions of genre (based on Bakhtin’s notion of speech genres) and ideology into the SFL model of language (see Figure 2.4). Genre thus is considered the context of culture (Eggin, 1994, p. 30) that

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8 Lee (2002, p.259) provides the following distinction.

“… register and genre are two different ways of looking at the same object. Register is used when we view a text as language: as the instantaneous of a conventionalized, functional configuration of language tied to certain broad societal situations. … Here the point of view is somewhat static and uncritical: different situations ‘require’ different configurations of language, each being ‘appropriate’ to its task, being maximally ‘functionally adapted’ to the immediate situational parameters of contextual use. Genre is used when we view the text as a member of a category: a culturally recognized artifact, a grouping of texts according to some conventionally recognized criteria, a grouping according to purposive goals, culturally defined.” (italics in the original) (p. 259)
affects the context of situation (register), which in turn affects the linguistic choices of the user. Genre is a category directly influenced by culture that will determine which combinations of field, tenor, and mode will be possible (Eggins & Martin, 1997; Martin, 1991) and how the culturally determined purpose of the genre will be realized in stages called schematic structure or generic moves (Eggins & Martin, 1997; Martin, 1991a, 1991b). Thus, genre in the SFL perspective, differently from the ESP view, does not conceive of genre only as an identification of generic moves in a sample but also as how the register variables (field, tenor, and mode) combine in the sample or in the different moves of the genre (Martin, 1991).

*Figure 2.4: Language in relation to ideology, genre and register (Martin, 1993)*
The notion of ideology inserted into the model is a response to the need for a more critical pedagogy for the teaching of writing in the Australian educational system. Due to the process writing approach in that country, the students were being denied access to more empowering genres and to the mainstream forms of discourse. However, Martin does not clearly define ideology in his model. However, in a later article (Martin, 1991a), he points out that Kress and Hodge (1979) “inspired [his] first attempts to model the interaction between ideology and genre” (p. 126). These authors define ideology as “a systematic body of ideas, organized from a particular point of view” (p. 6). In addition, by inserting the concepts of ideology and deconstruction into his models of language functioning and pedagogy, respectively, Martin aims to conceptualize a critically oriented pedagogy. The approach aims to empower non-mainstream learners by making them achieve awareness about how language structures convey meanings in a variety of social contexts.

Despite the systemic functional linguists’ efforts to provide a comprehensive model for genre and its teaching, they and the ESP perspective were not spared criticism. Process writing criticizes the systemic functional linguistics approach from two perspectives: for its debilitating effects on creativity and for its prescriptive quality. Martin (1999) counter argues stating that it is only possible to achieve creativity once the rules of the genre are learned (p. 128). He along with Carter (1996) points out that recontextualization of genres—the use of genres in different circumstances from those

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9 Figures 1 to 3 show that Martin et al. are concerned about responding efficiently to the critical theorists’ criticism of their approach to genre. In my opinion, since process writing was also a dominant pedagogical perspective for literacy in Australia, there was a great concern on the part of the systemic functionalists to come up with a better model than their opponents. Another indication of this critical stance of SFL is its close association with critical discourse analysis (see Martin & Wodak, 2003, for example).
the student initially learned—is motivated by their pedagogical approach. The criticism of prescriptivism became known as the ‘back to the basics’ argument. The systemic functional linguists’ (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993; Martin, 1999; Williams & Hasan, 1996) response is that metalanguage is necessary knowledge for empowering students and that language structures are seen in relation to the social purpose for the genre rather than in a decontextualized way as the traditional grammar approach.

Other scholars mention that empowering the students cannot take place by simply teaching mainstream genres and helping students control them (Barrs, 1994; Dixon & Stratta, 1992; Lee, 1993). Rather, genres should reach and act upon audiences (Barrs, 1994, p. 252). Luke (1996) warns that the changes intended by the systemic functional linguists are restricted to individual social mobility rather than to ample social transformation (p. 314). He continues that actually SFL genre-based pedagogy goes in the same direction as process writing: to maintain the status quo through “naturalization of a textual canon, particular text types and practices” (p. 318).

Kern (2000) also points out that genre-based pedagogies have not provided substantial results in the improvement of learners’ writing. Russell (1997), from an activity theory perspective (Engstrom, 1987, 1993), criticizes SFL for reinforcing structuralism (p. 505) and Cartesian dualism (text versus context, mind versus society (p. 506) and for not connecting school writing with writing in other social settings.

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10 Martin (1999) provides a good example of how a student, after learning expository texts, used their rules to write a letter to a politician.
Although Luke (1996) strongly criticizes SFL’s lack of commitment to change in society at a broader level, its approach, in fact, opens possibilities for a critical pedagogy in its full sense. Firstly, Martin (1993) recognizes the role of ideology in his model of social semiotics, and in a later work (1999), introduces the concept of deconstruction in his pedagogical model “in reference to the French masters” (p. 130)\(^{12}\). Secondly, Martin (1999) provides an example of how SFL pedagogy enables social change, by reporting that a sixth grade student used the knowledge from argumentative texts to write a letter to the municipality in which she asked them to replace a pool for the community. Despite the simplicity of the issue, it is arguable that this fact might lead the students to engage in subsequent more serious social issues that can be dealt with through genre knowledge. As Martin (1999) says:

> It has always seemed to my colleagues and me that this kind of generic recontextualization is the norm. Once guided into a genre, students naturally rework the genre in light of their own subjectivity as new contextual pressures arise. (p. 140-141)

It is possible for SFL pedagogical practice to enable students to be more active citizens in society and criticize and transform genres that are taught. However, to be more effective, the connection between genre taught in schools and social transformation should be explicitly discussed.

I acknowledge the contribution of critical schools of thought to education and literacy, in particular. However, the present study opted primarily to promote

\(^{12}\) To me, this is a response to critiques such as that of Luke (1996), who argued that systemic functional linguists viewed power as a product to be given through literacy to the powerless.
psychological development in the form of theoretical thinking (to be explained in chapter 3) in the individual. In the last chapter of this dissertation, I will argue for the possibility of relating theoretical thinking and critical thinking in subsequent research.

The Australian perspective of genre has been implemented in that country through various literacy programs such as LERN (Literacy and Education Research Network) and NSW AMES (New South Wales Adult Migrant English Service) (Hyon, 1996, p.700) and has recently gained international attention. Outside Australia, another important implementation of the SFL model for genre and its pedagogy can be found in the integrated language program development by the German department of Georgetown University. There, Byrnes along with the faculty of the department and its graduate students, have implemented an innovative curriculum called Developing Multiple Literacies to teach German at the undergraduate level.

The pedagogical approach underlying the curriculum reflects a learner perspective. In particular, courses in Levels I - IV take a psycholinguistic language-processing perspective that, in current thinking, is best achieved through task-based teaching and learning (http://www3.georgetown.edu/departments/german/programs/curriculum).

As can be seen, this program relies on systemic functional linguistics, on task-based language teaching, and on second-language acquisition principles. In addition, it also misses a critical component in its pedagogy, which I attempted to incorporate in the genre-based course designed.
2.3.3 The gap in the genre-based pedagogies

Both SFL in Australia and its ambitious and groundbreaking application in a foreign language department at Georgetown University focus solely on language learning; they are concerned with language acquisition, in general, and with language proficiency, in particular. There is no explicit pedagogical action that consciously targets the learner’s psychological development. In sum, genre-based pedagogies consider development to be a by-product of instruction. (For example, Cope and Kalantiz [1993] basing their argument on Vygotsky’s ideas, criticize SFL approach for not taking account of the cognitive growth that occurs during instruction.) This dissertation attempts to directly address the matter of cognitive development during genre-based writing instruction. To this end it supplements the Australian genre-based pedagogy with the pedagogical ideas developed by Davydov and his colleagues – an approach that focuses on theoretical thinking based on conceptual instruction.

Although systemic functional linguists acknowledge the relevance of Vygotsky’s work (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993; Martin, 1999; Williams & Hasan, 1996) and even propose a connection between Vygotsky and Halliday (Wells, 1993), they seem to adopt a narrow view of Vygotsky’s most well-known concept, the zone of proximal development. A clear example is provided by Martin’s (1999) inappropriate (implicit) link between the ZPD and scaffolding.

The development of our pedagogy for teaching literacy involved a dialogue across approaches to guided instruction influenced by Vygotsky and Bruner, and studies of language development undertaken by Halliday and Painter . . . .
Critical to this dialogue was the notion of scaffolding. Understandings about the guiding role played by caregivers in spoken language development . . . have been built into the pedagogy as a Joint Construction stage. (p. 126)

Moreover, Wells (1993) emphasizes the interactionist features of the ZPD and the role of the adult caregiver in fostering a child’s linguistic and cognitive development as a point of similarity between Halliday and Vygotsky.

A significant feature of this formulation [ZPD] is that it makes clear that the zone of proximal development is not an attribute of the individual learner but rather a potential for his or her intramental development that is created by the intermental interaction that occurs as the learner and other people cooperate in some activity. (pp. 62-63)

These are good illustrations of the misappropriation of the concept of the ZPD. As Newman and Holzman (1993), in an insightful critique of this fact remark, the notion was simplified by privileging its interactionist features over its revolutionary ones. The ZPD in its full sense involves more than just more competent adults scaffolding children or less competent peers, so its research should focus beyond the interaction involved as well. Instead, ZPD is a “meaning-making/learning-leading-to-development activity” (p. 90); it is a dialectical unit that comprises individual adaptation to society (pp. 136-137) as well as radical transformation of individual cognition and of social structures (p. 86). For this reason, Newman and Holzman (1993) call it revolutionary activity, a social-historical unity (p. 65). The genre-based course considered in the present study aimed to promote
this kind of ZPD by utilizing the pedagogical approach reflected in the principle of “movement from the abstract to the concrete”.

2.4 Concluding remarks

From the definitions above we can see that different perspectives define genre differently by focusing on different aspects of language use. While the new rhetoric focuses on the social, external circumstances of genre production, the ESP and systemic functional perspectives focus on the interrelationship of language and purpose. However, there is a difference between these two approaches. The former focuses more on the relationship between discourse communities and text production (much of the work done is on academic writing), whereas the latter emphasizes the relationship between language and purpose without explicit concern for the discourse community that molds, or at least influences, genre construction. Regarding instructional orientations, the Sydney school has the most comprehensive pedagogical program of all three. The ESP approach influences instruction instead with the release of didactic materials (see publications of The Michigan University Press such as Academic Writing for Graduate Students). The new rhetoric does not offer a pedagogical approach because it does not believe that genre instruction enables socialization into a discourse community—a major factor if a genre is to be fully controlled (Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1993).

In a didactic review of the three schools of genre-based instruction, Hyon (1996) portrays them as separable, unrelated perspectives. However, these views can be conceived as complementary. By focusing on the discourse community’s construction of
the genre, the new rhetoric can shed light on the history of the genre under focus. This aspect is of extreme relevance to promote critical literacy along the lines suggested by Martin and colleagues in their models. The ESP approach offers a detailed view of particular instantiations of genre—professional and academic writing—that might contribute to the overall understanding of this linguistic social phenomenon of genre. The Australian school can also offer insights into the other perspectives in the sense that they also study genres with a clear discourse community—the school—that affects a person’s literacy for a lifetime. Hence, this dissertation argues for a holistic integrative perspective on the pedagogical integration of the concept of genre in order to help students better comprehend how human communication functions and how this is reflected most particularly in writing.
CHAPTER 3
ACTIVITY THEORY BASED PEDAGOGIES

While chapter 2 portrayed L2 writing instruction approaches, focusing, in particular, on SFL, chapter 3 will elaborate more extensively on the definition of theoretical thinking and Davydov’s approach to teaching. These two theoretical frameworks ground the experimental freshman composition course that I implemented, and which I describe in chapter 4. As Davydov’s approach relies on Galperin’s work, and both authors utilize A. N. Leontiev’s activity theory for their theoretical framework, this chapter will also address the philosophical concept of activity, Leontiev’s perspective of activity theory along with Galperin’s pedagogical theory. While chapter 3 provides an overview of the theoretical principles of Davydov’s approach, chapter 4 describes in detail the specific learning actions that comprise it.

3.1 The theoretical concept of activity

As I employed an activity-theory pedagogy to design the ESL freshman composition course reported on in this dissertation, it is important to clarify precisely how the concept of activity is understood in the present study. This is because there are slightly different versions of how activity has been interpreted from different theoretical perspectives. Activity is a theoretical concept which was addressed by philosophers such as Kant, Fichte, Hegel, and Marx (Toulman, 2001). Actually, it is not possible to define activity apart from some philosophical perspective (Shvyrev, 1990, p. 2). Kant was the first philosopher responsible for changing the category of activity from the theoretical to
the practical. Theoretical activity usually refers to the “activity of the mind as constituting both objects and selves” (Toulman, p. 85), while practical activity refers to the relationship between the individual and the world. Practical activity emerged in Kant’s philosophy as a consequence of his concerns for “our moral capacity to freely and responsibly determine our own actions” (Toulman, p. 85). This capacity is exercised in action upon the world not only in theoretical activity of the mind. Yet, Kant did not further pursue the important concept of practical activity.

Fichte, who improved on Kant’s philosophy, admitted the primacy of practical activity over its theoretical counterpart. He argued that theoretical activity seemed to be first in origin because objects are present in our thinking; however, the object emerges from the action the individual has upon the world. Both Fichte and Kant recognized the existence of practical activity but they did not employ the concept to explain human action. They could not confer on it any explanatory power in their philosophies (Toulman, 2001).

Hegel moves to provide activity with explanatory power by stating that social/labor activity constituted consciousness. This aspect of Hegel’s philosophy represented a move toward accrediting more importance to the concept. However, Hegel did not further investigate labor activity with concrete examples. It would be Marx who would further elaborate on this concept with his work on capitalism. He proved that activity is practical rather than theoretical and is social in nature. Activity is “social practice” (Toulman, 2001, p. 89) that makes human development possible.

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1 Lompscher (2002) defines activity as “fundamental, specifically human form of relationships between human beings and the world” (p. 80).
Vygotsky, in attempting to build a Marxist psychology, adopted Marx’s view of activity as the discipline’s explanatory principle to study consciousness (Davydov & Radzikhovskii, 1985). By considering activity as the explanatory principle of psychological development, Vygotsky started elaborating an activity theory which later would be developed by A. N. Leontiev.

3.2 Leontiev’s activity theory

Leontiev, using the work of Vygotsky and philosophers like Marx, Engels, and Rubinshtein, proposed a psychological theory of activity (Wertsch, 1981, p. 37). This theory constituted a reaction to the reflexology that dominated Soviet psychology at the time. Reflexology like other behaviorist approaches to mind considered the object of psychology to be the S→ R patterns (Leontiev, 1981). However, for Leontiev, the concept of activity mediated the relationship between the individual and the object (the world). It was the explanatory principle of the individual’s mental activity (the traditional focus of psychology). It is relevant to remark that in the activity theory perspective there is no opposition between objective activity and mental/individual activity. The two are necessarily and dialectically integrated into a single monistic system. In Leontiev’s (1981) words, “Internal activity, which has arisen out of external, practical activity, is not separate from it and does not rise above it; rather, it retains its fundamental and two-way connection with it” (p. 58).

Leontiev (1981) structures activity into three components: motives, actions, and operations. The motive is the driving force of activity; it is the object of the activity, and
it originates in specific biological and socially organized needs. Activity is realized by means of actions. The actions “translate activity into reality” (Leontiev, p. 59) and have a certain conscious goal leading them (Leontiev, p. 60). Operations are the conditions in which actions are carried out (Leontiev, p. 63). For example society has a need for knowledge acquisition which is manifested by a learning activity. This activity can be realized through different actions such as attending classes in a school, having a tutor, reading books, completing assignments. Each of these actions will be concretized in a certain condition, or by means of operations. For instance, there are different ways to read a book: taking notes, writing a summary of it or just reading for a general comprehension.

It is important to point out that the same action can belong to different activities. In this case, if the motives that guide the apparent similar actions are different, then the actions belong to distinct activities. Leontiev (1981) provides the following illustration: a student is reading a book required for an exam. Then this student discovers that the book he/she is reading is not required for the exam. In this case he can either interrupt the reading or continue it. These two actions reveal the motive behind the activity, which guided the action of reading the book. In the first alternative the action of reading the book was part of an activity that focused on the exam; he/she was reading the book as a preparation for the exam. In contrast, in the second alternative the action of reading the book was part of an activity which aimed learning.
Although this theory did not escape criticism\textsuperscript{2}, it nevertheless provided a cohesive psychological theory (Wertsch, 1981). One of these criticisms came from Galperin, who was not satisfied with the answers provided by activity theory as developed by Leontiev. To Galperin, psychology still faced the problem of what its subject matter was. Although the social nature of the mind and its reliance on practical activity was a shared assumption between these two Russian psychologists, Galperin did not think Leontiev’s activity theory fully explained the mental activity of the individual. For this reason, he narrowed the subject matter of psychology to orienting activity (Galperin, 1992). Orienting activity constitutes the person’s ”orientation in problem situations” (p. 68), what he/she does to accomplish a task. Galperin wanted to focus on the relationship between activity and its actor, rather than just on activity as Leontiev did (Haenen, 1996, p. 80). What mattered to Galperin was creating orienting actions which learners could employ to solve problems. This focus determined Galperin’s lifetime research project – the psychological investigation of orientation in school settings. His pedagogical approach stems from this research project.

Davydov also shares Leontiev’s conceptualization of activity but emphasizes its transformative character. He defines activity as “a specific form of the societal existence of humans consisting of purposeful changing of natural and social reality” (Davydov, 1999b, p. 39)—in other words, “the process in which the surrounding reality is transformed by men’s creative efforts” (Davydov, 1999c, p. 124). As Davydov investigated mainly learning activity in schools, he felt it was fundamental to promote

\textsuperscript{2} One of the main criticisms of activity theory is the fact that activity became both the unit of analysis and its explanatory principle (Kozulin, 1986).
activity, especially transformative activity – a pedagogical approach he characterized as ‘the movement from the abstract to the concrete’. Through this approach students’ theoretical thinking would be nourished and learning-leading-to-development would take place.

Although Vygotsky aimed to promote learning-leading-to-development, it was through activity theory that this process was addressed more consistently. Galperin and Davydov tried to implement Vygotsky’s principle of learning-leading-to development (Vygotsky, 1978) along with an activity theory view on mental development. For activity theory, thinking/cognition evolves into activity, that is, in action upon the social world. For this reason, cognition can only be studied through history, with “individual[s]-in-society (in-history)” (Newman & Holzman, 1993, p. 74). Given that Galperin influenced Davydov’s work in its initial stages, it becomes relevant to comprehend, at least to some extent, the former’s pedagogical approach (for a full discussion of Galperin’s model and how it can be implemented in a language classroom, see Negueruela 2003).

3.3 Galperin’s pedagogical approach: systematic formation of mental actions and concepts

Galperin’s theory of the formation of mental actions (Galperin, 1974, 1989, 1992), called stage-by-stage development of mental functions and concepts, was initially a theory of psychic development, of how materially and physically-based actions were transformed into ideal (mental) actions. Later it was developed into a theory of learning.
Galperin, employing Vygotsky’s genetic approach, discovered that mental actions lie in the practical activity of the world. Any human action consists of three components: orientation, execution, and control. Orientation is the basis of the action, its plan, the explanation of how to carry it out; execution is the performance and control is the verification of the action. The conversion of material to mental actions, also called internalization, possess the following path: material(ized) → external speech to others → external speech to oneself → inner speech → pure thought (Galperin, 1966).

Based on the formation of mental actions, and reacting to the prevailing mode of trial and error orientation (inductive learning) in the schools, Galperin (1974) proposed an approach for teaching called the ‘systematic formation of actions and concepts’, which is based on the implementation of orienting cards designed to guide the student in the new actions or concepts being taught. Hence, the card becomes “a tool for mental activity” (Galperin, p. 70). On this card, important information to carry out the action is provided. This includes the future product of the action, its form, its tools, its material, and its general plan of action (p. 69). The essence of the discipline being studied should also be on this card. In this way, trial and error learning and learning are in fact expedited. Content originally taught later in school can be taught earlier; students become more autonomous (Galperin, 1992, p. 73), and their motivation to learn increases (Galperin, 1992, p. 77). In other words, Galperin believes mental capacity can be intentionally and directly nurtured. At the same time, Galperin’s approach places increased responsibility for education on the teacher.
Talyzina (1981) discusses the criteria necessary to develop a syllabus based on Galperin’s stage-by-stage formation of actions and their internalization. The first is that the knowledge to be taught must be always associated with an activity. The second criterion is learning must be an activity whose motive is the appropriation of knowledge needed for practical activity in the world. Therefore problem situations should be created to demonstrate to students why the knowledge about to be taught is needed (p. 109). This constitutes the third criterion. Hence, instruction should make clear to students the need for what is being taught in the particular social historical contexts in which they are embedded. The fourth criterion recommends teaching should make learning a meaningful activity, an end in itself and not a means to something else, such as receiving a high grade. The purpose of instruction is to teach cognitive capacities, types of thinking—rather than contents of disciplines—that will lead the greater development of the individual, as Vygotsky (1978, p. 137) suggested. The fifth criterion is that the role of the concrete here represents just a means to exemplify general principles—which are, indeed, the focus of instruction.

Despite Galperin’s assurances that his approach would result in greater educational gains for students, the approach is not without its problems. First, orientation is restricted to orienting cards. He does not consider the role of language and discourse (Gee, 1999) in providing this orientation and students’ meaning-making process in interpreting it. For instance, Galperin does not consider the possibility that orientation in

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3 Here we see that Galperin had already proposed that instruction should focus on the essentials of the discipline rather than on the superficial similarities among concrete examples. Davydov, as we will see, pursues this goal more consistently.

4 This meaning-making process constitutes the third research question of this dissertation and it can be defined as the way a person makes sense of something.
instruction occurs not only on a card but also in classroom discourse (students, teachers, textbooks). Second, although Galperin considered activity not in isolation but in relation to the actors and to their process of appropriation of the activity (which also involved meaning-making processes) (Haenen, 1996, p. 80), he overlooked the learners’ meaning-making process and the individual differences in appropriating the orienting schemas in his research project. Third, several scholars have criticized Galperin because “the systematic formation [of mental actions and concepts approach] only guarantees the appropriation of ready-made or ‘second-hand’ knowledge and discourages the independent search for the meaning of knowledge” (Haenen, 1996, p. 202). The orientation is provided to the learner only from a top-down perspective; consequently, he/she does not have the opportunity to experience a bottom-up approach, an important capacity as well. The goal of instruction is to achieve an error-free performance in addition to providing a cognitive tool kit (orientation schema) to the learner. Fourth, Galperin is also criticized for not explaining the different effects his instruction could have on learners (Menchinskaia, 1960, in Haenen, 1996, p. 201).

Davydov proposed what he considered to be a way of overcoming the ready-made orientation problem in Galperin’s pedagogy. By developing theoretical thinking in students, he allowed them to understand why one is doing what one is doing, that is, to comprehend the principles behind his/her actions. In Davydov’s approach, known as the movement from the abstract to the concrete (henceforward MAC)\(^5\), the orientation

\(^5\) It is also known as the ascent from the abstract to the concrete.
schema is theoretical thinking. Davydov commenced his work, following in Galperin’s footsteps (Haenen, 1996, p. 179), but later, he developed his own pedagogical approach.

3.4 Davydov’s approach: the movement from the abstract to the concrete

As stated before, Davydov also employed Vygotskian activity theory principles to improve education. From Vygotsky, Davydov adopted his genetic methodology and the tenet that learning should lead to development. From activity theory, he assumed that mind and consciousness are a result of the person’s practical activity in the world. As sociocultural/activity theory perspectives hold that external practical activity constitutes one’s cognition, Davydov argued that formal instruction in school should focus on the teaching of scientific concepts. He attempted to design a pedagogical approach that could be used to teach such concepts effectively.

One of the most important features of an activity theory pedagogy is to link the leading activity of the learner to the content to be taught. As education is based on the concept of activity, a leading activity should be identified for each stage of the person’s development. For example, Russian children from ages 0 to 1 have direct emotional communication as a leading activity. From ages 1 to 3, item-specific manipulative activity; from 3 to 6, play; from 6 to 10, learning; from 10 to 15, socially useful activity, and from 15 to 18, learning occupational activity (Davydov, 1988b, p. 70). After this age,

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6 This pedagogical approach will be detailed in chapter 4, which focuses on the implementation of the approach in a freshman composition course.
7 Activity theory defines leading activity as the activity that has a major role in the cognitive development at a particular phase in the developmental course (Engstrom, Hakkarainen, & Hedegaard, 1984, p.84).
8 Davydov mentions the leading activities for Russian children but it is possible to extend them also to western children.
Vygotsky (1997), following Marx, claims that the leading activity is labor. Each of these leading activities develops certain mental abilities in the child. For instance, before the age of 1, the leading activity develops perceptual actions and emotional attitudes; between 1 and 3, it develops conscious operations with things; whereas play fosters imagination, rational orientation, generalized feelings, and symbolic functions (Davydov, p. 70). One of the features of the movement from the abstract to the concrete is to connect the content to be learned with the leading activity of the learners.

Davydov attempted to overcome the gap Vygotsky recognized in the way scientific concepts were generally taught in schools. Although Vygotsky (1987) recognized that scientific concepts were mainly taught by “empty verbalism” in schools (p. 170), he did not propose an instructional method to address the problem. Davydov designed his approach (i.e., MAC) to eliminate the “empty verbalism” that dominated in the schools. In his approach, students would not receive a summary of knowledge; rather they would engage in actions and tasks that would enable them to observe and understand how the knowledge was constructed and how it was linked to leading activities.

. . . . the teacher demonstrates to the pupils the very route taken by scientific thought, obliges the pupils to trace the dialectical movement of thought toward the truth, makes them, as it were, coparticipants in scientific exploration (Davydov, 1988b, p.16).

In chapters 5 and 6 of Thinking and Speech, it is possible to see that Vygotsky provided Davydov with the basis for his future pedagogical work. In Vygotky’s
explanations of the difference between complexes and concepts, implicit references to theoretical thinking development emerge.

A complex is first and foremost a concrete unification of a group of objects based on the *empirical similarity of separate objects to one another*. . . . The most important characteristic of complexive thinking is that it occurs on the plane of *concrete-empirical thinking* rather than on the plane of abstract-logical thinking. Therefore, the complex is not characterized by the underlying unity of connections, which helped to establish it.

The concept is based on *connections of a single, logically equivalent type*. In contrast, the complex is based on heterogeneous empirical connections that frequently have nothing in common with one another. Therefore, a *single, essential, and uniform connection or relationship among objects is reflected in the concept* while the connections are empirical, accidental, and concrete in the complex. (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 137; italics are mine)

As can be seen, Vygotsky relates complexes with empirical thinking that focus on generalizations based on superficial features, and concepts with theoretical thinking that emphasizes the basic uniform essential relations among things. Later in this chapter, I will discuss both empirical and theoretical forms of thinking in more detail.

Vygotsky (1987) conceived concepts functionally: they should be a tool to solve a problem (p. 164). This idea is also presented in Davydov (1988b, p. 45) since he recommends that instruction should make clear to students the influence of the concept.
Davydov also drew on Vygotsky regarding the issue of the concepts of a discipline: “In each subject, there are essential, constituting concepts” (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 207). Davydov emphasizes the representation of the concept through essential relations by means of a germ-cell model⁹.

In chapter 6 of *Thinking and Speech*, the concept of ZPD is discussed mainly in terms of how instruction of scientific concepts can promote further development of already-existing everyday concepts. This learning-leading-to-development principle is reflected in Davydov’s (1988d) proposal that theoretical thinking should be introduced from the elementary level on. In other words, once schools focus on abilities children do not yet have, such as learning scientific concepts by means of theoretical thinking, the learning provided will lead to greater development. In fact, Davydov (1988a) grounds his work on Hegel’s proposal of learning, which is based on dialectics (p. 176). Theoretical thinking originates from using the dialectical method of investigation called movement from the abstract to the concrete. Dialectics, or dialectical logic, was the domain of several philosophers, including Socrates, Plato, Kant, and Hegel (Hall, 1967). It is particularly relevant to Marx’s philosophy which provided the foundation for Vygotsky’s monistic psychology. Dialectical logic can be succinctly defined as: “thinking which attempts to grasp things in their interrelationships and in the totality to which they belong, in the process of change, of being born and of dying, in their conflicts and contradictions” (Acton, 1967, p. 392).

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⁹ A germ-cell model is a type of model that represents the abstract (the essential relations of a concept, a discipline). It will be further explored in chapter 4 of this dissertation.
Dialectics can best be understood through its opposition to empiricism and Cartesianism. Through the empiricist lens, the concrete is “particular, sensually perceived things or their perceptual images” (Ilyenkov, 1982, pp. 14-15), and the abstract is “the general form of things, their identically repeated qualities and law-like relations, expressed in terms, names, and numbers “ (Ilyenkov, 1982, p. 15). For empiricism, what matters is to find recurrent observable features among objects that can be classified into categories. In contrast, dialectics does not rely on superficial observable features to understand reality. Rather it recognizes that despite these superficial similarities or differences, there are essential laws, relations that are present in the phenomenon or object under analysis (Bakhurst, 1991). This essential law is referred to as the abstract and the concrete in turn is as an instantiation of this relation. Hence, dialectics and Cartesianism define the abstract and the concrete distinctively. Cartesianism opposes the similarity and the difference, converting them into dualisms (for example, mind versus body, internal versus external). Dialectics combines both the similarity and the difference, recognizes their coexistence in the object, and accepts and deals with the conflict originated by this coexistence and in fact brings them together into a necessary unified relationship. The conceptualization of the terms concrete and abstract is quite different in empirical and dialectical logic, respectively. This will become relevant in chapter 4 where I discuss the central principle of “movement from the abstract to the concrete” (MAC).

Hegel thought that school learning should be based on theoretical thought that is achieved by the movement from the abstract to the concrete and not the other way
around. Ilyenkov, who followed Hegel and extensively analyzed the use of this method in Marx’s *Das Capital*, proposed that students should “repeat in adequate forms the discoveries of people of previous generations”\(^\text{10}\) (mentioned by Davydov, 1988a, p. 178). To achieve this, teachers should orient students towards the principles of the phenomena under study, which compose the theoretical abstraction/ generalization of the particular subject (the abstract). Thus, by application, when schoolchildren begin to make use of the primary abstraction and the primary generalization as a way of deducing and unifying other abstractions, they turn the primary mental formation into a concept that registers the ‘kernel’ of the academic subject. This ‘kernel’ subsequently serves the schoolchildren as a general principle whereby they can orient themselves in the entire multiplicity of factual curricular material, which they are to assimilate in conceptual form via an ascent from the abstract to the concrete. (Davydov, 1988b, pp.22-23)

As can be seen, instruction starts with teaching the abstract, which constitutes the orientation in this approach, rather than the other way round, as empiricist approaches to pedagogy suggest. However, the difference between empirical and theoretical approaches does not simply lie in the former being inductive and the latter, deductive. This issue will be discussed later in the chapter where common misunderstandings of theoretical thinking will be addressed.

\(^{10}\) This does not mean that Davydov’s approach aims just mere transmission of knowledge. By engaging students in quasi-investigation, the approach is nourishing in the learners an active relation with knowledge production as well.
In order to identify the abstract, the following should be observed: “the basis of generalization lies not in a formal comparison of the external traits of objects, but in a specific concrete activity, revealing and reproducing a definite function of things within some real system” (Davydov, 1988a, p.186). Afterwards, the teacher should design ways to lead students to identify this abstraction by means of learning tasks and problem situations that will make the students move from the abstract to the concrete, that is, to examples where the abstract is manifested. The concepts, rules, methods uncovered should be the result of theoretical rather than of empirical generalization.

They [systems of concepts, rules and methods] arise as the result of theoretical generalization, which reveals the substance and regularities of the learning object on the basis of an intensive analysis of mutual relations and transitions.

(Lompscher, 1984, p. 331)

For example the abstract component of the ESL freshman composition course to be described in chapter 4 relies on the systemic functional view of language. This abstract component is entitled the abstract communicative principle (ACP) and represents the basic principle of language function (LANGUAGE ↔ CONTEXT). Context is defined in terms of the register variables of field, tenor and mode (to be explained in chapter 4) and of culture. The four versions of the abstract component of the course to be discussed

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11 However, how the instructor will derive the abstract to guide his/her teaching becomes an object of concern. Ilyenkov does not provide a clear method to derive the abstract of a discipline (Bakhurst, 1991). Instead, he suggests a “careful analysis of the specific object of investigation” (Bakhurst, 1991, p. 160). Davydov’s followers (Lompscher, Hedegaard) recommend a collaborative work among specialists in the discipline, psychologists and philosophers.

12 The symbol (↔) indicates tension, conflict, dialectical relationship in the interaction between language and context.
in chapter 4 consist of a modified version of the SFL model that appears in Eggins (1994).

The learner should develop an active stance towards knowledge, which means he/she should be able to predict and transform the learning object (Lompscher, 1984, p. 331). Moreover, this approach also values cooperative learning.

The systematic formation of learning actions requires and at the same time makes possible the organization and systematic formation of co-operative forms of learning activity as a principal presupposition of the acquisition of new psychic qualities and as an important condition of high effectiveness. (Lompscher, 1984, p. 331)

As a result of these learning actions, students should develop a model that illustrates the relationships among the objects and concepts. This is followed by a phase of concretization in which “the concrete is analyzed under the aspect of and with the help of the abstract. The abstract is enriched and founded by the concrete” (Lompscher, 1984, p. 331).

Following these steps, the genesis of the knowledge is revealed to students and the role of the content to be learned in the leading activity is made clear. Learners should be able to apply this abstraction “as a unity of concept and method, as a means for the cognitive reproduction of the concrete, as a means for the more and more independent analysis and explanation of a multitude of concrete phenomena” (Lompscher, 1984, p. 334). The movement from the abstract to the concrete is the realization of a dialectical approach to instruction. From this perspective, both theoretical and empirical modes of
thinking have their importance. But, in scientific research and instruction, theoretical thinking should play a major role (Davydov, 1988a; Lompscher, 1984).

For Davydov, educational activity is not about making students become scientists and walking them through a rediscovery of the findings (Davydov & Markova, 1984). Rather, it is a “quasi-investigation in which pupils reproduce real investigatory and search acts in only a compressed form” (Davydov & Markova, 1984, p. 67). This quasi-investigation is the way to provide students with the genesis of the knowledge being taught and to make them active learners. The components of learning (educational) activity are tasks and educational (learning) actions, which include acts of control and evaluation (Davydov & Markova, 1983, p. 62; Davydov, 1988b). Tasks are realizations of the educational acts. They constitute the unit of analysis of the educational activity (Davydov & Markova, 1983, p. 61) and aim to move the learner from the abstract to the concrete and by this means, to develop theoretical thinking. The teachers should control and evaluate educational activity and simultaneously provide students with conditions for acquiring these acts to control their own learning (p. 62). The educational actions are the following: (a) problem situation, (b) modeling, (c) modifying the model, (d) applying the model to solve tasks, (e) monitoring the actions, and (f) evaluating the actions. Actions e) and f) are acts of control and evaluation.

Some features of Davydov’s approach such as interactive, cooperative and explorative (experiential) learning and the design of problem situation questions resemble Wells (1994, 1995)’s pedagogical approach entitled dialogic inquiry. However, these two

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13 The notion of task will be further elaborated in chapter 4.
approaches are distinct since the latter is not based on dialectics and does not aim to develop theoretical thinking in learners. Karpov (2003) strongly criticizes discovery advocates (Wells included) for promoting empirical rather than theoretical learning. This view of education encourages scientific concepts instruction by means of experiential/discovery learning, that is, learners engage in research to discover, to construct the knowledge. Although MAC promotes this type of learning by means of ‘quasi-investigation’, this process, differently from discovery advocates, is based on a dialectical view of the world, which intends to promote theoretical thinking. Hence, the discovery process MAC promotes to learners does not lead to empirical thinking and misconceptions because it is ruled by the abstract and the dialectical logic.

In sum, an activity theoretic approach to instruction is explicit, linked to the leading activities (see Markova, 1979; Davydov, 1988 a, b, c), focused on conscious awareness of what and why one is doing what one is doing (see Markova, 1979), and aims at developing autonomy and creativity in students. In the next section, the definitions of theoretical and empirical thinking will be discussed.

3.4.1 Theoretical thinking and empirical thinking

Theoretical thinking searches for relations among things in a system as well as for the role and genesis of these relations (Davydov, 1984, pp. 20-21). Thus, this type of thinking goes beyond sensory perception as it seeks internal relations and interconnections. As a result, a “developed theory by the deduction and explanation of the specific manifestation of the system relying on its universal basis” is created
(Davydov, 1984, p. 21). The reality perceived by empirical thinking is manifested in the superficial observable features present in the concrete, whereas the reality grasped by theoretical thinking lies in the abstract (basic relationship) that composes the transformation, the development of things in its concrete manifestation. Theoretical thinking aims to capture the dialectics (transformation, interconnection, unity of opposites) constitutive of the world. To Davydov (1984, p. 24), theoretical thinking overcomes the “absolutization of the role of comparison in thinking” and sensualism.

According to Davydov (1984), empirical thinking along with empiricism can be misleading. The search for some common traits among the objects or phenomena under observation, in order to group them and to develop a taxonomy can end up grouping unrelated things, although they may share perceptual, superficial features. This results in perceptual empirical concepts based on sensory observations rather than abstract and coherent concepts. Because the manifestation of the universal in the particular can be at odds with the universal (p. 14), empiricism is not the most appropriate way to produce scientific knowledge. Specific traits of an individual manifestation of the universal do not coincide with the traits of the universal relation and are often in contradiction with them (p. 4). Thus, when empirical thinking prevails in the sciences and pedagogy it cannot provide individuals with the same comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under study as can theoretical thinking.

Theoretical thinking does not deny the empirical or inductive (Lompscher, 1984 p. 297), rather it is a way to think dialectically about the empirical and the theoretical, the concrete and the abstract, the particular and the general. Empirical thinking is ruled by
formal logic, whereas theoretical thinking is governed by dialectical logic. In dialectical logic, the concrete is not “an isolated single thing” (p. 294); rather, it is “a unity of singular, particular, and general characteristics, as a unity of manifold aspects, features, relations, etc., as a system” (Lompscher, 1984, p. 294). Lompscher also points out that theoretical thinking should not dominate empirical thinking. Instead “what must be overcome is an absolutization of empirical thinking as the only kind of thinking and of formal logic as the only logic” (p. 296).

Lompscher (1984) calls attention to some frequent misunderstandings concerning theoretical thinking. First, it is not a synonym for deduction (p. 333). In dialectical logic, both deduction and induction coexist:

Theoretical thinking in the sense of dialectic logic is not identical to abstract thinking and the formation of theoretical thinking begins, of course, on an empirical level. (p. 333)

Second, theoretical thinking does not negate the empirical level. As was stated before, the concrete, the abstract, the particular, and the general constitute a unity of opposites, which are in constant interconnection and change (p. 334).

Ascending does not mean the negation of the empirical level of knowledge and activity. On the contrary, theoretical—that is dialectic thinking—again and again turns to the empirical level in order to test, to enrich and to develop knowledge about substance and regularities. (p. 334)

Third, the method of ascending from abstract to concrete is not “solving application tasks or . . . finding different examples for a general rule “(p. 334). Concepts, systems,
knowledge do not come out of the blue. Rather, they have a history, a reason to exist realized in their role in the activity of which the concept is part. That is why I believe a fundamental question to be asked using this perspective is: What is the role of the concept under study? Why was it created? What need is it designed to fulfill?

To conclude, if the concept reflects the dialectical relationship between the concrete and the abstract, it should allow movement from the general to the concrete and vice-versa (Davydov, 1984, p. 14). For Davydov the concept is a tool for cognition, for thinking, for analysis. For this reason, he aimed to develop theoretical thinking in learners through an approach that focused on essential/basic relationships (the abstract) that involved specific concepts of a discipline.

Since Galperin and Davydov shared the same basic theoretical framework (Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory and Leontiev’s activity theory), and the former inspired the latter in his first works, it becomes relevant to compare the work of both authors. In so doing, we will be able to better understand Davydov’s approach to pedagogy.

3.5 A comparison between Galperin and Davydov

Despite the fact that Galperin also privileged the instruction of the general over the particular; according to Davydov (1988a), “what remains unexplained is the specificity of those concrete activities which expose in the material the universal genetic ground of a certain system of things” (p. 182). Hence, Davydov went beyond Galperin in designing a way to teach the essentials of a discipline. Davydov improved on Galperin’s
approach by adding the element of abstraction and a method to teach it based on dialectical logic.

Mastery here will occur not through orientation ‘according to laws of association [third type of orientation]¹⁴ of the basic units . . . but through an ascent from the abstract to the concrete. (Davydov, 1988a, pp. 183-184)

. . . . it seems to us that an actual carrying out of the third type of orientation, as described by Galperin, requires the forming in the students, both abstraction and generalizations of a contentful character, along with their mastery of theoretical concept. (p. 184)

Galperin seemed to be concerned about internalization more than Davydov, as can be seen in the stages of overt speech, covert speech, and mental stage in his theory of stage-by-stage formation of mental actions and concepts. Davydov had more ambitious goals for education than Galperin since he wanted to design instruction that affected the development not only of the intellect but also of the personality, that is, education should affect the person as a whole (personality and motivation)¹⁵. Although both Davydov and Galperin aimed at providing autonomy in learning, they approached it differently. The former wished to achieve it by the development of theoretical thinking in learners, while the latter aimed to make students internalize orientation schema. In both approaches

¹⁴ Galperin studied three types of orientation, and in his opinion, the third one was the most efficient. The third type of orientation is general, complete, and constructed under the guidance of the teacher. It is general because it is based on the essential principles of the discipline that allows the student to transfer the knowledge to other contexts. It is complete in the sense that it contains all the necessary instructions for the learner to do the task. Moreover, as it is constructed by the learner under the teacher’s guidance, it is characterized as guided-constructed (Haenen, 1996; Talyzina, 1981)

¹⁵ Davydov & Markova (1983) argues that “education cannot be reduced to the transmission of knowledge and the cultivation of acts and operations; rather, it involves mainly the formation of the pupil’s personality and the development of those qualities that determine his behavior (values, motives, goals, etc.)” (p.71) and I would add emotions.
development can occur but through different routes and leading to distinct cognitive outcomes since the approaches engage them in different learning activities.

Although Haenen (1996) mentions that models for both authors have the same goal: to be a cognitive tool for concept formation (p. 191), their conceptualization of these models was quite different. For Galperin, models constitute procedures to perform an action faultlessly, an algorithm (Haenen, 1996, p. 190), while for Davydov, models encompass the essence of the discipline, the abstract which will guide both instruction and learning. In the former, the model is inflexible, procedural and performance-focused; in the latter, the model is flexible, a germ-cell model and a tool to develop theoretical thinking. Although Davydov’s approach allows students to make mistakes in their models because of its flexibility, the approach allows them to experience learning more actively by conceding more discoveries than the Galperinian pedagogy.

Davydov (1988b) emphasizes that students should search for the orientation in instruction, under the teacher’s guidance, rather than receive a ready-made orientation schema:

When working on those projects, children must conduct an independent search for the way to resolve a task and must examine its diverse possible variants. (pp. 40-41)

. . . school children concretize the general mode they have previously come upon . . . . (p. 32)

. . . when performing those actions, school children can disclose the conditions under which the concept they are assimilating originated . . . . (p. 33)
The orientation to be developed in learners is theoretical thinking, which will allow them to solve problems and to explain phenomena. Students engaged in activity (learning activity) will discover the relation among concepts, will move from abstract to concrete and vice versa, assisted by the teacher. Although the orientation is not straightforward as in Galperin’s approach, students are oriented in the process by a germ-cell model that guides the teaching activity. In fact, a straightforward orientation as proposed by Galperin would run counter to the dialectical approach to instruction because it is a way to transmit knowledge in its finished form. This discovery process allows the students to understand the genesis of the knowledge, and to know why he/she is doing what he/she is doing. Theoretical thinking aims to lead the students to learn how to orient themselves, to discover what they know, what they do not know, and to go to the world to find resources to learn what he/she does not.

Davydov conceives of his pedagogical research project as linked to educational reforms (Davydov, 1988b,d). This goal seems less evident in Galperin. But like Galperin Davydov values controlling/evaluative actions in his pedagogy. Furthermore, both authors neglect how students make sense of their pedagogies. This dissertation goes in this direction, as it intends to investigate how learners made sense of the genre-based course based on Davydov’s approach. The meaning-making process relates directly with motivation (the formation of motives), which Davydov considers as a fundamental aspect of education that his approach should address. Learners’ making sense of the approach sparks motives for their own activity (which can be learning or not) which will affect the
motivation towards the approach, and consequently its influence in the students’
development, theoretical thinking included. In chapter 9 I will address this issue further.

The comparison of Davydov and Galperin does not aim to categorize the
approaches into efficient or inefficient. Both approaches share the same conceptions of
mind, cognition, and the broad educational goal of promoting development in ZPD.
However, it is important to realize that different approaches will engage students in
different activities that will potentially develop them in a certain direction rather than in
another. Also, a choice for either one or the other depends on the educational context, on
the concept to be taught, and on the immediate goals desired.

On the one hand, the systematic formation of mental actions and concepts, as
advocated by Galperin, is well suited to contexts in which there is an urgent need for
rapid transformation of students’ actions. The concept to be taught should be a
straightforward/consensual one. This will guarantee that the orientation schema is not
controversial. For example, concepts such as aspect, syntactic patterns of languages, or
thematic progression can be taught using a straightforward algorithmic procedure to
achieve error-free performance and development since the concept should provide
psychological growth to the individual.

On the other hand, if the context permits more long-term changes, and educators
wish to develop theoretical thinking in learners and are committed to a more
transformative character of education, a Davydovian approach might be more suitable.
The concept under focus should be allowed to be seen in a more holistic perspective and
in relation to other concepts of the discipline. For example, the concept chosen to be
taught in the course under consideration in this dissertation—a systemic functional view of genre—generated a germ-cell model that can differ from models based on the new rhetoric view of genre. The educator should also keep in mind that Galperin and Davydov conceive of the notion of activity differently. To Galperin, the activity that matters is a personalized/orienting activity with a particular focus on actions that will change a person’s mental functioning. To Davydov, in order to be depicted as such, activity should be transformative. Thus, activity to Davydov is much more committed to social change and a view of ZPD as learning-leading-to-social-development than Galperin.

With all of this in mind, and with my interest in the learner’s meaning-making process, and in promoting theoretical thinking as the basis for development both at the individual and social levels—I have opted to use Davydov’s movement from the abstract to the concrete rather than Galperin’s systematic formation of actions and concepts.

3.6 Criticisms of Davydov’s approach

Davydov (1988c, p. 32) reports several experiments that his group conducted and the beneficial results it provided to students’ thinking, memory, and imagination. For example, children learning by this approach, developed theoretical thinking (reflection, analysis and planning) earlier than students from the regular curriculum implemented in Russian schools (p. 32). Yet, as Grigorenko (2000) points out, Davydov and his colleagues do not provide “convincing quantitative empirical data to support its claims” (p. 45); it has no independent evaluations of the education being provided by this
approach, and it lacks careful controlled studies. Furthermore, more publications in refereed journals are needed.

Regarding the lack of quantitative evidence, Grigorenko (2000) misses a very relevant point about sociocultural theory and activity theory principles, which are followed by Davydov. In an insightful reading of Vygotsky’s ideas, Newman and Holzman (1993) remark that Vygotsky’s methodology for psychology is the tool and the result rather than the tool for the result, which is typical of the rationalist paradigm of science. In the latter, explanations of phenomena are based on causality, and tools are methods, albeit external to the phenomena studied, and employed to explain them. This methodology is a consequence of the modern scientific goal of achieving total control of the objects under study (Lektorsky, 1999). In such an approach it is necessary to dismantle a certain phenomenon into its component parts and study these in isolation. In this way, the object under study is disconnected from the activity in which it was embedded (Lektorsky, 1999) and with it modern science lost a holistic perspective of approaching things and the notion of activity of social individuals.

What Vygotsky, based on Marx, advocates is exactly the opposite: a tool and result methodology. It implies a revolutionary activity in which tools cannot be separated or disengaged from the results. Human phenomena are not fixed, stable behaviors but a constantly moving and changing activity. In a Marxist view of science, the tools employed and the results obtained are dialectically related, i.e., they influence one another. It is nonsense to apply an external tool to explain a phenomenon if this tool is not part of the activity in which the phenomenon itself is involved.
An example of the tool for result approach to research is seen in the statistical tests that are used as a real external method detached from the phenomena under study. Hence, the rationalist, Cartesian, experimental epistemology implies causality, generalizations, and a utopian control of the world, while the Marxist-Vygotskyan methodology argues for replacing these with interpretation, contingent explanations, and above all, the notion that there is no truth but truths. This is because humans engage in different activities and these activities change constantly. Grigorenko, in her criticism of Davydov’s research, privileges quantitative analysis over this contingent interpretative approach, which is more compatible with Vygotsky’s activity theory principles.

Moreover, Hedegaard and colleagues have been employing this interpretative approach to report their research results (see, for example, Hedegaard, 2002; Hedegaard et al., 2001).

Engeström (1996) criticizes Davydov’s approach for solely focusing on changes at the level of content and its transmission without modifying social relations pertaining to the school setting (p. 161). Engeström argues for a social and critical stance in pedagogies. In order to achieve this goal, he suggests that a viable pedagogy should encompass the following: a critical stance towards the content to be taught, a Davydovian pedagogy to learn the content, and Lave and Wenger’s (1991) situated learning approach, which would situate the learning practice in practical application. Although his integration of the three pedagogical approaches is appealing, it is important to point out that development of theoretical thinking can result in critical thinking. For example, in the genre-based course to be described in chapter 4, there were moments when topics such as the social status of genres, relations of power between discourse communities and
writers, the relation of genre with social economical contexts, and issues regarding the right of being creative in a genre or not, were frequently addressed. In my opinion, these discussions open doors to a more critical stance towards genre, writing, and society, illustrating that Davydov’s approach is compatible with a critical perspective of education.

3.7 Applications of Davydov’s approach

The research conducted by Davydov and others adopting the Vygotskian principle of genetic experiment was called a formative experiment (Davydov, 1988b, p. 52). Through this methodology, the effect of the approach of moving from the abstract to the concrete on children’s cognition was investigated, showing how the social environment constitutes the mental functions of human beings. The implementation of this approach to education began in the 1950s (Davydov & Markova, 1983). Initially, there was an investigation of the current situation in Soviet public schools, which showed that elementary children had more cognitive potential than was being promoted by current pedagogies. Moreover, experimental syllabi on math and language were implemented in some schools. In the 1960s, experimental schools were established and an investigation of how the type of learning being offered affected students’ mental development was conducted. In the 1970s, how Davydov’s approach affected students’ personality, in other words, moral development (motivation, plan of action, voluntarism, and reflection) was studied (p. 56). Hence, here we find another characteristic of Davydov’s approach:
education should change the person as a whole, not only transmit knowledge in a certain way.

An example of this instruction applied to math can be found in Davydov (1988b). In order to teach the concept of numbers to first graders, the concept of quantity was introduced by means of comparisons (equal to, greater than, less than) of quantities. Then ways to represent these comparisons were taught: \( c + a = b, a = b - c \) (p. 34). Next, by putting the students in a situation in which these representations of quantity are not efficient anymore, in order to represent the relationships among quantities, the teacher leads the students to perceive the need for the concept of number. For example, how is it possible to express the equality or inequality of segments? Thus, the concept of number works as a form of mediation to compare measures. Along with numbers, the concept of multiplicity is introduced as the students verify how many times a certain quantity fits in what is being measured \( (A/c = 4, B/c = 5, \text{then } 4 < 5) \) (p. 36). This is followed by a modification of the multiplicity concept: a change in \( c \) with the same quantity in \( A \) alters the number.

As we can see from this example the teacher provides the students with tasks that lead them to the need for another concept—number—to mediate the relationships among quantities. In this case, the abstract being taught is the concept of quantity, followed by the concrete concept of number, which will lead to the concrete concept of multiplicity. Hence, the concept under focus—number—is taught as a necessary tool, created to facilitate the measuring of things and the relationship among these measures.
Another groundbreaking study based on Davydov’s approach is Markova’s (1979) implementation of a MAC curriculum for teaching Russian L1 in the schools of Moscow. In her book, she extensively describes the curriculum which followed the principles of the dialectical pedagogical method. The experimental teaching, whose curriculum focused on the theory of utterance, lasted 10 years (from 1962 to 1972) and was applied from the 4th to the 8th grades. The basic relation of the discipline (the abstract) in this curriculum was the concept of utterance and its constitutive relations: form—function and form—meaning. Several concrete examples of language use were utilized to reveal how these elements relate to one another and constitute the utterance. The concept was also investigated as a tool for communication.

Aidarova (1981) employed Davydov’s approach to teach Russian morphology and spelling to seven-year-old children. The basic relation taught was form—meaning at the word level, and linked to the broader activity of communication (p. 106). Using tests designed to detect children’s level of theoretical thinking and orientation, she reported significant improvement in their performance in subsequent grade levels. The author extensively explored the impact of models on the development of theoretical thinking. Nevertheless, similar to Markova (1979) she did not investigate the students’ meaning-making activity. Neither did she study the role of discourse in the experimental syllabus implementation.

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16 Markova (1979) defines utterance as “expository statement” (p. 66) that can be expressed in a group of words, a sentence, or a whole text (p. 67).
17 However, she provided extensive information about how instructors could orient students.
Lompscher (1984) also conducted a 30-hour study with fourth graders to teach the natural sciences. The abstract concept presented to students was described as follows:

... there are permanent changes in nature; these processes are evoked by certain conditions and in their turn, they evoke certain effects in the sense of interaction, not only simple causal relations; a necessary condition for all processes of nature is the existence of energy; there are different forms of energy, which are based on different carriers and can be transferred and changed. (pp. 337-338)

As a continuation of this course, the fifth graders in the subject of biology are taught the basic relations below:

... the permanent contact and exchange (of matter, energy, and information) between living beings and the environment is the necessary condition for the building up and upholding of the body and for procreation; the presupposition of this exchange is the adaptation of living beings to their environment; modifications of the environment have, in the course of very long timespaces, effected the adaptation to modified circumstances and thus the development of living beings. (pp. 345)

Lompscher (1984, 1999a) and Giest and Lompscher (2003) report significant improvements in the classes participating in their experimental project compared with control groups in terms of performance in tasks (planning, and proving of an experiment, describing and observation), development of theoretical thinking, and motivation 18 19.

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18 As these studies are mainly published in German, a language that this investigator does not know, it was not possible to provide a more extended critique of them.
However, there are still topics to be investigated in this area, such as motivation and its relationship to cognition and emotion, social conditions surrounding the implementation of the approach of moving from the abstract to the concrete, “inter-individual differences” (Lompscher, 1999a, p. 152)\(^{20}\), and learning strategies (Lompscher, 1999a, b). Towards this direction, he reports a study that investigated individuals’ learning strategies both in task performance and in their level of reflection on it by means of questionnaires (Lompscher, 1999a).

Hedegaard’s research (Engstrom & Hedegaard, 1986; Hedegaard, 1987, 1989, 1990, 1999, 2002; Hedegaard, Chaiklin, & Pedraza, 2001; Hedegaard & Sigersted, 1992) represents the most accessible\(^{21}\) and comprehensive work on MAC to date. In a series of research projects, the most important of which was the three-year project to teach biology, history, and geography in a combined form from the third to the fifth grade in Denmark, she investigated a wide range of topics, including goal formation, motive formation, theoretical thinking development, use of models to solve tasks, methodological aspects of data collection, along with personality development, and cultural identity. The focus of the course of study was on the evolution of the species, the origin of man, and historical changes in society (see Hedegaard, 1990, pp. 356-357, and Hedegaard, 1999, p. 260, for some of the abstract relations used in her course).

Hedegaard conducted analyses of case studies of students’ personality development in

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\(^{19}\) Lompscher’s studies somehow address Grigorenko(2000)’s critique since he employs a more traditional methodology to investigate development: use of pre and posttests an of control and experimental groups.

\(^{20}\) I understand inter-individual differences as being the differences related to how learners position themselves towards group work.

\(^{21}\) She publishes considerably in English.
their various aspects (motivation, theoretical thinking development, for example) rather than using comparisons with control groups.

Despite of the comprehensiveness of her research, some topics were not investigated. Hedegaard does not address discourse as part of the orientation to the students and constitution of the experimental teaching that she extensively depicts. In addition, the meaning-making process of the students in this approach is not investigated. It is understandable why this is the case. As Davydov and colleagues applied the pedagogical approach to elementary children, the innovative method counterbalanced well the influence of traditional pedagogies. For example, Hedegaard’s teaching experiment had as learners young children who were exposed to traditional pedagogies for just three years. In contrast, my experimental teaching lasted 15 weeks compared to 12 years of traditional schooling of the students. Hence, how students made sense of this approach became relevant in my study.

3.8 Concluding remarks

This chapter detailed the second theoretical framework utilized for this project: MAC. This pedagogical approach is based on dialectical logic and on activity and sociocultural theoretic principles of cognitive development. The approach seeks to develop theoretical thinking in students by means of educational actions (problem situation, modeling, modifying the model, applying the model to solve tasks, monitoring the actions, evaluating the actions). In addition, the chapter characterized theoretical
thinking, which will be needed to analyze the development of this kind of thinking in chapters 6 and 7.

In chapter 4, I will describe the teaching I implemented in an ESL freshman composition course employing Davydov’s approach.
CHAPTER 4

THE MOVEMENT FROM THE ABSTRACT TO THE CONCRETE IN AN ESL FRESHMAN COMPOSITION COURSE

In this chapter, I will describe the course I designed and implemented to teach ESL freshman composition and detail the learning actions of the MAC approach. The course utilized as theoretical frameworks the SFL view of genre (described in chapter 2) and the SCT and AT principles of the MAC approach (discussed in chapter 3). The course comprised three units organized according to three genres: unit 1 – invitation by means of an announcement\(^1\), unit 2 – cover letters, unit 3 – argumentative texts. These genres represented the concrete manifestation of the abstract communicative principle (LANGUAGE ↔ CONTEXT) (ACP). Students practiced writing through multiple drafts of the major writing assignments, conferences with the instructor and several types of writing tasks described later in the chapter. As the course sought to develop not only writing but also theoretical thinking development, MAC’s seven learning actions were carried out in the class: a) problem situation, b) modeling, c) modifying the model, d) applying the model to solve tasks, e) monitoring the actions, and f) evaluating them, g) social interaction. Following the explanation of these actions I will describe the course syllabus including its tasks and assignments and explain how the abstract and the concrete elements of the course are enacted. The syllabus is included in Appendix A. Sample logs for three lessons are included in Appendix B. The logs describe what

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\(^1\) I opted to refer to this genre as invitations by means of an announcement instead of as simply announcements to avoid the misunderstanding that announcement is a genre rather than a medium to convey the message. Announcements can be not only about invitations but about other events as well such as contests, awards, etc. Throughout the dissertation, both terms (announcements or invitations by means of an announcement) will be used interchangeably but having in mind that announcement per se is a medium rather than a genre.
transpired in each class including actions and operations. In addition, I will consider how the learners themselves were expected to move from the abstract to the concrete and vice-versa through the seven learning actions implemented.

4.1 The movement from the abstract to the concrete in the ESL freshman composition course

Davydov believed that in order to develop theoretical thinking and knowledge, the approach called MAC should be employed. The basic principle of this dialectical approach to pedagogy is to engage students in problem-solving situations that represent an abridged form of the discovery process of the academic discipline. In other words, no ready-made knowledge is provided; rather, knowledge is acquired through experiential learning. As activity is transformative (Davydov, 1999 b and c) learning activity should also target the transformation of the individual at the cognitive-social level.²

Learning activity has two components: learning (educational) actions and tasks. The learning actions constitute phases of the MAC approach. They encompass acts of control and evaluation, which stimulate students to reflect on why they are doing what they are doing (Lompscher, 1999a). These acts are implemented in the literature by means of self-appraisal/control questions (Markova, 1979), the scientific work board (Aidarova, 1982; Engstrom & Hedegaard, 1986; Hedegaard, 1990, 1995, 1999, 2002; Hedegaard et al., 2001; Hedegaard and Sigersted, 1992) and reflection and verbalization (Lompscher, 1999a). In sum, MAC has seven learning actions: a) problem situation, b) modeling, c) modifying the model, d) applying the model to solve tasks, e) monitoring

² I preferred to use the symbol (-) instead of the connector ‘and’ to avoid giving the false idea that cognition and society are in opposition.
the actions, f) evaluating them, and g) social interaction. Tasks are exercises aimed at realizing the learning actions through problem situations (Davydov 1988c, p. 26). Tasks in MAC and in Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) differ regarding their definition and theoretical framework. Whereas tasks in the former are problem solving exercises, which aim to develop theoretical thinking in students, tasks in TBLT are an exercise “which requires learners to use language, with emphasis on meaning, to attain an objective” (Bygate, Skehan, & Swain, 2001, p.11). While MAC is grounded in dialectics and sociocultural and activity theories, TBLT relies on second language acquisition principles, on a pragmatic view of language (language as tool for a result) and on the dualism between form and meaning.

In the following section, I will discuss each of the learning actions and how they were implemented in the course.

4.1.1 Learning action 1: the problem situation question

The problem situation question happened at four points in the course. There was a problem situation for the course and one for each unit (see Table 4.2). These questions were either answered jointly by the instructor and the students in the class or only by the students as a homework assignment. The problem situation questions for the units targeted the problem situation for the course in specific concrete circumstances – an invitation by means of an announcement, cover letters, and argumentative texts.

The dialectical pedagogical approach states that students should be put in a situation in which they perceive the need for the content to be taught (Aidarova, 1982; Markova, 1979; Lompscher, 1999a and b) in the discipline under focus. Students should
be exposed to problems that they cannot solve without first receiving instruction in the content. For this reason, the problem situation questions linked to the students’ interests and experiences are elaborated on (Lompscher, 1999a). For example, Hedegaard (2002) designed the problem situation question of her experimental course based on preschoolers’ questions about life, religion, and nature.

The problem situation question and its variations were elaborated on based on systemic functional linguistics. As this linguistic theory informed the course syllabus, I opted to choose a question that would be relevant for the theory and the students. The questions focus on the basic relationship of the course (LANGUAGE ↔ CONTEXT) and how knowing this relationship can help students learn and use language effectively. Moreover, this problem situation question is extremely relevant for students’ linguistic needs. It was clear that the students knew that language is used differently according to the context; for example, that one speaks with a boss differently than with a friend. However, because of their low level of writing skills, they did not know precisely how to realize this linguistic difference. I will return to the matter of how the course attempted to improve student proficiency later in the chapter when I discuss the concepts of field, tenor, and mode.

Table 4.1 below shows the four problem situation questions asked in the course.

Table 4.1:

**Problem situation questions in the course**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of problem situation question for the course</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>We use language in a variety of situations and to achieve a wide range of goals. How do we use language to achieve these goals? How does the social situation affect our use of language?</em></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The questions changed as the course progressed. The problem-situation question for the course in general and for unit 1 in particular focused on how context affects language. The other two questions focused on the interrelation of context and language. The last two questions better represent the abstract concept underlying specific genres that were presented to the students.

### 4.1.2 Learning action 2: modeling

Davydov’s approach recommends that students visually represent the abstract relation of the subject matter; this can be done by engaging them in tasks that would reveal this abstract relationship to them (Davydov, 1988c). It constitutes a tool to develop theoretical thinking: “By registering in some referential form the primary general relationship that has been identified, schoolchildren thereby construct a substantive abstraction of the subject under study”(Davydov 1988c, p. 22). However, Davydov does

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>What is the context of the genre invitation by means of an announcement? How does the context affect the way we use language in this genre?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>What is the context of the genre job application letters? How are language and context related in this genre? How do we use language to apply for a job in the USA?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>What is the context of argumentative texts? How do this context and language interrelate in this genre?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
not consider all forms of representation to be a viable model. To him, only the models that represent abstract relations are legitimate and these he refers to as germ-cell models (Davydov, 1999c, p.129; Engstrom & Hedegaard, 1986). In addition to representing the abstract concept, the germ-cell also contains the conflict of the subject matter (as dialectics grounds this pedagogical approach, the conflict of the subject matter should also be represented in the model) (Engstrom & Hedegaard, 1986). The germ-cell model also guides teaching (Hedegaard, 1990, p. 354) by revealing how the abstract concept is manifested in concrete examples.

Models in SFL (Martin, 1993; Eggins, 1994) inspired the germ-cell models created for the course. Since this linguistic theory focuses on how language and context influence each another (Eggins, 1994), students were given a model depicting the abstract relationship LANGUAGE $\leftrightarrow$ CONTEXT (ACP). As SFL defines context in terms of field, tenor, and mode, I gave the students a second variation of the ACP where context is defined in terms of these three elements. Field refers to the content, the social action involved in the text. Tenor regards the relationship between the language users and mode refers to how language is employed in the text (cohesion and thematic progression – how sentences start) (Martin, 1993).

*Figure 4.1: the germ-cell model of the course – version 2*
The third version of the germ-cell model was inspired by Eggins’ (1994) definition of genre as context of culture.

*Figure 4.2: the germ-cell model of the course – version 3*
The fourth version was intended to show the interconnection among the context elements of field, tenor, and mode. I used the four germ-cell models to represent progressively and in a chronological sequence the ACP: from a simple basic relationship to an operationalization of the term context and its relationship to culture.

*Figure 4.3: the germ-cell model of the course – version 4*

The basic starting abstraction (LANGUAGE ↔ CONTEXT) also contains the conflict inherent in language use: the symbol ↔ can be explained in terms of the tension between creativity and constraint in language use. This was further explored in the genre cover letters, where the genre simultaneously promotes creativity from the individual and
requires compliance with the norms of the genre. Using this concrete example, instruction aimed to help the students comprehend the conflict (creativity ↔ norms, individual use of language ↔ social use of language) which constitutes language use and which is part of the abstract concept of the discipline. The symbol (↔) indicates tension, conflict, dialectical relationship in the interaction between language and context.

Another type of model is called procedural; it simply represents the steps necessary to carry out a task. An example of this type of model is the scientific work board designed by Aidarova (1982) and extensively utilized by Hedegaard and her colleagues (see figure 4.2). Aidarova designed this model to realize the fifth (monitoring) and sixth (evaluation) actions constitutive of the learning activity explained above. To her, modeling promotes the development of theoretical thinking and an ability to reflect and evaluate one’s own actions (Aidarova, p. 123). This procedural model also allows students to engage in quasi-investigation, one of the features of Davydov’s pedagogical approach, where students experience the stages of a scientific investigation (questioning, hypothesis making, data collection, verification of hypothesis) albeit in an abridged form.

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3 This same abstract relation is present in Saussure with the constructs of langue and parole.
The course relied extensively on the use of models to help students understand and concretize the relevant concepts of genre. The prefabricated germ-cell models and its variations (figures 4.1 to 4.3) were given to the students to save time. Moreover they were asked to draw their own models to show their understanding of the concept of genre in general (i.e., at the abstract level) as well as the three genres taught at the concrete level.

In chapter 6, I discuss the models the students drew about genre and analyze what they reveal about their level of theoretical thinking development.

4.1.3 Learning action 3: modifying models
The modification of the students’ models of genre took place at three different points throughout the course: at the beginning (week 3 of the course), in the middle (week 11) and at the end of the semester (week 13). The modeling of the three types of genre taught occurred in two phases: a hypothesis model before reading examples of each of the genres and another model after having read them. Also, the students were given tasks that attempted to promote theoretical thinking; and, consequently, to compel them to modify these models.

Although the students’ models for each type of genre taught were mainly procedural, they were encouraged to draw germ-cell models. This occurred during feedback on the students’ models in writing conferences and was also achieved by presenting to the class viable models produced by individual students. Students’ models were also compared to the models developed by the instructor. By stimulating students to draw models that represented abstract relations, the course sought to implement Davydov’s notion of “formative experiment”. Formative experiment is a psychological research method that allows the investigation of the formation of mental actions rather than approaching them in their finished form (Davydov, 1988c, p. 52). This is in line with Vygotsky’s (1978) genetic method.

4.1.4 Learning action 4: applying the models

As will be seen in chapter 6, the models representing the three types of genres tended to be procedural, that is, they displayed the steps to construct a text in this genre. For this reason, they were employed more extensively by the students to write their

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4 It showed abstract relations.
assignments. The germ-cell models were employed to solve tasks, i.e., to explain linguistic phenomena.

4.1.5 Learning actions 5 and 6: monitoring and evaluation

The monitoring/evaluation action combined occurred at several points in the course and in a wide range of ways: 1) the scientific work board, 2) writing reports\(^5\), 3) review sessions, 5) closing sessions, 6) self-appraisal/control questions\(^6\), 7) answers to the problem situation questions, and 8) the final evaluation of the course which was done in the students’ log\(^7\).

Initially, the instructor had planned to implement a review and closing activity during each class meeting. However, due to time constraints, she opted to limit these to the beginning and end of each unit. The time factor also affected the instructor’s decision to abandon the plan of asking students the self-appraisal and control questions. Also, the exercises with these questions usually had to be finished at home; and for this reason, I could not observe how the students answered self-appraisal questions or provide them with resources to help them accomplish this task. Table 4.3 displays the self-appraisal/control questions asked of the students.

Table 4.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of self-appraisal/control questions</th>
<th>Questions/Place in the syllabus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

\(^5\) Writing reports will be explained later in this chapter.
\(^6\) The review and closing sessions and the self-appraisal/control questions are in the lesson plan in the appendix.
\(^7\) The log and its role in the data collection will be discussed in chapter 5.
| Before task | - Can you do this exercise? Why do you think so? What are the steps you will take to do this task?  
- What are the steps you will take to do this exercise?  
- Is this task easy or difficult? Why? What steps you will take do it? |
| During task | - How is this schema helping you do the task? What else are you using to do this task? Are the models helping? Why (not)?  
- What are the things you are taking into consideration to do this task? Are you doing well? How do you know that? Do you have any difficulties? Are your models helping you explain why wedding invitations are different from announcements? |
| After task | - What were the steps you took to do this task? How did the chart help you do it? What criterion did you use to evaluate your work? Was the exercise difficult? Do you have any questions about it?  
- What were the steps you took to do this task? What did you use to do this task (schema, model, explanation, etc)? Explain how these resources helped you do the task. How do you evaluate your performance in this task?  
- What steps did you take to do the task? Why did the T give this task to you? |

Verbalization is also a way to achieve control and evaluation of actions. Hedegaard (1990) recommends that students explain the models they draw. Lompscher
(1999) argues that these explanations can enhance control and evaluative capacities in learners (p. 151). The verbalization or linguistic formulation (Hedegaard) of models requires that students evaluate their understanding of the models by preventing them from just jotting down key words on the paper. Having more reflection about what one is doing leads to greater control of one’s actions. In addition, the verbalization of the models reflects Galperin’s verbal phase of internalization (see chapter 2 for details). By explaining their models (to themselves or to others), learners can evaluate the relations represented in a germ-cell model and in this way foster their internalization.

In the course there was not sufficient time for the students to explain all of their models because other learning actions such as modeling, applying the models, teacher’s explanations, and pair work took more time than had been anticipated. However, they did have the opportunity to explain their models for the announcement genre to the class in the fifth week of the course and their cover letter models in the conferences for unit 2. Even though verbalization is fundamental for internalization to occur, its limited focus in the course represents a drawback and should be carefully considered in future implementations of this approach.

4.1.6 Learning action 7: social interaction

Lompscher (1999a) and Hedegaard (1995) point out that social interaction constitutes an important feature of the movement from the abstract to the concrete. As Vygotsky showed, an individual’s cognitive development lies in the social communication in which he/she engages. Hence, it is relevant to provide learners with opportunities for social interaction in order to develop their theoretical thinking. In this
course, these opportunities occurred frequently through pair work. The students either wrote together (joint reformulation of announcements and joint construction of a cover letter) or discussed questions about creativity and rules in cover letters or their models. They also answered a problem situation question and conducted linguistic analyses as homework working in pairs. In addition, the learners engaged in research to discover the appropriate context of some words.

4.2 The course syllabus

The course had specific research and pedagogical goals. The research aimed to investigate the students’ theoretical thinking development, writing improvement, and meaning-making process. The pedagogical goals not only anticipated the development of students’ theoretical thinking as well as improvement in their writing ability but it also cultivated their level of control and evaluation of their learning.

The syllabus aimed to develop a theoretical understanding of how language works, and thus sought to lead students to employ theoretical understanding effectively to achieve certain goals in writing activities. The content of the syllabus was organized around the SFL view of genre. Three genres were taught: announcements (unit 1), cover letters, or job application letters (unit 2), and argumentative texts (unit 3). Widely used manuals on cover letters (Besson, 1996) and argumentative texts (Hacker, 1999) were employed to inform the teaching. The syllabus was implemented in a course entitled ESL 004 – Academic Writing 1 – Section 002 in fall 2004 for 15 weeks in an American university. Classes met twice a week for one hour and 15 minutes per meeting. The students were about 18 years old.
The concept of genre was taught by relating it to the more general activity of communication. According to Elkonin (Elkonin, 1971, cited by Markova, 1979, p. 24), the leading activity of adolescents in the cultural development of the individual is “educational and vocational activity directed by vocational guidance and career choice.” Thus, writing instruction should be linked to this leading activity. The leading activity justifies the written genres chosen. Announcements were chosen firstly because they are a genre that college students often use to convey important messages regarding clubs, careers, disciplines, and extra-curricular activities both in written and oral form. Secondly, it is a simple genre, which allowed for the introduction of the concepts of field, tenor, mode, and generic moves more easily. The classification of genres into simple or complex relates to the complexity of their schematic structure and the role of language (mode) in actualizing them.

The cover letter was introduced because it is linked to the students’ vocational activity. Also, it has a medium level of complexity that would allow the instructor to more extensively teach them the concept of mode via cohesion and thematic progression (how sentences start). The genre argumentative text was chosen because it is one of the major text types students were expected to master in tertiary education. As it has a more complex schematic structure than the others, it was introduced as the final genre.

The course exposed the students to other genres as well. They read and wrote invitation letters, obituaries, wedding invitations, and letters to the editor; and read research abstracts. Although the students were not asked to analyze these genres and their schematic structure extensively, they nevertheless had the opportunity to observe how the ACP (LANGUAGE ↔ CONTEXT) was realized in these types of genre. Furthermore,
the exposition of different types of text allows learners to improve their language proficiency.

For this course, SFL was adopted because this approach provides a precise theoretical framework for understanding language in use, which it was hypothesized would better enable students to improve their writing proficiency. Students revealed a low level of language proficiency in reading and writing. For example, based on their writing placement tests and on-going assessment of students’ work it was possible to observe that they frequently used informal language where a more formal tone was appropriate; they showed problems in employing verb tenses, articles, connectors, and punctuation; they tended to write conversationally. In addition, they were usually unable to understand the main points of a text, or to construct and support a thesis statement. In sum, the students did not know how to use language efficiently to achieve certain purposes, especially in writing tasks. To overcome this problem, I designed a syllabus, which combined SFL with a pedagogical approach that promotes development through promoting students’ understanding of the connection between the ACP and its concrete instantiation in specific genres (announcements, cover letters and argumentative texts).

The course engaged students in tasks to help understand what genre, field, tenor, and mode are. For example, the students were exposed to tasks where they could see genre as a linguistic concept present in their lives and as a tool needed for effective communication. The course aimed to teach students genre as a theoretical concept rather than as a loose complex (Vygotsky, 1987). As discussed in chapter 3, Vygotsky’s explanation of both terms allows us to consider complexes as the product of empirical generalization and concepts as the product of theoretical generalization. However, the
three perspectives on genre studies depicted in chapter 2 (the EAP approach, the new rhetoric perspective, and the Australian school orientation) frequently approach their object of study empirically. Their focus is on extensive analysis based on superficial observable features of either texts or actions that enact the genres. Genre seen through this lens is an empirical construct: a complex rather than a theoretical concept.

In contrast, genre can also be conceived theoretically. In this case, it is seen as a concept that is composed of the essential relationship of LANGUAGE ↔ CONTEXT, which represents the tension between regularity and creativity as was shown earlier in this chapter. In addition, it contains the basic elements of field, tenor, mode, and culture that are recurrent in any instantiation of language use.

The new rhetoric perspective on genre opens the door to a theoretical approach to genre instruction. Freedman & Medway (1994) portrays genre as dynamic, as “stable for now” (p. 9), but with potential for freedom; it studies “complex relations between text and context” (p. 9) highlighting its reciprocal relationship. Another indication that genre in the new rhetoric perspective can be conceived theoretically is the association of this theoretical framework with activity theory (cf. Russell, 1997).

Despite this potential association of theoretical thinking with the new rhetoric perspective of genre, the course preferred the SFL understanding of genre because it argues that genres can be explicitly taught and learned and because SFL presents an elegant linguistic model of genre that could help improve the students’ language abilities. This linguistic model, as we have seen, has the potential of serving as a theoretical (rather than as an empirical) generalization.

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8 Although SFL also recognizes this interaction between context and text, the new rhetoric, for its focus on social action, has been used to investigate this interrelationship further.
Conceiving genre as an abstract concept rather than as an empirical complex does not mean that the learners were not given the opportunity to work with genre at the concrete empirical level; they did. However, it was made clear that this activity was subordinate to the ACP represented in the germ-cell models. For instance, while the notion of generic moves is based on empirical comparisons of texts classified under the same genre (e.g., announcements of events must always show time, place, and date) the students were required to go beyond this empirical analysis and relate their moves to a general principle of language functioning. In this case, these moves related to the concept of audience (tenor) and to a broader social context (field and mode).

In the next section, I will describe the tasks employed to nourish and evaluate this type of development among these learners.

4.2.1 Tasks that aimed to develop theoretical thinking

The course aimed to develop theoretical thinking in the students, but some tasks were designed specifically to develop this kind of thinking. They were either problem solving tasks which required students to explain linguistic phenomena by employing a germ-cell model (Bhatia’s exercise on cover letters\(^9\), obituaries exercise, wedding invitation task) or tasks that led students to redraw their models, whether germ-cell models or their models of the genres taught. The latter tasks aimed to lead students to represent abstract relations and concepts (field, tenor, mode, discourse communities) in their models.

4.2.2 Tasks that aimed to improve writing

\(^9\) This exercise was based on Bhatia (1993)’s study of South Asian cover letters.
The genre-based course offered the learners several opportunities to practice their writing. Basically there were three types of writing tasks: short answers to questions, long writing assignments (one page or more), including the major assignment of each unit and the writing report, and transformed practice (Kern, 2000). Transformed practice relates to tasks that demand students to rewrite a certain piece following new parameters. These parameters can be to write to a different audience or with a different goal, for instance.

The students also engaged in a review exercise given during the 11th week of classes where they had to correct their classmates’ letters for sentence structure and excessive use of the first-person pronoun. This exercise was useful and well received by the learners. Unfortunately due to time constraints, the instructor could not give it more often in the course.

4.2.3 Reading tasks

The reading opportunities consisted mainly of students reading samples of the genre under study as well as texts that explained the properties of these genres (Cover letter: basics10 and excerpts from a commonly-used book on freshman composition that included a discussion of argumentative texts11). The course employed the readings to promote discussions in the classroom, to teach the generic moves of the genre, and to carry out linguistic analysis, that is, to analyze the field, the tenor, and the mode of the text. As was said before, students also had some exposure without engaging in detailed analyses of the following genres: obituaries, wedding invitations, invitation letters, research abstracts, and letters to the editor.

4.2.4 The linguistic analysis tasks

These tasks aimed at the following: (a) to display to the students the ACP (LANGUAGE ↔ CONTEXT) through concrete examples, (b) to help the students understand the concepts of field, tenor, mode, and generic moves, (c) as a consequence of a and b to improve students’ command of the English language. All three genres were introduced and worked with using the linguistic analysis presented in Table 4.4. This was later modified (cf. Table 4.5) to lead students to modify their own models by taking account of the concepts presented in the table. Slight variations were required depending on the genre under study (cf. the lesson plans)\(^\text{12}\).

Table 4.3

*Linguistic analysis chart (version 1)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Field (content)</td>
<td>1) What is the content of ….</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) What is its goal?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3) What are the parts of…? (generic moves). In other words, divide the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>text into parts and indicate what is happening in each part.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenor (reader/writer</td>
<td>1) Who is the writer?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relationship)</td>
<td>2) Who is the text addressed to?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{12}\) As can be seen, this linguistic analysis is called register analysis in SFL, but this technical term was not given to the students themselves.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social context</th>
<th>Answers</th>
<th>Language from the text</th>
<th>Model - which part of your model does it refer to? Evaluation of your model drawn in the hypothesis.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Field</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-What is the content of the letter?</td>
<td>1st Paragraph</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-For what purpose was it written?</td>
<td>2nd Paragraph</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3rd Paragraph</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4th Paragraph</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Who is the writer?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Who is the text addressed to?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-How does the writer approach the audience?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there an unequal relation of power between the interactants?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do they frequently</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
meet each other? Is there affective involvement from one of the parts?

Mode (medium) letter -cohesion -how the sentences start

By carrying out this analysis, the students had the opportunity to perceive that the genres studied realized the ACP (LANGUAGE ↔ CONTEXT) differently. For example, the concept of mode in the genre of announcement is mainly realized through key words rather than through complete sentences. In contrast, the mode becomes quite complex in the cover letter and argumentative genres because of the social demands they make on the producer: the need to attend to thematic progression (how sentences start), to avoid the excessive use of ‘I’ and to use appropriate explicit cohesive devices and connectors in cover letters and in argumentative texts.

4.2.5 Major writing assignments

The students were given a major writing assignment at the conclusion of the relevant units covered in the course. The first assignment consisted of writing two announcements of an event. In each case the event remained the same but the targeted audience shifted. One audience was real and one was imagined. In the first assignment the students had to find a real event announced on campus and write an alternative announcement for the audience aimed at by the sponsors of the event. For the second assignment, they had to write an announcement for an event they created, which was

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13 The major assignment prompts are in the appendix B of this dissertation.
aimed at a target audience of their choosing. For the second writing assignment the students had to write a cover letter for a job they would like to apply for. This was to be based on a real advertisement which they took from the local newspaper.

The third assignment dealt with argumentative texts. The students had to write a three-page text where they supported a thesis statement regarding the influence of culture on genres. The course exposed the students to different realizations of a genre affected by culture. For instance, they read and discussed wedding invitations, obituaries, cover letters, and argumentative texts in the United States and in their own countries. When information was available the discussion about other countries such as Brazil, Indonesia, and Japan (cf. Johns, 1997; Hinds, 1990) was also provided. Through this third assignment, students were led to review the entire course and to verbalize their understanding of what was taught. They also had to specify the field, the tenor, and the mode for this text on a separate sheet of paper. They did this to verify the extent to which they were employing these concepts in their text.

4.2.6 Writing reports

The writing report realized the control and evaluation learning actions of Davydov’s approach. The writing report consisted of an evaluation of the writing process that the students were engaged in for each of the three major writing assignments. The report had to be submitted with their final version of each major assignment. The writing report sheet contained instructions and guidelines for the students to prepare this text. In

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15 The writing report is in appendix B and the templates, in appendix C.
order to facilitate the writing of the report, and as a consequence of this evaluation process, I created a writing report template where the textual organization was provided to the students.

However, the writing reports were not implemented in the same way throughout the course. Because the students did the first writing report at the last minute rather than in stages as the instructor asked them to (first part after receiving the prompt, the second part after the conference with the instructor, and the third part after finishing the text), I decided to require the students to submit parts of the writing report as homework assignments. In the writing report for unit 3, due to time constraints, it was not possible to follow this format. The content of the writing reports differed slightly. For the third writing report, the students had to explain how they were using the concepts of field, tenor, and mode to write their argumentative texts.

4.2.7 Teacher- student writing conferences

As explained in chapter 2, writing conferences are a landmark feature of process writing pedagogy. The conference therefore was adopted as an integral part of the genre-based course. The conferences mainly focused on discussing and repairing the students’ textual problems, but they also included discussions of the students’ models on the three genres taught and the students’ doubts about these models and the conceptual focus of the course, which related to the notions of field, tenor, and mode. Students were therefore frequently asked to explain their models and to verbalize their understanding of the concepts of field, tenor, and mode and their use of these in the writing tasks.
4.2.8 Overview of the grading criteria used in the course

The grading scheme used in the course was fairly straightforward. A total of 100 points was available. The total was distributed across the various activities as follows: homework assignments were worth 30 points; in-class exercises, 7.5 points each; the logs were worth 7.5 points as well. In addition the course required students to write one major assignment for each of the three units: the first assignment was worth 10 points and the final two, 15 points each. Along with each major writing assignment, students also had to submit writing reports worth 5 points each.

4.3 Concluding remarks

The syllabus designed for the ESL freshman composition course utilized two theoretical frameworks: systemic functional linguistics (SFL), to describe the object of study, and ‘the movement from the abstract to the concrete’ (MAC), to provide the pedagogical procedure for promoting the learning process. The first pedagogical goal of the course was to promote the development of theoretical thinking through MAC procedures, whereby the basic abstract relationship (the ACP) that defines the function of language (LANGUAGE ↔ CONTEXT) was realized at the concrete level through the specific genres of announcements, cover letters and argumentative texts. These genres constitute the concrete manifestation of the theoretical concept of genre (CMTCG), based on the SFL view of genre and as a manifestation of the ACP.

The second, and related, pedagogical goal consisted of improving students’ writing in specific textual genres. In other words, the course encouraged students to develop a conceptual understanding of the communicative function of language, which,
when coupled with concrete instantiations of genres and implemented through principles of MAC pedagogy aimed to improve students’ writing proficiency.

In the following chapter, the methodology for the research phase of the study will be presented.
CHAPTER 5

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Chapters 2 and 3 depicted the theoretical framework of this study, and chapter 4 explained the genre-based course design for the ESL freshman composition course I conducted employing the principles of a dialectical pedagogical approach known as the movement from the abstract to the concrete (MAC). The present chapter will detail the purpose of the study and research questions, and the methodology for collection and analysis of the data used to answer each question.

5.1 The context of the research

As a reminder, the purpose of this study is to investigate ESL freshman composition students’ development of theoretical thinking, writing improvement and meaning-making process having as an epistemological ground Marxist dialectics as adopted by Vygotsky and a conventionalist view of science, as explained in the previous section. Thus, the research questions of the study are the following:

1) Did the genre-based course promote theoretical thinking in students?
2) Did the genre-based course promote students’ writing improvement?
3) How did the students make sense of the genre-based course?

As the instructor, I designed and implemented this genre-based ESL freshman writing course, which was taught at a large public North American research university during the fall semester of 2004. Fourteen students, originally from seven countries,
consented to participate in this study: J is from South Korea, K and D from Vietnam, H and Ma from Mexico, F and Fr are from the Dominican Republic, N is from Somalia, and X, Chg, Chl, M, Xn and Cho are from China. The students were mainly immigrants to the United States, having moved to this country at the average age of 13. Most of them had started learning English in American schools. Six of them (Chl, H, Ma, M, X, Xn) reported having had ESL classes in their American schools, one (Fr) said he had gone to regular English classes while he was in high school, and the other six just mentioned that they had learned English in American schools. Unlike the others, J came from a non-immigrant family who had received all his English instruction in South Korean schools and through private tutoring. All of the students, except J, were participating in the university’s College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP). This program aids children of mainly migrant farm-worker families to adapt to university life and to increase their chances of graduating. Some of these students had been accepted to the university on their own; others had depended on assistance from the CAMP program to gain admittance.

At the time of the study, the students were also taking two other writing-related courses: one-to-one tutoring in writing called English 005, offered by the English Department, and LLED 005, offered by the Curriculum and Instruction Department. J was the only student who was not required to take any of these courses since he was not a CAMP student. The students volunteered to participate in this study and did not receive any compensation for doing so.

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1 Information obtained through personal communication with the CAMP staff.
2 College and Reading Improvement 1.
5.2 Research question 1 (development of theoretical thinking)

5.2.1 Methodology of data collection

The methodology of data collection for the first research question is derived from Hedegaard (1995, 2002), who focused on her students’ actions and their answers to problem-solving tasks to investigate their development of theoretical thinking. Based on her own data, she designed a set of useful questions that can be employed to investigate this topic:

- Does the child participate in the problem formulation?
- Does the child anticipate part of the teaching process?
- Is the theme kept in focus?
- Are why-questions formulated?
- Does the child seek relational instead of categorical solutions?
- Does the child relate conceptual knowledge to a model?
- Does the child question the model’s borders?
- Does the child’s model change and develop?
- Does the child’s imaginative production evolve?
- Does the child criticize the content of the teaching?
- Does the child create new tasks for him/herself?
- Does the child have a critical attitude to her own production and capacity?

(Hedegaard, 1995, p. 308)
Not all of these questions apply to my data set; consequently, I found it necessary to modify Hedegaard’s question to better fit the situation I was interested in: (a) Does the learner seek relationships instead of categories in his/her model? (b) Does the learner’s model change and evolve? (c) Does the learner explain linguistic phenomena by employing the ACP? (d) Does the learner understand the ACP? (e) Does the learner understand the concepts of field, tenor, and mode? (f) Does the learner understand the interrelationship between field, tenor, and mode?

Studies investigated the development of theoretical thinking through qualitative changes in the students’ social interaction, participation in class, engagement in tasks, models, and solutions to problem-solving tasks. For this dissertation, the data analyzed consisted of models (from the modeling phase), solutions to problem-solving tasks (from the applying the model phase), and answers to the problem situation question posed in the course (from the monitoring/evaluating actions phase) (see chapter 4 for details).

My selection of data for analysis was based on specific factors. The models representing genre were preferred over the models representing announcements, cover letters or argumentative texts because the former would reveal the students’ theoretical understanding of what genre is. I assumed that their development of this theoretical understanding of genre would provide signs of the development of theoretical thinking. In addition, the models for announcements, cover letters, and argumentative texts tended to be procedural rather than germ-cell models. In other words, the models for these types of genre displayed the generic moves of the genre rather than the concepts needed to understand genre theoretically.
Another source of data for analyzing the development of students’ theoretical thinking was their answers to the problem-situation question posed by the course. As detailed in chapter 4, this kind of question was asked at the beginning of the course and it was to be answered by completing the learning actions of MAC: We use language in a variety of situations and to achieve a wide range of goals. How do we use language to achieve these goals? How does the social situation affect our use of language? This task would also simultaneously reveal the students’ comprehension of the ACP (LANGUAGE ↔ CONTEXT) and lead them to reflect upon this issue. Since the students answered this question at the end of the course, I assumed it would serve as an appropriate indication of how well they understood this relationship.

Although the entire course aimed to develop theoretical thinking, some tasks were specifically designed to nourish this kind of thinking. They were either problem-solving tasks, which demanded that the students explain linguistic phenomena by employing a germ-cell model (wedding invitation task, part 10; Bhatia’s exercise, parts 2 and 3; obituaries exercise, part 2; homework, given in the fourth week of classes; homework, given on the 12th week of classes3), or tasks that led the students to redraw their models, whether the germ-cell models or their own models of the genres taught (the wedding invitation task, parts 4, 6, and 9; teacher-student discussion about Johns (1997, p.39-41) about cultural differences in wedding invitations, given in the eighth week of classes; the

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3 Both homework assignments were the same. And, although they could be tasks whose solution could be facilitated by the use of the germ-cell model for genre, the students were not instructed as such by myself due to my inexperience with the approach.
blood announcement task⁴, parts 6 and 7, also given in the eighth week of classes; perceiving the conflict of the discipline⁵, given during the 11th week of the course; the teacher’s feedback on the students’ models, given during the 11th week of the course; comparison of field, tenor, and discourse communities in announcements and cover letters, given in the 12th week of the course). The latter aimed to lead the students to represent abstract relations and concepts (field, tenor, mode) in their models.

From these theoretical thinking tasks I selected the following for analysis: wedding invitation task – part10; Bhatia’s exercise – parts 2 and 3, and obituaries exercise – part 2. These tasks were chosen for being similar in design: they required the students to explain a particular linguistic phenomenon. Thus, the students’ ability to recognize the ACP as the basic explanatory principle of the phenomenon (the best indicator of the development of theoretical thinking) would be assessed. In addition, in the Bhatia and obituaries exercises, the students were explicitly asked to use the germ-cell models introduced in the course. These tasks did not involve any participation on the part of the instructor as they were performed by the students individually or in pairs. For purposes of analysis I selected tasks from the beginning, the middle and the end of the semester to analyze how development in the various domains took place throughout the course.

⁴ The blood announcement task required students to read a blood drive announcement, conduct a linguistic analysis of it and analyze the interconnection of its field, tenor, and mode. They also had to rewrite the announcement by making it more concise, but maintaining its persuasiveness.

⁵ The teacher promoted a discussion in the classroom by contrasting the manuals’ discourse on rules and creativity in cover letters. This discussion aimed to draw students attention to the conflict between rules and creativity in language functioning. As MAC is dialectical, approaching the conflict of the discipline under study is relevant.
It was unrealistic to assume that the students would fully develop theoretical thinking in only 15 weeks of instruction. Much more extended longitudinal studies have reported that students did not fully develop theoretical thinking. For example, Hedegaard (1995)\(^6\) found one learner had not developed certain aspects of theoretical thinking such as a critical attitude towards “the content of the model or her own contributions”, and misrepresentations in models of historical development of humans (“her model was not so well developed that she was able to explain changes in societies through historical time”(p. 317) after the first year of instruction. She also reports that one student after 3 years of instruction did not differentiate clearly the concepts of city, society and ways of living (Hedegaard, 2002), and another was not critical of the concepts presented in the model and was able to use them creatively.\(^7\) I am aware that theoretical thinking requires time to be nurtured in learners, especially in adults who have been experiencing a more traditional and empirically based pedagogical practice for most of their educational histories. For this reason, in this study, I looked for signs of the emergence of theoretical thinking among the students rather than for complete and full development.

5.2.2 Methodology of data analysis

The methodology used for the data analysis consisted in identifying three units of analysis and searching for traces of theoretical thinking in the data. For the model analysis, the unit was the relations established by the students among words to represent

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\(^6\) This study employed MAC to teach geography, history and biology combined.

\(^7\) Both studies (Hedegaard, 1995, 2002) report the development of individual cases rather than of the whole class.
their understanding of genre. For the problem-solving tasks, the unit of analysis was comprised of the explanations that the students provided for linguistic phenomena. For the answers to the problem situation question, the unit of analysis was the students’ understanding of the ACP.

As mentioned in chapter 3, theoretical thinking searches for a basic idea (the abstract concept) that can account for a variety of concrete phenomena. The focus is on relationships among concepts in a system rather than on observable superficial features which are classified or categorized by empirical thinking. Consequently, the data for this study were analyzed in terms of the students’ references to the ACP, their understanding of it, and their awareness of this as the basic explanation for linguistic phenomena, and of how the concrete is related to this abstract.

Qualitative changes in the unit of analysis define development. The relations established in the models should become less empirical and more theoretically based. The explanations of linguistic phenomena should be based less on superficial observable features and more on the elements of the ACP; in addition the leaner must demonstrate awareness of the explanatory power of the ACP in his/her answers to the performance phase tasks. The understanding of the elements of the ACP and how they are materialized in concrete instances of language use should increase. I delineated four levels of theoretical thinking based on the analysis of the data: (a) theoretical thinking 1 (TT1) means that the student only reveals some understanding of the elements of the model; (b) theoretical thinking 2 (TT2) indicates that the student understands some elements of the model and provides an explanation of the linguistic phenomena based on the elements of
the model but is not aware of ACP as the basic explanatory principle; (c) theoretical thinking 3 (TT3) means that the student shows some understanding of the elements of the course and recognizes ACP as the essential explanatory principle; and (d) theoretical thinking 4 (TT4) signals a very developed form of theoretical thinking where students reveal full understanding of the elements of the model, ask ‘why’ questions, and recognize ACP as the essential explanatory principle of underlying human communication.

5. 3 Research question 2 (writing improvement)

5.3.1 Methodology of data collection

The second research question addressed in the study refers to the influence of the genre-based approach on the students’ writing improvement. Only the six students who completed the tasks from all phases of MAC were selected to have their writing analyzed. They were K, Cho, M, H, Chl and X, two of whom (Cho and X) developed theoretical thinking to a certain extent; two of whom developed minimal theoretical thinking (M and H); and two of whom (K, and Chl) remained in a transitional position. The analyses were both quantitative and qualitative.

The writing pieces used for this data were the students’ pre-tests and post-tests (see appendices F and G) that they took in class. The pre-test was given before the students received any instruction, and the post-tests were given on the last two days of class. While the announcement-cover letter pre-test remarked that this test would not affect either students’ grade or their placement in the writing course they were enrolled
in, the post-test had this information omitted. Whereas the argumentative text pre-test pointed out that the assignment was a placement test which should be taken seriously in order to place the student appropriately; the post-test omitted this information. In other words, the post-tests maintained the content of the pre-tests and eliminated the instructions that characterized the test as a test. The intent was for students to perceive the post-tests as nothing more than in-class exercises. First, they wrote the cover letters and in the following class, they wrote their argumentative texts. I designed the tests on cover letter writing, whereas the test for the argumentative text consisted of the placement test used by the department which offered the ESL writing course.

The texts were typed and any trace of the students’ identities, such as address, phone numbers, names, and signatures, was removed from the text. The words pre-test and post-test were also removed from the texts. In this way the raters in their scoring were not influenced by either access to the students’ identities or by the words pre-test and post-test. The texts were randomly assigned to the raters.

The quantitative analysis of the students’ writing proceeded as follows. I designed two 4-point holistic scales, with 4 being the highest score (see appendix E). One scale was for the cover letter genre and the other for the argumentative text genre. These scales were piloted by two experienced ESL writing instructors. For the scoring session, the raters were three different experienced ESL writing instructors who were also native

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8 It is interesting to observe how the teacher’s instructions to the tests determined different goals for the exercise. While the argumentative text pre-test comprised a real testing situation, the announcement-cover letter pre-test and both post-tests were portrayed to the students as in-class exercises which would not affect their grades or placement in the course. This is a good example of how a traditional methodology of data collection is affected by the context of the research (it turns out that the tool for the result is in fact the tool and the result). Although the four tests had testing as their research goal, the only real test students took was the argumentative text pre-test.
speakers of English. They participated in two training sessions of one and a half hours each, where they learned to use the scale, tried the scale on samples, and discussed the results. The raters were randomly assigned texts in such a way that systematic multiple independent scoring would be achieved. According to Tedick (1990), “multiple independent systematic scoring involves having two different readers score each essay independently. A one-point difference between scores is acceptable; a difference of two or more points necessitates a third reading, which resolves the discrepancy.” (p. 140). For the purposes of this study, when there was a one-point difference between the scores, they were averaged. When there was a 2-point or more difference between the scores, a third rater scored the text and the three scores were averaged as well.\(^9\)

The students produced a total of 24 texts subjected to evaluation, four writing pieces for each of six students (including two pre-tests and two post-tests). Each student piece was scored by two raters and the discrepancies were solved according to the procedure explained above. Thus, each rater rated 16 pieces and had two weeks to submit the scores. One rater had to score three additional texts due to discrepancies. The inter-rater reliability coefficients were the following: for the cover letters, pre-test (0.91); for the argumentative texts, pre-test (0.91); cover letters, post-test (0.83) and argumentative texts, post-test (0.89). Only the correlation for cover letter, post-test was not significant at \(p= 0.05\). All correlations were calculated through Spearman Rank Order (Rho). The raters were compensated for their service.

\(^9\) The literature on writing quality assessment does not seem to be consistent in the treatment of the scores. Tedick (1990) and Hirose and Sasaki (1994) used sum of scores provided by raters, and Tarone et al. (1993) and Carlisle (1989) employed the average of the raters’ scores. I opted for the averaged scores since it gives a number in the range of 1-4, which facilitates the understanding of the scores obtained.
The holistic scoring designed for this study was inspired by Macken and Slade (1993), who suggest that the literacy assessment should be informed by SFL. Their grading criteria were grounded in the concepts of genre (generic moves or schematic structures) and register variables (field, tenor, and mode). The criteria developed for this study also involved four levels of analysis: genre (the presence of the generic moves of the genre), field (the realization of each generic move, the use of language to elaborate on information), tenor (the writer’s enticement of the audience, how this audience is approached), and mode (thematic progression, cohesion, and minor language mistakes that do not affect the comprehensibility of the text). The grading criteria did not employ technical language to make it more comprehensible to the raters.

There are several scales for writing assessment in the literature (Test of Written English, Michigan English Language Assessment Battery, and the Jacobs’ scale\(^{10}\)), but apparently there are no scales for cover letters and argumentative texts per se\(^{11}\). In fact, there is a lack of studies that deal with assessment in genre-based courses (except Macken & Slade, 1993, and Pang, 2002, for example). For this reason, I developed the two holistic scales to assess the overall quality of the students’ writing in cover letters and argumentative texts based on several writing manuals (see next section for a list of references). Moreover, I did not employ the analytical scales found in the literature mentioned above because they are not genre sensitive nor are they based on the SFL. The Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks nonparametric test was run on the averaged scores to determine


\(^{11}\) There are scales for argumentative writing in the literature (Connor, 1991; Knudson, 1992); however these scales are based on Toulmin’s (1958) model. As this genre was not taught according to this theoretical framework, these scales could not be employed in this study either.
if the difference in the scores was significant. I ran this test twice: on the cover letters and on the argumentative text pre-tests and post-test scores.

5.3.2 Methodology of the qualitative analysis

The methodology of the qualitative analysis consisted of the schematic structure analysis of the texts; thus, the unit of analysis was the generic moves as written by the students. I analyzed the presence and quality of the moves based on manuals on how to write in the genres cover letters and argumentative texts. These manuals are the following: Beatty (2004), Besson (1996) Enelow & Kursmark (2001), Hansen & Hansen (2001) and Yate (2003). Hacker (1999) was utilized because it is among the most widely adopted textbooks on the teaching of argumentative texts. Thus, the unit of the qualitative analysis of the texts was the generic moves of cover letters and argumentative texts. Writing improvement in this study is defined as a statistically significant difference in scores assigned by the raters and by the students’ manifestation of the rules of the genres cover letters and argumentative texts, as stipulated by the manuals.

5.4 Research question 3 (meaning-making process)

5.4.1 Methodology of data collection

The data most relevant to answering the research question 3 (How did the students make sense of the genre-based course?) was provided by the logs the students were required to keep throughout the entire semester. In this they recorded their impressions of the course. The logs were checked by the instructor every Tuesday and the
student who submitted the log at all times received 7.5 marks as part of the course grade. In keeping with the requirements of the university’s IRB, I did not read the content of the logs during the semester. At its end, an outsider collected all the logs and delivered them to my advisor’s office, where they were kept in sealed envelopes until after all course grades had been submitted. Through this procedure, the students had a non-threatening environment in which to express their opinions about the course. The log was accompanied by the following instructions:

In this notebook you will do the following: (1) comment on an aspect of the classes (for example, a discussion, a text read, a concept you were taught, a discussion you had with the teacher or a classmate, something you disagreed with or doubted in class, your writing, the models), (2) explain what you have learned this week or in this class, and (3) write about your impressions of this course.

You should do the task by writing what comes to your mind freely and without concerns with grammar mistakes and organization of your text. In other words, this task is similar to a journal writing. The text should be comprehensible to another reader (in this case me) and with a legible handwriting. If you prefer, you can type your text and glue it on the log notebook. I would also like to ask you to write the date each time you do this task. You can do this activity after each class or weekly when and where it is appropriate to you. Although I will be checking the notebook every Tuesday, I will not read the content of your log (refer to the informed consent of the study that states I will have access to the logs...
only after the grades are posted). The checking is just to give you the assigned grade for this task (7.5 marks).

Keeping a log about your writing and your writing class can be useful in a number of ways. First, you will be practicing free writing on a regular basis. This will help you unblock your writing. Second, you will have a chance to reflect on your writing, needs, problems, difficulties as well as your strengths and improvements. As a consequence, you will probably be more conscious about your strengths and weaknesses and you will be able to design ways to solve them or to help your teacher assist you. Third, you will have a better chance of learning the concepts taught in class. By verbalizing (in this case, through writing) what you understood about the concepts, how they relate to one another (models), and how they construct a good text, you will develop a conceptual understanding of language and of writing functioning. As a result, you may become a better language user, in general, and a better writer, in particular.

As can be seen, the instructions focused on the three topics the log should cover (a comment on an aspect of the class, an explanation about what the person learned on that day/week, impressions of the course), and the importance of keeping the log. I selected this methodology of data collection instead of interviews with the students because in such situations the instructor/investigator can more easily influence the expression of the students’ opinions. Also, to interview the students many times during the semester or every week was not feasible; for this reason, the logs were more suitable to follow the students’ meaning-making process more closely.
5.4.2 Methodology of data analysis

The methodology of data analysis consisted of the content analysis of ten students’ logs. H’s log was not used because he did not comment about the classes; he simply wrote an informal diary of his activities in college. F and Ma did not provide comments about the class and Fr’s log was illegible. Therefore, the students whose logs were analyzed are the following: K, Cho, M, Chl, X, D, N, Chg, J and Xn.

The definition of content analysis adopted in this study is the following: a “research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use” (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 18). In this perspective, the content of a text is not its property or inherent in it but rather “emerges in the process of a researcher analyzing a text relative to a particular context” (p.19). The replication and validity referred to above depend on the context of analysis employed by the researcher: “Differences in interpretations do not preclude the possibility of agreements within particular contexts (…) once content analysts have chosen the context within which they intend to make sense of a given text, the diversity of interpretations may well be reduced to a manageable number” (p.24). The context of analysis constitutes the perspective adopted by the researcher to interpret the text; if different researchers interpret the same text from different points of view, their content analysis will differ.

The context of analysis of the logs comprises the epistemological grounds discussed previously in the introduction: a conventionalist view of science (and
consequently of scientific concepts such as replication and validity), a dialectical view of
cognitive development and meaning making process as constitutive of this development.
The analysis focused on the comments ten students made about any aspect of the genre-
based course. In these logs, students had to comment on an aspect of the course, to
explain what they have learned in the classes and to register their impressions of the
course.

5.5 Concluding remarks

This chapter has described the method of data collection and of data analysis
relative to the three research questions addressed in the study. The research questions
focused on the development of theoretical thinking, as well as improvement of students’
writing ability and on their meaning-making process. The data analyzed for the first
topic consisted of the investigation of relations among concepts in the students’ modeling
of the concept of genre, solutions to the problem-solving tasks and answers to the
problem situation question posed by the course. Writing improvement was assessed by
means of pre-tests and post-tests, which were analyzed qualitatively - through focus on
the moves performed by the students - and quantitatively – through the scores assigned
by raters. The meaning-making process was captured in the logs students kept throughout
the semester.
This chapter presents the data analysis regarding development of the students’ theoretical thinking (the topic of the first research question of the study) in the modeling phase. Since the course lasted only 15 weeks, it is unrealistic to hypothesize that the students would develop their theoretical thinking fully within that time. One semester was not sufficient to counterbalance the students’ experience in the educational system that privileges empirical rather than theoretical thinking. For this reason, the results obtained and reported on here represent the beginning of the emergence of theoretical thinking rather than its full development. Full development of theoretical thinking (TT4) refers to the stage where students are able to perceive the ACP as a basic explanatory principle of underlying human communication and as such have a clear and explicit understanding of how and why specific linguistic features are used to construct specific types of meaning. This type of understanding represents an unequivocal move from empirical to theoretical thinking. In chapter 7, I will address this issue more extensively since the models do not elicit full expression of theoretical thinking but rather its initial form of manifestation (TT1).

The data analysis was based on the following premises: (a) Models are cognitive tools to develop theoretical thinking (Davydov, 1988 a, b, c, d; Engstrom & Hedegaard, 1986; Hedegaard, 1990, 1995, 2002; Hedegaard & Sigersted, 1992; Lompscher, 1999a) and they consist of evidence for the development of theoretical thinking once they are
conceived as part of a broader learning activity; (b) If students understand the concepts of field, tenor, and mode, then they are beginning to develop a theoretical (conceptual) understanding of genre. This theoretical understanding of genre indicates theoretical thinking development.

Three sources of data were utilized to answer the first research question: (a) the students’ models for genre, (b) problem-solving tasks (wedding invitation task, Bhatia’s task, and the obituaries’ task), and (c) the students’ answers to the problem situation question. This chapter will depict the signs of theoretical thinking development for the modeling phase. Chapter 7 will continue with the analysis and trace the development throughout the genre-based course.

6.1 Analysis of the students’ germ-cell models for genre

Models can be a valid source of evidence for development of theoretical thinking for three reasons: first, Davydov and his colleagues consider models to be psychic tools for such development (Davydov, 1988 a, b, c, d, 1999; Engstrom & Hedegaard, 1986, Hedegaard, 1990, 1995; Hedegaard & Sigersted, 1992; Lompscher, 1999a); secondly, these models prompt students to review and evaluate content, and challenge them by demanding that they seek relations among the words mentioned; thirdly, although it can be argued that a student can represent anything in a model, regardless of his/her understanding of this representation, there is evidence from the data that this is not always the case.
In the first model of genre, the students were prompted to represent the key words that made them understand this concept and relate these words to one another. However, they frequently selected the words but did not relate them to each other. This frequently happened with the terms field, tenor, and mode. Although the instructor modeled and demonstrated through concrete examples (the blood drive announcement task and Bhatia’s exercise) the interrelationship between field, tenor, and mode, the students were unable to represent these in their models. Student (H) in his announcement model was unable to verbalize his understanding of mode, and because of this he did not insert this concept into his model. After discussing creativity, rules, and discourse communities in different genres, the instructor asked the students to draw their understanding of genre. Out of 14 participants, only three mentioned discourse communities in their models, and out of these, only one mentioned rules and creativity. These examples indicate that the students tended to represent what they understood in their models rather than just putting words on paper.

Another reason that models make a valid source of data for analysis of theoretical thinking is that they are not analyzed in isolation. The context in which they were given (the teacher’s instructions, what was studied in the class on that particular day) was always considered in the analysis. Furthermore, the students’ models varied despite the fact that the instructions were the same. This means that they were not simply reproducing what the teacher said, and thus the models the students produced were in fact differentiated representations of their individual understanding.
Three models were analyzed. Model 1 was presented during the third week of the course, model 2 during the 11th week, and model 3 during the final week of the course. As homework, the students received instructions to draw their understanding of genre for the first time:

Model your understanding of what genre is. Think about what you read in the poster cards on 9/16/04, the genres you saw in the magazines and newspapers on 9/21/04, the chart you filled out about genres and communicative situations, and the homework you just did. Then think about the key words to understand the concept of genre and how they relate to one another. Then draw your model. This model should be a visual representation (use circles, squares, arrows, etc) of your understanding of what genre is.

The students drew their second version of the model for the genre in class after the instructor had led a discussion about discourse communities in different genres. The instructions were as follows: How do you model genre? How do you understand genre? Think about the key words that are important to understand genre.

The third model was given as homework during a class session when the instructor led a discussion with the students about the essential features found in the three genres taught in the course. There was also a closing session of the course in which the basic relations represented in four germ-cell models were reviewed. The following instructions were provided:

You have studied extensively three genres in this course – announcements, cover letters, and argumentative texts – and more superficially two others –wedding
invitations and obituaries. You have also found samples of genres in magazines and newspapers. Considering this, draw a representation of your understanding of what the concept of genre is.

As can be seen from the quotes above, the instructions were not consistent throughout the semester. Because the course was the instructor’s initial experience with the new pedagogical approach, she did not emphasize to the students that they should show the relationships among the key words when drawing models 2 and 3 as she had done in the instructions to draw the first model. However, as the model analysis would be compared with other sources of data, this oversight should not affect the overall findings of the study. In addition, at other times in the course the instructor emphasized the relations the students should seek and the ACP. For example, in the model given in class during the sixth week of the course, the instructor focused on the relation between field and tenor; in the blood drive announcement task, she illustrated the fourth version of the germ-cell models used in the course, which deals with the interrelationship of field, tenor, and mode; in the eighth week of classes, she emphasized the ACP by discussing an excerpt from Johns (1997); in the 11th week of the course, she presented a student’s germ-cell model to the class in which she pointed out the need for the students to draw more relational than procedural models; in the 12th week of the course, she gave the students a model which showed the relation between field, tenor, and discourse community.

The questions asked about the models were adapted from Hedegaard (1987, 1995) and were the following: (a) Does the learner represent relations instead of categories
and concrete examples in his/her model? and (b) Does the learner’s model change and evolve? The analysis of the models for the students’ understanding of genre reveals a developmental sequence: empirical → empirical and theoretical, but not relational → empirical and theoretical and relational – theoretical but not relational → theoretical (with correct or almost correct relations).

An empirical model reveals empirical rather than the desired theoretical thinking; it shows categorizations, classifications, concrete examples of genre. For example, the model contains a classification of the genre as oral or written, or the citation of many different examples (mostly from the class) such as advertisements, news, and recipes. A concrete model can also attempt to group genres based on superficial features. For instance, some students related ads to announcements, and e-mails to letters.

In contrast, a theoretical model displays signs of theoretical thinking; that is, it relates words present in the four germ-cell models presented in the course; all these relations are correct or almost correct. Moreover, the analysis reveals a type of model called transitional. This transitional type of model constitutes a combination of empirical and theoretical features; it either contains references to concrete examples of genre and words that are part of the ACP but are not related (empirical and theoretical but not relational) or just references to these words, establishing some relations among them (empirical and theoretical and relational), or references to just the words contained in the germ-cell models without establishing relations among them (theoretical but not relational). The variations empirical and theoretical but not relational, empirical and
theoretical and relational, and theoretical but not relational are part of what I called the transitional type of model.

There is a qualitative change from the empirical and theoretical but not relational to the other two types of transitional models (empirical and theoretical and relational, and theoretical but not relational). This is so because the model either becomes more relational or represents the ACP. However, the empirical and theoretical and relational and theoretical but not relational are equated because there is no qualitative change between them. Although the model loses its concrete examples of genre or genre classification, it is no longer relational. Examples of empirical and transitional models (with variations), and theoretical models are reproduced below (see Figures 6.1 to 6.5).
Figure 6.1: Chg’s concrete (empirical) model
Figure 6.2: Chl’s transitional model (empirical and theoretical but not relational)
Figure 6.3: K’s transitional model (empirical and theoretical and relational)
Figure 6.4: D’s transitional model (theoretical but not relational)
Figure 6.5: Cho’s abstract (theoretical) model
Table 6.1 displays how the students’ models evolved during the course.

Table 6.1

*Development of theoretical thinking in the students’ models for genre*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>Empirical</td>
<td>transitional</td>
<td>transitional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cho</td>
<td>Empirical</td>
<td>theoretical</td>
<td>(←)theoretical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Empirical</td>
<td>empirical</td>
<td>theoretical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Transitional</td>
<td>(→) transitional</td>
<td>transitional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xn</td>
<td>Empirical</td>
<td>transitional</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fr</td>
<td>Empirical</td>
<td>transitional</td>
<td>empirical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ma</td>
<td>Empirical</td>
<td>transitional</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Empirical</td>
<td>transitional</td>
<td>transitional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Empirical</td>
<td>transitional</td>
<td>theoretical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Empirical</td>
<td>transitional</td>
<td>transitional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chl</td>
<td>Empirical</td>
<td>transitional</td>
<td>(→) transitional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chg</td>
<td>Empirical</td>
<td>transitional</td>
<td>theoretical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Empirical</td>
<td>theoretical</td>
<td>theoretical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>Theoretical</td>
<td>theoretical</td>
<td>theoretical</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(→) = the person moved toward the next subcategory of the transitional phase. F’s model 1 was empirical and theoretical but not relational whereas model 2 was empirical and theoretical and relational. Model 3 was the same type as model 2. Chl’s model 2 was empirical and theoretical and relational while her model 3 was theoretical but not relational.

(←) = the theoretical model was less relational than the previous one.

--- = the student did not submit his/her model.

no arrows = the student is in the same category; no changes occurred.

Table 6.1 shows that most of the students (12 out of 14) drew empirical models for model 1, revealing that they understood genre basically in terms of oral versus written genres or actual examples of genres such as news, advertisements, or recipes that were given in class. In the second model, most of the students (10 out of 14) had developed to the transitional category. In the third model, there were 6 theoretical models, 5 transitional models, and 1 empirical model. These results indicate that as the instruction
progressed, the students were able to move from an empirical to a theoretical representation of genre. Thus, the instruction apparently had a positive effect on the students’ development of their theoretical thinking. However, as will be discussed later in the chapter, the students were not fully able to actualize their theoretical understanding of genre in their writing performance.

F’s model 1 and Chl’s model 2 are examples of empirical and theoretical but not relational models (see appendix H). For example, F mentioned categorizations (oral versus written) and examples of genre and words from the ACP (language) but did not relate any of them. All of the words were surrounding the central word genre. Likewise, Chl provided examples of genre (letters, e-mails, ads) and definitions of field and tenor surrounding the word genre, but without establishing relations.

F’s, Fr’s, Ma’s, H’s, D’s, and Chg’s models 2 and K’s, F’s, and H’s models 3 are included under the category empirical and theoretical and relational. F’s and Fr’s models represented relations among the concrete examples of genre and field, tenor, and mode. Ma’s model related mode with examples of genre. In his model 2, H linked the concrete examples of genre to field, tenor, and mode and these terms to the words communication and information. Chg established relations between a formal/informal audience with mode by means of concrete examples. In D’s model, field, tenor, and mode are hierarchically related and encompassed by genre.

In K’s model, culture influences genre, which affects language and context. Language and context also subsume field, tenor, mode and generic moves. It is interesting to note that, although he is able to recognize that culture affects genre, he only
mentioned American genre rather than genres in general. This might have happened because the genre-based course focused primarily on the realization of genres by American culture, despite the fact that cultural differences in realizing genres were frequently addressed in the course. F’s model 3 mentions concrete examples of genre and relates them to the word context. The word genre is linked to field, context, and tenor, and context is directly related to mode and indirectly related to field and tenor. It is interesting to observe the primary position the examples of genre present in the model; they are the first mentioned, which indicates the primacy of empirical thinking in his understanding of genre. H’s model 3 relates field, tenor, and mode, and these words with the word text, but still provides examples of tenor (formally, informally, friendly). K’s and Xn’s model 2 and Chl’s and D’s model 3 are classified as theoretical but not relational. They mention field, tenor, and mode but do not relate them.

Cho’s model 2 represents a theoretical model. He did not mention concrete examples of either genre or classifications. He represented genre only by means of the elements of the ACP (field, tenor, mode, culture, language ↔ context) and inserted another relevant word to understand genre: discourse communities. However, he did not reveal a full understanding of this term since it was unconnected to anything inside the circle.

In addition, the models revealed how the students established empirical relationships. Essays and news, or ads and announcements were considered similar because they either shared the same goals (X’s model 1, Chl’s model 1, Xn’s model 1) or superficial features such as formality or use of key words (Chl’s model 1). In her model
1, Chl also associated emails with letters because both could be formal or informal and used to communicate with others. Xn linked recipes with prescribing information because both provide directions.

Some students in Table 6.1 stand out for specific reasons. Fr, for example, regressed in his development (beginning with empirical, moving to transitional, and then regressing to empirical again). This finding is not surprising given Vygotsky’s understanding of development as a revolutionary process (Lantolf & Aljaafreh, 1995; Vygotsky cited in Elkonin, 1972, p.2291; Vygotsky, 1978). As shown in Figures 6.6 to 6.8. Chg represented a smooth course of development where he passed through all three phases. J, on the other hand, began with a theoretical model and failed to develop beyond this level.

6.2 Discussion of Fr’s, Chg’s and J’s models

Fr had difficulties throughout the entire semester in visually representing his understanding of the course content. His models (of the specific genres and of the concept of genre always tended to be loose (see his models below). I constantly pushed him to draw more relational models; as a consequence, he attempted to abandon his usual type of drawing. His models 2 and 3 represent an instability in this practice. He tried to improve but ended up producing even less effective models. In model 2 he was unable to visually represent the relations he found. Instead, he wrote, “all genres have a purpose”/“genre having field, tenor, mode.” In model 3, he did not draw a model; he wrote

1 Vygotsky, L.S. Problema vozrasta. Unpublished manuscript.
examples of genres (announcement, cover letter, and argumentative text) and took some notes regarding a feature of each of them (key word, well-written, developed sentences), which are linked to the genre by arrows. Models 2 and 3 reveal how this student is regulated by the activity of drawing his/her understanding of the course.

Fr attempted to comply with the instructor’s request (he drew model 2 after the conference), but was unable to do so. In the conference he recognized his models were not relational and when asked why he thought this, he answered: “I don’t think I don’t try. But I feel I am mistaken”. The second sentence of his answer reveals his recognition that his goal should change from just jotting down words on the paper in compliance with the instructor’s request for visual representation to drawing models that can be used as a tool to mediate learning. The instructor’s intervention during the conference seemed to have some impact on Fr’s orientation to drawing the models, but it did not appear to push him sufficiently to overcome his being regulated by the act of drawing. His subsequent model (of the genre argumentative text) combined two strategies employed in previous models: representing ideas around a main concept located in the center (in model 1) and writing a note about each concept around the main concept (in model 3) (see figure 6.9). With more instruction and more practice with visual representations, Fr might reach a stage of other-regulation (where he could respond effectively to the instructor’s request of producing more relational models) and eventually attain full self-regulation.

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The question was the following: Do you know why you are not linking them [the words on the model]? You don’t try or you can’t link them because you really don’t understand them sufficiently so that you can make these relations?”
Nevertheless, I argue that there was some development because Fr tried to respond to the instructor’s request by drawing a different type of model and perceived that his models were not useful because they were “mistaken”. His models revealed development in the sense that the instructor managed to create some dissonance in Fr’s perception and drawing practice. In other words, they signal development as a historical process, constituted by “upheavals, (…) gaps and discontinuity” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 73). The upheaval was present in the data; what was not present was the consequence of this upheaval which would show more noticeable development: more relational models drawn following model 3.
Figure 6.6: Fr’s model 1
Figure 6.7: Fr’s model 2
Figure 6.8: Fr’s model 3
Figure 6.9: Fr’s model of the argumentative text
Chg manifested smooth development. He began with empirical models, where the focus was on the classification of genres into written and oral, formal and informal. He also mentioned examples of genres (ads, recipes, news). In model 2, he classified genre into formal and informal, and provided a real example of mode (full sentences). This learner empirically represented ways to approach an audience (straightforward, formal or informal, friendly or without emotion). Field, tenor, and mode are dissociated, and the examples of tenor are not actually associated with it (no emotion, friendly, formal or informal). He clearly confuses mode with tenor since he inserted “friendly” and “no emotion” in the mode circle. In contrast, model 3 contains the words field, tenor, and mode, which compose the basic relationship that is constitutive of genre. (see figures 6.10 and 6.11.)
Figure 6.10: Chg’s model 2
Figure 6.11: Chg’s model 3
J presents an especially interesting case. All his models are theoretical but basically represent the same relationship between goal and situation (see Figures 6.12 to 6.14). Although his models do not contain the elements of the ACP they reflect words associated with it: goal can be associated with field and situation, with context. Rather than just representing genre in terms of types of texts or a classification into oral or written modes, in model 1, J conceives of genre as a way to achieve a goal; in model 2, as a key to unlock a padlock; and in model 3, as a political choice of writing affected by different situations. It is particularly interesting to note his use of physical objects (key and padlock) to represent his understanding of an abstract concept (abstract in the sense that genre was not clearly defined for him).

In fact, his models did not change substantially and did not evolve since he was unable to insert the concepts of field, tenor, mode, and culture into his model. For this reason, although he had a theoretical understanding of genre from the outset, he was unable to respond appropriately to the instruction and modify his representations. He showed signs of theoretical thinking, but they did not develop throughout the semester.
Figure 6.12: J’s model 1
The Model of General Meaning of Genre

The proper key is needed depend on different books.
The proper genre is needed in different goals.

Figure 6.13: J’s model 2
6.3 Discussion

The analysis of the three models for genre revealed that the students’ models changed and evolved, except for J’s. Two students (Cho, Fr) moved forward and then
regressed. Five displayed continuous progression (Xn, Ma, N, Chl, Chg). Six revealed stabilized progression; they moved forward and then became stable or they were stable and then moved forward (K, M, F, H, D, X). In all, the modeling phase revealed that six students reached a theoretical thinking stage (Cho, M, N, Chg, X, J).

The quality of the relations represented in the model also developed from being restricted to examples of genre (news, ads, recipes, etc.) or its classification into oral and written to visualizing the interconnections between field, tenor, and mode. The analysis of the models uncovered the developmental path of the students’ theoretical thinking in the modeling phase of the course. It showed how development varied according to the individual. The analysis also revealed that as the course evolved the students tended to abandon categories and concrete examples to represent genre with words from the ACP and in a more relational way. However, we should be cautious in interpreting these findings. The model’s evolution presumably reveals how students changed their thinking about genres. Yet, if this thinking is not translated into performance, their development of theoretical thinking remains incomplete.

Through a sociocultural lens, psychological development, and consequently, the development of theoretical thinking, do not constitute a linear cumulative process of past achievements (Lantolf & Appel, 1994). Rather, it is a “movement on an ascending spiral” (Kussman, 1976). In other words, the individual is in continuous progression that not only implies steps forward but also steps backwards. As Kussman (1976), referring to the work of Vygotsky write that “development can be progressive and regressive” (p. 124).
However, the backward movement cannot be interpreted as regression; it is, instead, revisiting the past from a different perspective. As Vygotsky (1978) states:

Our concept of development implies a rejection of the frequently held view that cognitive development results from the gradual accumulation of separate changes. (...) child development is a dialectical process characterized by periodicity, unevenness in the development of different functions, metamorphosis or qualitative transformation of one form into another, intertwining of external and internal factors, and adaptive processes … .(p.73)

For example, Fr drew concrete models, then a transitional model, followed by a concrete model (see Figures 6.6 to 6.8). Yet his concrete model 3 differs from his initial concrete model, since he recognized the need to change his drawings when the instructor urged him to draw more relational models during the writing of cover letters. Hence, I would say that Fr’s model changed and evolved but not sufficiently to reveal signs of theoretical thinking.

Also, it is important to note that Vygotsky’s (1978) genetic method employed in this study brought more validity to the data obtained as it indicates the learner’s zone of proximal development (ZPD). As discussed in chapter 4, the goal of the course was to promote the development of theoretical thinking in learners through learning actions, including modeling. The instructor frequently pushed the students to draw models that represented a theoretical understanding of genre. To achieve this, the course provided the students with extensive work on field, tenor, and mode, with some focus on the conflict of the discipline and discourse communities. On several occasions this stimulus proved
ineffective for students to represent relations in their models. X, for example, after a
discussion on discourse communities and their relation to field, tenor, and mode was only
able to draw a disconnected little square with discourse community written in it in her
model 2. In model 3, this element was removed (see appendix H). This modification
represents a clear indication that X did not understand the term discourse community; she
tried to insert it in the model, but her understanding was not enough to keep it there. In
sum, interfering in the experiment makes the data obtained more valid because it reveals
the student’s level of ZPD3.

The models cannot constitute the only source of data to analyze theoretical
thinking despite their richness and evidence that the students tend to represent what they
understand in the models. This analysis can be enriched if it is linked to the analysis of
other sources of data as well. This will be done in the next chapter.

6.4 Concluding remarks

This chapter analyzed theoretical thinking development in the modeling phase by
means of the three models of genre. The analysis revealed three types of models:
empirical, transitional and theoretical. The transitional type had the following subtypes:
empirical and theoretical but not relational, empirical and theoretical and relational and
theoretical but not relational. Six students (Cho, M, N, Chg, X, J) reached a theoretical
thinking stage. The analysis indicated that the students had different paths of

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3 This is the same position of Kinchin and Bay (2000) from a conceptual map perspective.
development and that this was comprised of steps forward and backward rather than of a linear sequence.

In chapter 7, I will analyze the development of the students’ theoretical thinking in their performance and in the evaluation phase of the course.
CHAPTER 7

ANALYSIS OF LEARNERS’ THEORETICAL THINKING DEVELOPMENT (PART 2)

This chapter presents the data relating to the development of the students’ theoretical thinking in the performance phase (Bhatia’s exercise and the obituaries exercise\(^1\)) and in the evaluation phase (answers to the problem situation question) of the course. A comparison of the students’ development through this course identified which students developed their theoretical thinking the most and the least. The students whose writing was evaluated to answer research question number 2 were selected based on this information.

7.1 Analysis of the development of theoretical thinking in the performance phase

The analysis of the development of theoretical thinking in the performance phase is based on data from the following sources: (a) wedding invitation task, seventh week of the course, (b) Bhatia’s exercise, 12th week of the course, and (c) obituary exercise, 12th week of the course. These exercises constitute problem-solving tasks in which the students had to explain a linguistic phenomenon by employing the germ-cell models given in class.

7.1.1 Analysis of the wedding invitation task

\(^1\) See appendices I and J.
The wedding invitation task asked the students to write about the genre of wedding invitations in their own countries and to explain the differences and/or similarities between the genres in their countries and those in the United States. Through this task, the instructor intended that the students explain a linguistic phenomenon (the differences or similarities) by means of the ACP (LANGUAGE ↔ CONTEXT). The task was instructed as follows:

*The examples you read are of American wedding invitations. What is a wedding invitation like in your country? How do you explain these differences or similarities? (at least 1 double-spaced page)*

The unit of analysis for this data was the students’ explanation of this linguistic phenomenon. Thus, the question used to analyze the data was: *Does the learner explain linguistic phenomena by employing the ACP?* The features of an answer that reveals signs of theoretical thinking are as follows: (a) the answer should start with a reference to the ACP (this would indicate that the student is not linked, restricted, or tied to concrete examples), (b) examples can be mentioned but after the ACP is addressed (this indicates subordination of the concrete to the abstract), (c) the student should reveal understanding of the words from the germ-cell model (how culture affects genre and/or field and/or tenor and/or mode) in his/her answer, (d) the student should ask ‘why’ questions, and (e) the student should recognize that there is an abstract concept (ACP) as an explanatory principle that accounts for both differences and similarities of the phenomena under scrutiny. Not all these features should be present in an answer in order to reflect theoretical thinking. For example, if an answer first mentions empirical examples
followed by a reference to the ACP, this secondary reference is considered a sign of theoretical thinking because there was eventually reference to the basic relationship. The main features of an answer that revealed signs of theoretical thinking were (c) and (e). If the answer revealed all traces, it indicated the students were developing theoretical thinking in its fullest form. An ideal example of an answer that would reveal theoretical thinking for this task is provided below:

Culture affects the way genres are constructed by determining the different ways field, tenor, and mode are combined and realized in a certain genre. Several countries might have wedding invitations, but they are realized differently because different cultures have different ways of realizing the field, the tenor, and the mode. For instance, wedding invitations in the United States might have different levels of formality, while in Brazil there are no variations in this aspect: the invitation must always be formal. The field is the same for both but some aspects of it might differ. For example, depending on the circumstances, American wedding invitations might not contain the names of the bride and groom’s parents. In Brazil, this is not acceptable. Whether the bride and groom are young or not or whether their parents are alive or not, the text should mention their names. The mentioning of parents’ names in wedding invitations might actually reveal some other features of the society where the text is embedded. For example, we could ask: Why in Brazil is the mentioning of the parents’ names always obligatory, whereas in the United States it is not? The answer should lie in the context. There must be something in the culture regarding the relationship
between parents and children that inclines the writer to include or not include the names. Culture also affects mode. In Brazil, usually the invitation starts with the bride’s name followed by the groom’s name [K and E together with their parents (parents’ names are then mentioned) to the ceremony . . . .] It seems that there are other ways to start the sentences in American wedding invitations: For example, with we (We wish you, our friends to share with us the tender moment of the marriage…) or you (You are invited to attend the wedding of X and Y). In Somalia, wedding invitations are oral so the mode is spoken. Thus, although there are differences and similarities among wedding invitations in different cultures, there is a basic explanation for them which is the following: language and context influence one another.

Answers which emphasize empirical thinking focus exclusively on the description of superficial observable features of the genre. The transitional phase encompasses answers that refer to the model but without signaling any understanding of it. For the theoretical thinking stage, there are four levels: (a) theoretical thinking 1 (TT1) means that the student only reveals some understanding of the elements of the model (feature c) above); (b) theoretical thinking 2 (TT2) indicates that the student understands some elements of the model and provides an explanation of the linguistic phenomena based on the elements of the model but is not aware of the ACP as the basic explanatory principle; (c) theoretical thinking 3 (TT3) means that the student shows some understanding of the elements of the course and recognizes the ACP as the essential explanatory principle; and (d) theoretical thinking 4 (TT4) signals a very developed form
of theoretical thinking where students reveal full understanding of the elements of the model, ask ‘why’ questions (feature d) above), and recognize the ACP as the essential explanatory principle of the linguistic phenomena (feature e) above). The design of the task itself elicits answers that should be at a certain level of theoretical thinking. In this case, the wedding invitation task elicits levels TT2, TT3 or TT4 since it demands an explanation of a phenomenon.

My analysis of the students’ texts indicated that four students (K, Fr, Ma, and N) did not exhibit signs of theoretical thinking. Six showed signs of development of theoretical thinking (Cho, M, H, Chl, Chg, and X). Four did not do the task.

Table 7.1

*Theoretical thinking development in the wedding invitation task*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student/ stage of development</th>
<th>Empirical thinking</th>
<th>Transitional</th>
<th>TT signs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cho</td>
<td></td>
<td>√ (TT3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td>√ (TT2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>---</td>
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<td>---</td>
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<tr>
<td>Xn</td>
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<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fr</td>
<td>√</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ma</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td></td>
<td>√ (TT2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chl</td>
<td></td>
<td>√ (TT2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chg</td>
<td></td>
<td>√ (TT2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>√ (TT3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TT = theoretical thinking
--- = the student did not do the task
√ = presence of a type of thinking
As can be seen from the examples below, the students’ texts emphasized the description of the wedding invitations more than the explanations for why the features were used.

**K:** Although, there are many differences, there are some similarities. The first similarity is that they must identify the bride and groom and frequently identify the parents. The second similarity is that they both have the same purpose is to invite people to the ceremony. Those words could be formal or friendly. Finally, all invitations will include the date, time, and place of the ceremony.

**Ma:** In my country invitations are almost the same as American invitations. The invitations in my country usually have a small essay on the side of the invitation. It is usually written by the bride and the husband, and it is to thank god and their families for the care that they have received from them and encouragement throughout their lives.

**Fr:** One of the reasons why they get the most formal wedding invitations is because when the guests receive the wedding invitation they always will keep the wedding invitation as something to remember for that event. And the people that are having the wedding, wanted that everyone that they send the invitation too, remember this event as one of the best in their life.

**N:** In our culture [Somalia] do not send invitational cards or letters to the people whom we are inviting to the wedding. (. . . ) Inside the city the chosen ones in

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2 These are excerpts from the students’ longer answers and were not edited.
charge of inviting the guests, would go door to door to invite people for the wedding. (italics are mine)

The explanations provided (Ma: "to thank god … lives"/ Fr: “because … for that event.”) are not linked to the ACP; they are part of the observable superficial feature of the phenomenon. Likewise, N does not use culture to explain the oral mode for wedding invitations in his country; the element of culture is simply part of this observable superficial feature. N’s answer also raises ‘why’ questions – Why are wedding invitations oral in this country? Or written in American culture? – which apparently he does not recognize, as his text does not address the question.

Examples of signs of theoretical thinking follow:

**M:** When the Chinese write a wedding invitation, we usually choose the red or pink paper because of the Chinese culture. The red and pink are means good luck.
That is why they pick these colors. The white color, of course means bad luck. So, we never pick this color for wedding. (italics are mine)

**Chl:** According to Chinese tradition, people take the respect to parents seriously. The couple who are going to marry would put their parents’ names on the invitations in order to appreciate and honor their parents’ support and fosterage. (italics are mine)

M and Chl explain the linguistic phenomenon by means of the element of culture (or tradition, which is encompassed by culture), which is part of the ACP. However, they are not aware that culture is part of an explanatory principle for all linguistic phenomena. For this reason they are at level 2 of theoretical thinking. Despite the fact N, M and Chl use
the word culture (tradition), they employ it differently. While N sees culture as simply an empirical object (what is observable in the wedding invitation), M and Chl through the use of the words ‘because of’ and ‘according to’ give some explanatory status to culture.

**H:** Same format is used, but one of the differences between American and Mexican wedding invitations is that, we include the names of the godparents, which is one thing American wedding invitations do not include, this is not because they don’t want or they do not consider it important. *This is because the American people do not have this custom, they do not look for godparents to sort of sponsor part of the ceremony.* (italics are mine)

H is able to provide an explanation for a difference (absence of ‘godparents’ in American wedding invitations) by means of a “custom,” which is part of the cultural element of the ACP. Like M and Chl, he is not aware that culture (context) is the basic principle of explanation for linguistic phenomena either. H is at level 2 of theoretical thinking.

**Chg:** Although there are a lot of similarities, there still are many differences: we have a format order about invitations – guest’s name, description of two characters, and then date/time/location and the writer’s signature. We don’t write sentences from left to right but from top to bottom *because Chinese write words in this way long time ago and we have been keeping the tradition* until today’s wedding invitations. (italics are mine)

Chg accounts for the differences and similarities through Chinese tradition. Like the others, he did not search for a basic relation to explain the features he noticed and mentioned in his text. In addition, his explanation raises a ‘why’ question that he does not
address: Why is the tradition referred to maintained in the genre wedding invitations? He is also at level 2 of theoretical thinking.

As can be seen, the students’ comments do not provide theoretically satisfactory explanations; for this reason, the following questions remained unanswered: Why are the names of godparents needed/relevant in Mexican wedding invitations? Why does Chinese tradition preserve the respect for parents, which is reflected in the invitation text? These students did not perceive the basic relationship (ACP) as an explanatory principle of the phenomenon in focus. For these reasons, they did not show signs of TT4 signs; rather they revealed at most the emergence of theoretical thinking.

Another important aspect of the analysis regards the level of awareness the students had concerning the role of ACP. M, H, Chl, and Chg may not have been aware of the explanatory power of this relation according to the features of the wedding invitation described in their texts. If they had been instructed to use the germ-cell models and had used them, these models could have been employed as tools for them to remember the role of the basic relationship in explaining an array of linguistic phenomena. Consequently, theoretical thinking might have developed more efficiently.

Two students showed level 3 of theoretical thinking:

**Cho:** Another thing is we read the wedding invitations form top to bottom, then right to left. It is really big different form American wedding invitations, because of different cultures.

The generic moves and mode of Chinese wedding invitation and American wedding invitation are very similar to each other. But the social background of
cultures makes some differences in language and context. Because they have the same goal to invited people to attend a wedding, so they have had a connection between Chinese wedding invitations and American wedding invitations. (italics are mine).

Cho explains some of the differences between wedding invitations in the United States and China as arising from culture (“Another thing is we read the wedding invitations from top to bottom, then right to left. It is really big different form American wedding invitations, because of different cultures.”). He also in the second paragraph generalizes his explanation to some extent: “the social background of cultures makes some differences in language and context.”

X also reveals signs of TT3.

X: No matter in what language or country, wedding invitation must have its field, tenor, and mode. The field and tenor may be similar, because they are specified for wedding; new couple and their family invite people to the wedding. Mode may be much different, first, in different language, English, Chinese, French, and so on. According to different culture and tradition, people approach to the guest in different ways.

As different from the others, X showed understanding of the ACP and considered it the basic explanatory principle of the phenomenon (“No matter in what language or country, wedding invitation must have its field, tenor, and mode”/ “According to different culture and tradition, people approach to the guest in different ways”). In other words, she was aware that wedding invitations, regardless of cultures or countries must have field, tenor,
and mode. In addition, she showed understanding of the concepts of field and tenor (“The field and tenor may be similar, because they are specified for wedding; new couple and their family invite people to the wedding“). For these reasons, she showed level 3 of theoretical thinking development.

In sum, four students (K, Fr, Ma, N) did not show signs of theoretical thinking while six (Cho, M, H, Chl, Chg, X) did. Cho and X had signs of TT3 and M, H, Chl and Chg reached the level TT2. Four learners did not do the task.

7.1.2 Bhatia’s exercise

Bhatia’s exercise was given to the students during the 12th week of the course. In this class the instructor led a discussion on the relation between field, tenor, and discourse communities with regard to the invitation genre. This included an announcement of an event and a cover letter. The instructor provided her own visualization of these relations to the students. Bhatia’s exercise was meant to make the students perceive how the ACP, represented in the four versions of the germ-cell model, was realized with a concrete example (cover letters in South Asia). The instructor explicitly advised the students to use the germ-cell models to carry out the task, as follows:

2) Use the models (1-4) about Basic Relationships to answer the following:
   a) How do you explain the differences between cover letters in America and in South Asia?
   b) How do you explain the presence of the moves adversary-glorification and self-degradation in South Asian cover letters?
c) How are field, tenor, and mode interrelated in the genre cover letter? Answer this question by comparing South Asian and American cover letters.

3)

-Do people in your country write job application letters when they apply for a job? --- yes, ----no. Why?
-(To be done individually) What are cover letters like in your country? Write at least one double-spaced page.

Students began this exercise in class and finished it as a homework assignment. Although they were allowed to work in pairs (except for part 3, second question, which was a writing exercise), most of the students submitted individual answers. Chl and X worked together, and M and J worked with students who did not give their consent to be in this study. For this reason, M and J’s answers to this exercise were discarded. While the students were in the classroom, the instructor emphasized the use of the models to do the task, but for part 3, first question, which was done as homework, the students might not have employed the model. It would have been better to emphasize its use in the wording of the exercise.

The questions asked of the data were the following: Does the student explain linguistic phenomena by employing the ACP? Does the learner understand the concepts of field, tenor, and mode? Does the learner understand the interrelationship between field, tenor, and mode? Thus, the unit of analysis for analyzing this data was the relations that the students established between the phenomena under scrutiny, in this case, the characteristics of cover letters in South Asia and in their own countries, and the elements of the model. A typical answer that would reveal the students’ theoretical thinking
contains the same features shown for the wedding invitation task (see section 7.1.1) plus an additional one: students should reveal at least a partial understanding of the concepts of field, tenor, and mode and/or the interrelationship between the concepts. This partial understanding is subsumed by the feature ‘some understanding of the elements of the model’ in the classification of the levels of theoretical thinking.

Illustrative answers for each question for tasks (2a, 2b, 2c, and 3) that reveal signs of theoretical thinking are provided below:

2a) The differences must be explained by a basic relationship (language ↔ context). If cover letters in South Asia are different from those in the United States, it means that the contexts or cultures surrounding the creation of these texts are different. So what are the differences between these two countries in regard to cover letters? In the United States there are more jobs and the job market is very competitive. So the market must screen the candidates without interviewing all of them. Cover letters have become the tool to do this. For this reason, cover letters in the United States are relatively complex. There are three moves: demonstrate knowledge about the company, reveal the applicants abilities and skills, and be proactive. The need for a cover letter is a reflection of a strong feature in American culture: time is money. The letter should reveal the qualities of the candidate without the need of an interview. The cover letter is the tool for the best candidates to stand out, because the resume itself is not longer sufficient. Competition obliges candidates to sell themselves by means of self-promotion. In South Asia, where there are fewer jobs and the level of education is lower, a cover
letter just mentioning the resume might be sufficient and may not be required at all.

2b) The differences must be explained by a basic relationship (language ↔ context). If cover letters in South Asia are different from those in the United States, it means that the contexts or cultures surrounding the creation of these texts are different. So what are the cultural/economic differences between the two countries? The United States is a much richer country than the South Asia region. There are more jobs and people are more educated in the U.S. than in South Asia. In addition, South Asia depends economically on richer countries, including the United States. Therefore, the context must affect the way cover letters are written. As Bhatia noted, cover letters in South Asia employ two moves that are not present in their American counterparts: adversary-glorification and self-degradation. Due to economic dependence, South Asians beseech more by glorifying the difficult situation they live in (adversary glorification) and by underestimating their capacity (self-degradation). Thus persuasion in South Asia is built upon different conceptions than in the United States. The tenor is persuasive in both types of cover letters, but it is expressed differently due to cultural differences.

2c) Field, tenor, and mode constitute the context that affects and is affected by language use. Field is the social activity of the text, what it is about; tenor is the writer (speaker) and the audience (interlocutor) and the relationship between both;
and mode is how language is used in the text. It is about cohesion and how sentences are linked into a coherent text. Field, tenor, and mode are interrelated. If one changes, the others change as well. For example, cover letters in South Asia have two moves (adversary glorification and self-degradation) that their American counterparts do not have. Due to cultural factors, explained in question 2b, these moves are present in the field of the cover letters in South Asia. The field, affected by culture, also affects the tenor. By emphasizing adversity and underestimating him/herself, the person approaches the audience by imploring the reader. The mode is also affected because sentences in the cover letter will begin, for example, with comments about family members as part of the job applicant’s use of adversity to appeal for a job.

Another example of this interrelationship is that mode is highly affected by the field in the cover letters in South Asia. In this region, cover letters are frequently used just to mention the enclosure of the resume, as it seems there is no concern for I-balanced sentences (see excerpt 38 in Bhatia’s text).

(part 3) In Brazil cover letters are not used. To apply for a job, a resume with the proof of qualifications along with networking (letting your friends know that you are on the job market; having a friend recommend you to the personnel unit of the firm which has an opening) is enough. I think the absence of the cover letter genre in Brazil is related to the country’s high level of unemployment and the low quality of education. As there are insufficient jobs, and the candidates are
sometimes not very qualified, the job screening process is based only on the resume and an interview. Also, in Brazilian culture, the recommendation of an important person or a good employee in the company might be sufficient to land a job. In order to explain more properly why cover letters are not employed in Brazil, research on the activity surrounding the job market and the search and hiring process should be conducted.

7.1.2.1 Analysis of part 2 of Bhatia’s exercise

The analysis of part 2 of the exercise reveals that the students were in three different stages of development. The empirical thinking (or absence of signs of theoretical thinking) stage is characterized by reference to concrete examples and focuses on the description of the differences between Americans’ and South Asians’ use of cover letters, without providing any explanations for these facts. If there are explanations, they are based on the superficial features of the context. The transitional phase is characterized by its reference to the ACP but without any indication from the learner that he/she understood it. The theoretical thinking stage is comprised of four substages (TT1, TT2, TT3 and TT4) as described in the wedding invitation task. Questions 2a, 2b, and 3 elicit a level of TT2 or higher, whereas question 2c does not require explanations but an understanding of the ACP (the interrelationship among field, tenor, and mode); hence, this question elicits level 1 of theoretical thinking. If the student reveals some understanding of the concepts of field, tenor, and mode without actually explaining their
interconnectedness, I also consider it a sign of TT1. Below are examples of the three stages. In each case, I have not edited the learners’ writing:

**Empirical thinking**

**Chg**: (2a, b, c combined). In the South Asia cover letter, they show too much emotion such as using different adjective to describe their thoughts. But in American, the rules show the lay out clearly, only a few paragraphs can describe all the information which they need. We should never use the adversary-glorification and self-degradation moves in the cover letter, all you have to do which is to show the employers your best abilities and skills. Let them know you are the best of those employees.

Chg did not provide explanations for the differences mentioned and instead provided a description of the differences between South Asia and the United States.

**H**: (2b) People in South Asia use this adversary-glorification and self-degradation because they want to reflect their humbleness. Therefore they enlist not only the good things about them but also their bad ones.

H was not able to explain the presence of the moves adversary-glorification and self-degradation based on the ACP. The explanation he provides based on humility is not linked to this abstract concept; humility is not seen as a cultural aspect that might be the result, for example, of economic dependence.

**Chl/X**: (2a) In American letters, applicants more likely write about their knowledge of the companies they apply; their own accomplishments and qualifications (selling themselves to the employer); and their proactive action –
contact the employer at a specific time. No emotion allowed in American cover letters. In contrast, applicants in South Asia don’t take the chance to demonstrate their capability to employer. Adversary-glorification and self-degradation are two common moves formed in South Asian cover letters.

As can be seen in the examples, the students highlighted the differences between the genre cover letter in the two regions without providing explanations based on the ACP. The example produced jointly by Chl/X also shows that a student can regress in development since X revealed theoretical thinking in the previous task (the wedding invitation task). A possible explanation for this is the fact that this exercise was done in pairs, and Chl might have influenced X to accept an empirical response.

Transitional phase

Cho: (2b) The presence of the moves adversary-glorification and self-degradation is caused by influence of South Asian culture. The social society affects the language and context using in the genre in the South Asia. The different cultures have dissimilar ways of expressions of feelings and thoughts.

K: (2a) The differences between cover letters in America and South Asia are because they both have difference culture or society, and that effect the used of language such as the field, tenor, and mode are difference from each other.

N: (2c) They all have they field, tenor and mode interrelated based on there cover letters that’s what every genre has.
D: (2a) The differences between the cover letters in America and in South Asia are culture, and the three basic elements (field, tenor, mode). These factors have a great impact on the cover letter between these two cultures.

The above quotes did not really show how culture explains the differences between the use of cover letters in South Asia and their use in the United States, or how field, tenor, and mode were interrelated in them. They basically referred to the model without indicating any understanding of it. This ‘ventriloquism of the model characterizes the transitional phase while empirical thinking is simply a description of the phenomenon without explanations; and if there are such explanations they are not based on the ACP.

Theoretical thinking

K: (2c) Field, tenor and mode all have related to each other. All of them are important to cover letter. If one is missing or cut out, that I will change the other two’s effect. For example, in South Asian cover letter only enclose the resume, but not taking advantage to offer self-appraisal. That change the field from more part to less, but that also affect the tenor become less persuasive and less creative.

In the first two sentences K repeats the models, but from the third sentence on, he is able to provide an example of the interrelationship between field and tenor. It is important to point out that his poor L2 writing skills hindered identification of more detailed signs of his development of theoretical thinking. When he says, “That change the field from more part to less,” he likely means that the letter does not cover a lot of topics; the letter consists just of a paragraph mentioning that the resume is enclosed. As question 2c does not require an explanation, K’s answer was classified as level 1 of theoretical thinking.
Cho: (2c) According to the model of genre, field, tenor, and mode affect the language and context we use in our genres. Also, all of them are influenced by cultures. It means the different cultures have different way of using language and contexts. And the field, tenor, and mode are interrelated in the genre of cover letters within their culture. Field is the goal of content, i.e., to write the cover letter, and tenor is the relationship how the writer makes with the reader. Thus field and tenor determine the language and context we use in the mode. However, culture plays a very important role in using language and context. In South Asian countries, the applicants write a cover letter including their adversary-glorification and self-degradation to show how they can overcome difficult situations, but do not mention their qualifications to convince the reader of their suitability for a job or position. In contrast, in American culture, the writer offers self-appraisal to convince the audience or recruiter to offer an interview. So, the cultures influence field, tenor, and mode as interrelated in the genre of the cover letter.

Cho does not show the interrelationship between field, tenor, and mode but reveals an understanding of the concepts field and tenor. He is at level 1 of theoretical thinking.

Ma: (2a) Cover letters in America have to be very professional. If you make at least a minor error, you may be discarded right away. In America, people do not beg for a job position while in South Asia it is permitted. In South Asia, this letters can be seen as professional, but they are greatly different from the ones in America. The tenor in the two letters is somewhat similar but at the same very different. In both countries you say good things about the company but in South
Asia people also beg too much for the job. The mode in America is different to the one in South Asia because in American Cover letters people try to diversify the beginning of every sentence. They try not to be too I centered. In South America, it seems to be permitted because to what I see, the sender of the letter talks too much about himself.

Ma explains the differences in terms of two elements of the model (tenor and mode) and shows an understanding of these concepts. He is at level 2 of theoretical thinking.

**Chl/X: (2b)** In my opinion, the presence of the moves adversary-glorification and self-degradation in South Asian cover letters is due to the tradition or culture of South Asians. The employers are more likely kind-hearted people who have lots of sympathy and willingness to help others. For this reason, once they read about the plight and difficulties of the applicants, they automatically want to try to help them solve the problem.

The first sentence of Chl and X’s comments refer to the ACP and then explain how culture affects the tenor in this cover letter: employees in South Asia are compassionate and for this reason they accept the moves adversary-glorification and self-degradation in the letter. Yet, the interesting ‘why’ question remains: Why would the culture compel the employer to be kind-hearted, sympathetic and willing to help? Since the students explain the phenomenon of the cover letter through elements of the model, but without signaling that this constitutes the basic explanatory principle, they are classified at level 2 of theoretical thinking.
7.1.2.2 Analysis of part 3 of Bhatia’s exercise

As the first question of part 3 was answered in the body of the second exercise of part 3, both questions were analyzed together to uncover signs of theoretical thinking. The analysis of part 3 of Bhatia’s exercise also revealed three stages of development: empirical thinking or absence of theoretical thinking, the transitional phase, and signs of theoretical thinking at three levels (TT2, TT3 or TT4). In the empirical phase, the students did not know how to answer the question or restricted their explanations to superficial, observable features (M, F, D, Chl, Chg, X, J). In the transitional stage the students referred to the model but did not demonstrate their understanding of what it represents. In other words, there was a reference to their culture but not to how it explained differences or similarities between the use of the cover letter genre in the United States and in their own country (Cho). In the theoretical thinking phase, the students provided some explanation for the differences and similarities found in the realization of the genre in the two countries based on the elements of the model (K, Ma). However, they should also have recognized that there was a basic explanatory principle to the phenomenon.

Below are examples\(^3\) of the students’ answers in the three categories:

**Empirical thinking**

**M:** In China, we need to write the cover letter to apply jobs, but have a lot of the people do not to do the cover letter. That is dependent on company, and people’s relative. If the company’s social class is high, the workers need to write a letter to

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\(^3\) They are non-edited excerpts of the students’ answers.
tell them what is your situation or anything about you. In my park of my city, people almost do not need to do the cover letter. Some people have some friends or families work in that company, or have good relationship with others who rich, they are very easy to get a job.

F: ( . . ) not all the jobs require a cover letter. The only job that require a cover letter are the jobs at big companies or a very formal office.

D: It is very common for the applicant to write their cover letter because it show the employer that this applicant is a well educated person. But in certain part of my country people tend to get job through connection. Many people tried to help their family members by allowing their family members to bypass the process of interview. I think this is unfair for those who has study for four years of college and does not have a right job.

Chl: Sometimes it is acceptable that if you mention about your plight or other difficulties, but make sure you don’t put yourself down. Usually, Chinese employers are kind-hearted and willing to help others to solve their problem based on their understanding of the situation.

Chg: Most of time, job application letters are not required in China. Sometimes it depends on the position of a job which they are seeking. If people are looking for the lower educational position, they will not need to write any letter. Otherwise, cover letters are required high educational position. However, many people just ask their friends whose work in the company to introduce them to the manager. Basically, we don’t write job application letter, this word seems strange in my
country. Therefore, we have never set up any rule as writing a job application letter. It is not important to our lives.

**J:** In Korea, when people apply for a job, they always write job application letters. Job application letters are required for all people who apply for a job. In Korea, like other countries, so many people apply for a job at the same time, especially when the job is popular. For this reason, the person who has responsible for the job should employ proper applicants from the hundreds of applicants. Job application letters are required for this reason. The recruiter can interview proper or competent applicants using job application letters without meeting every applicant.

**X:** It seems that Chinese cover letter is a little similar to American cover letter, but much different from cover letter of South Asia. It is basin on truths, the applicant’s experiences. Chinese cover over letter emphasizes on introducing applicant’s professional knowledge, ability, and colligated diathesis; as well, shows personal perspectives on study, work, and life. It is made up by three parts, introduction, body, and ending.

As can be seen, the students explained the differences and similarities of cover letters through elements of the context that were immediately observable. M and Chg referred to networking as a substitute for cover letters and F and Chg mentioned that not all types of jobs require cover letters. Neither did they employ the elements of the ACP to explain the phenomenon or reveal in their writing an awareness of the ACP as the basic explanatory principle.
In these examples, the students mentioned a few contextual influences on the existence of the genre and its characteristics, including the fact that cover letters are not used in certain countries because networking is employed more (M, Chg, D), or that cover letters are only employed as a way to select candidates for interviews (J). These students actually did not respond fully to the question; instead, they raised many other ‘why’ questions that they did not answer: Why is networking a more relevant tool to find a job than the cover letter? Why are Chinese employers kind-hearted? A possible reason they did not answer these questions might be seen in K’s answer, which explains the limited use of cover letters in his country because of the high level of illiteracy. If people do not know how to read and write, or do so poorly, cover letters are ineffective tools for a job search; consequently, networking might be a more adequate method. In addition, in order to fully answer these questions, the students had to consider the social action involving this genre in their countries. Thus, to understand the genre, theoretically one needs not only to understand the linguistic (field, tenor, and mode) or schematic structure analyses of genres but also to investigate the social action surrounding the genre. For this reason, in chapter 2, I advocated a holistic view of genre rather than its separation into schools which do not often interact with each other. However, due to time constraints, the investigation of the social action associated with the use of cover letters in each student’s country was not possible.

Cho’s explanation of cover letter use is the only transitional phase example in the data set:
**Cho:** I state that people in my country write job application letters when they apply for a job. The job application letter is a very useful tool to reveal applicant’s qualifications and ability to compete to other applicants in my country. Chinese cover letter has similarity and difference comparing to American cover letter by influence of different culture.

However, Cho does not develop his comment on the influence of culture on the genre further in his text.

Examples of signs of theoretical thinking related to the cover letter genre follow:

**K:** First of all, the field in my country’s letter is shorter than the American cover letter. In our letter we just have only one paragraph, which is simply introduce our self, and we send it including with the resume we have. Unlike in American cover letter that talk about the company and the reasons for applying the job. Also the letter in my country doesn’t have the third paragraph, which is to make contact with the employer in the future time, because we don’t like to make demand to the employer, so many of us do not use that move in the letter. Therefore, our cover letter is very simply and short.

Although K does not recognize a basic explanatory principle (LANGUAGE ↔ CONTEXT), he explains the differences between cover letters in the United States and in Vietnam (his home country) in terms of field, which is part of the ACP. He is at level 2 of theoretical thinking.

**Ma:** The tenor that they use in these letters is similar to Americans’. The tenor has to be persuasive enough so that the recruiter gives you at least an interview
and eventually get a job in the company that you want to work in. The word choice (mode) that they use is also very similar to American’s way. They try not to use too basic vocabulary and also they try to diversify the way they start their sentences.

Ma explains the phenomenon by means of tenor and mode, which are elements of the ACP. For this reason, he is at level 2 of theoretical thinking.

In these examples, the learners’ explanations could be improved since the element of culture, not mentioned, explains the different combinations of field, tenor, and mode that a genre presents in a given culture. In fact, the students do not fully recognize the ACP as the basic explanatory principle of the phenomenon under study. For this reason, the students in this data set have revealed signs of the emergence of theoretical thinking, at stage 2, rather than theoretical thinking in its fullest expression, which would be stage 4.

Table 7.2 summarizes the performance of the students in parts 2 and 3 of Bhatia’s exercise.

### Table 7.2

*Detailed students’ theoretical thinking development in Bhatia’s exercise*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student/ stage of development</th>
<th>Empirical Thinking</th>
<th>Transitional Thinking</th>
<th>Theoretical Thinking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td></td>
<td>2(a)</td>
<td>2 (b) TT2,(c) TT1, 3 TT2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cho</td>
<td>2(a)</td>
<td>2(b), 3</td>
<td>2(c) TT1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M**</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>2(c) TT1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>2(a,b), 3</td>
<td>2(c)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* TT1, TT2 are theoretical thinking levels.
This table reveals that the individuals’ paths of development did not coincide. On the one hand, Cho showed smooth progress whereby he moved from the absence of signs of theoretical thinking through the transitional stage to show signs of theoretical thinking. On the other hand, Chg did not demonstrate much progress at all in this task.

Moreover, there were 21 instances of empirical thinking, 6 instances of the transitional phase, and 13 instances of theoretical thinking. In other words, 21 signs of empirical thinking against 19 signs of non-empirical thinking represent a reasonable change. These differences indicate that the students still mainly employed empirical thinking to relate to the linguistic phenomena. Also, the students who did develop theoretical thinking were in this group for showing some understanding of field, tenor, and mode, not exactly for grasping the ACP as the basic explanation of all phenomena. X and Chl were the only students who provided an answer in this direction in question 2b.

There were 6 instances of the transitional phase. This means that the students did not tend to just repeat the model. This group of students either tended to show signs of

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>---</th>
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<th>---</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Xn*</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fr*</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ma</td>
<td>2(b)</td>
<td></td>
<td>2(a) TT2,(c) TT1 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H***</td>
<td>2(a,b)</td>
<td></td>
<td>TT2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N***</td>
<td>2(a,b)</td>
<td>2(c)</td>
<td>TT1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>2(b),3</td>
<td>2(a)</td>
<td>2(c) TT1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chl</td>
<td>2(a),3</td>
<td></td>
<td>2(b) TT2,(c) TT1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chg</td>
<td>2(a,b,c),3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>2(a),3</td>
<td></td>
<td>2(b) TT2,(c) TT1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J**</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TT= theoretical thinking
*Fr and Xn did not do the exercise
** M and J have not had part 2 analyzed because they did it with people who did not give consent for the study.
***N and H did not do part 3.
empirical or theoretical thinking. The same thing happened in the wedding invitation task (see Table 7.1) where the number of sign of theoretical thinking is greater than the number of the other two categories. This was a good indication that the students were displaying an emergence of theoretical thinking, despite the limitations of the course such as the time constraints and the instructor’s inexperience with Davydov’s approach.

Based on the findings presented in Table 7.2, I provided an overall classification of the students’ level of development by considering the phase that prevailed in the task. The form of development that had the most occurrences was used to classify the person as having achieved that developmental level. Table 7.3 provides the profile of the students’ theoretical thinking in a summarized form.

Table 7.3

Students’ overall development in Bhatia’s exercise

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Number of instances of the developmental stages (empirical thinking/transitional/theoretical thinking)</th>
<th>Overall level of development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>0/1/3</td>
<td>Theoretical thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cho</td>
<td>1/2/1</td>
<td>Transitional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>1/0/0</td>
<td>Empirical thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>3/1/0</td>
<td>Empirical thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xn</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fr</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ma</td>
<td>1/0/3</td>
<td>Theoretical thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>2/0/1</td>
<td>Empirical thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>2/1/0</td>
<td>Empirical thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>2/1/1</td>
<td>Empirical thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chl</td>
<td>2/0/2</td>
<td>Empirical = theoretical</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As the data reveal, the students did not perceive the whole model as a source of explanation for the phenomenon under study. They either paid attention to the culture/tradition or to the concepts of field, tenor, and mode. An answer that would fully indicate the students’ development of theoretical thinking would be one in which they recognized the ACP as the explanatory principle for the peculiarities of South Asian cover letters (adversary-glorification, self-degradation, using the cover letter just to enclose a resume, passive and humble tenor). The most students could do in this task was to identify the immediate social situation (because the writer wants to persuade, to be humble; the employer is kind-hearted). The students did the task but did not ask more ‘why’ questions in the answers they provided. Thus, it seems that the students were not yet able to free themselves from the immediate observable features of the culture and move to more general explanations, which would allow them to recognize the basic essential abstract relation (LANGUAGE ↔ CONTEXT) that governs any language phenomenon. This was done in the following class where the students read Bhatia’s explanations for these facts. The instructor drew their attention to how the context affected the way this genre was realized in that particular culture (see Appendix I for the whole exercise and Bhatia’s text).

7.2 Analysis of the obituary exercise, part 2
This task was given during the 12th week of the course. On this day, the instructor initiated the class by discussing with the students Bhatia’s (1993) explanations for the features found in South Asian cover letters. At this time in the class, the instructor called the group’s attention to the four versions of the germ-cell model. Then, students started the obituary exercise in class and finished them at home. In the following class, the students read Johns (1997) which focuses on the cultural differences in the obituary genre. After the students submitted the exercise the instructor provided them with corrections to their answers and as well as her own answers to the exercise. The exercise demands an explanation for a linguistic phenomenon; for this reason it elicits answers at level TT2 and higher. The task is as follows:

Use model # 2 of the Basic Relationships to answer the following:

- If both texts refer to the same topic, how do you explain the fact that text 1 has more information than text 2?4

The analysis of this data also revealed three levels of development: empirical thinking (absence of theoretical thinking development), the transitional phase, and signs of development of theoretical thinking. The answers that revealed theoretical thinking contained the features mentioned in section 7.1.1. A sample of an answer that reveals theoretical thinking follows:

As can be seen in model 2, language and context are interrelated. For this reason, if texts 1 and 2 are different, it is because they are surrounded by different contexts which affect the way language is used. So how different is the context of

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4 Texts 1 and 2 are in appendix J.
text 1 from text 2? The deceased in text 1 was more famous than the person in text 2. The goal of text 1 is to remember this important person who made great contributions to society, whereas text 2 is just to memorialize the deceased in a family circle. The tenor in text 1 is persuasive. A lot of accomplishments are mentioned to convince the reader (the general public, especially the newer generations who did not know Mr. Seybold’s work) about Mr. Seybold’s importance. Text 2 targets the deceased’s close family, who is approached emotionally. The mode is strikingly different in both texts. Whereas in text 1, there are many fully developed sentences the focus of which relies mainly on Mr. Seybold or his actions, text 2 uses key words (wife of, mother of, died peacefully) to express the family’s mourning. This mode was chosen probably because the newspaper charges by the word for obituaries and since the audience was comprised of family members, provision of a lot of information became unnecessary.

As defined before, empirical thinking occurs when the student does not refer explicitly to the ACP to explain the linguistic phenomenon (J, M, D, Chl, Ma). In the transitional phase, the students referred to the ACP without showing any understanding of it (Chg and H). If they explicitly referred to elements of the model and indicated some understanding of these elements they are considered to be at stage TT1. If the answer explicitly referred to elements of the model to explain linguistic phenomena, indicating some understanding of these elements but did not recognize that the ACP is the basic explanatory principle of the linguistic phenomena, then the student is in TT2. If the
answer explicitly referred to elements of the model to explain linguistic phenomena, and indicated some understanding of these elements and recognized that the ACP is the basic explanatory principle of linguistic phenomena, then the student is in TT3 (Cho, K, X).

Empirical thinking

**J:** The text 2 consists of just simple truth. The text 1 also consists of truth, but the truth is being supported with extra stories such as “according to his son Andrew Seybold.” In addition, the main stories of text 1 are based on detail additional stories.

**M:** The both texts are obituary. The first one is talking about who died and show all his experiences. How he spent his whole life, and some honors for him. The second one just shows about the person’s little bit background-her relation.

**D:** Because these two people have different social background, one is famous than the other. Also, the text 1 is referring to a bigger audience instead of text 2.

**Chl:** The text one focuses on a more famous person than the person in text two by comparing their achievements. Since he was well known by his accomplishments, the people who know him want more others to appreciate his contribution to the society.

**Ma:** Text 1 has more information because the writer wants the audience to know the importance of the person that has died.

These responses indicate that the students did not use the model to answer the questions. Although they used terms which might be associated with elements of the model (for example, D and Ma used the word audience, which is associated with tenor, D employed
the word social background which can be associated with context; and J, M, and Chl provided summaries of the text, which can be associated with field), they did not explicitly link the elements of the model with what they said. They did not perceive the ACP as the basic explanation for the phenomenon under focus. Thus, these answers indicate that the students are limited to the message of the text without relating the phenomenon to be explained to a basic explanatory principle. They are still operating at the level of empirical thinking.

Transitional phase

**Chg:** The text 1 has more information than text 2 because they have different fields, tenors and modes.

**H:** Because in the first paragraph more field, more tenor, and more mode are used, compared to the 2nd one.

1st paragraph -- the person was more famous

2nd paragraph -- less famous

And they are both aiming to different audiences

Chg just repeats what the model says (“because they have different fields, tenors and modes”) and H relates his explanations to field, tenor, and mode (“more field, more tenor, and more mode are used”), but they do not show understanding of these terms. For example, H should have explained how the fame of the person from text 1 affected the text to have “more field, more tenor, and more mode”.

Theoretical thinking
**Cho:** Text 1 has more information than text 2 since they have different audiences. It means that the tenor is different in these two texts. The person in the text 1 has great contributions and strong influence to the society. The writer wrote this obituary to memorize him, and wrote it for publics. Therefore, writer describes very details to show him what he contributed to our society. By comparing to text 2, the audiences are the relatives and friends who know Mrs. Avedon. She has less famous and affecting. So the writer approach to reader by using very brief words to describe that her relatives and friends miss her. Text one has more information than text two by having different tenor and Mode.

Cho is at level TT2 since he refers to the elements of the model tenor and mode to explain the phenomenon and shows understanding of the concept of tenor (“Text 1 has more information than text 2 since they have different audiences. It means that the tenor is different in these two texts.”).

**K:** Text 1 has more information than text 2, because the first one was more famous than the second one. So there is more information in the first one than the second. As we look at the model #2 of the Basic Relationships, if text one has more information than text two, then text one should have different Field, Tenor, and Mode. For example, text one is more persuasive than the second, because it has more information. It is very clear to show that text one have different Tenor than the second.

Although K does not start his answer with the ACP, he mentions it in the middle of the answer (“if text one has more information than text two, then text one should have
different Field, Tenor, and Mode”). He clearly mentions he used the model ("As we look at the model #2 of the Basic Relationships (. . .)". He relates the differences between the two obituaries by field, tenor, and mode ("if text one has more information than text two, then text one should have different Field, Tenor, and Mode") and shows comprehension of the term tenor ("For example, text one is more persuasive than the second, because it has more information. It is very clear to show that text one have different Tenor than the second"). He is at level 2 of theoretical thinking.

X: Text 1 has more information than text 2 because of their different social context. Mr. Seybold was a well-known person; he had made great contributions to the society. Besides his relatives, there are lots of other people know about and even respect him. People may be more interested in him so the writer gave more information to honor him. Mrs. Avedon is one of the billions of populaces. No much people know her except her family and friends. Her obituary is just for a small amount of people who are familiar with her, so don’t need to put much information.

She starts with the ACP and explains how the context is different in both texts in the subsequent sentences. She is at level 2 of theoretical thinking.

The table below provides an overview of the development of the students’ theoretical thinking in the obituaries exercise:

Table 7.4

*Students’ theoretical thinking development in the obituaries exercise*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student/ stage of development</th>
<th>Empirical thinking</th>
<th>Transitional</th>
<th>TT signs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td></td>
<td>√ TT2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cho</td>
<td></td>
<td>√ TT2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xn</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fr</td>
<td>---</td>
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<td>Ma</td>
<td>√</td>
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<td>H</td>
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<td>√</td>
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<td>N</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chl</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chg</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td>TT2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

--- = the student did not submit the exercise  
√ = the student presented the designated level of thinking

7.3 Discussion

The performance phase is composed of three problem-solving tasks. In the wedding invitation task, six students revealed theoretical thinking, whereas in the obituary task three showed signs of theoretical thinking. Since Bhatia’s exercise had four questions, the number of signs of theoretical thinking was greater: 21 instances of empirical thinking, 6 occurrences of the transitional phase, and 13 signs of theoretical thinking. After the students completed Bhatia’s exercise, the instructor discussed with them how the ACP explained the linguistic phenomena under focus in that task. In other words, there was stimulus from the course for the students to develop theoretical thinking. Even so, there was not much progress in the subsequent task (obituary). One reason might be that development does not occur in a straight line. Development involves transformations of the individual in a forward and backward direction. As has been said
before, from a sociocultural perspective, development evolves in an ascending spiral (Kussman, 1976), not through cumulative stages where phase 3 obligatorily shows a greater number of signs than phase 2. Hence, although the students were motivated to recognize a basic relationship as the explanatory principle for the linguistic phenomena, this motivation did not necessarily bring about an immediate response. Students need time to develop theoretical thinking; they were still struggling to understand part of the ACP (concepts such as field, tenor, and mode). For this reason, it is understandable that they still did not recognize the it as the basic explanatory principle. If the course had continued, more signs of the students’ theoretical thinking would probably have emerged. In addition, it must be noted that this study investigated development in its genesis rather than in the form of “fossilized behavior” (Vygotsky, 1978). This fact accounts for the frequent occurrences of backward and forward movement of development.

Another explanation as to why the students did not show more signs of theoretical thinking in the obituary exercise stems from their prevailing mode of thinking. These students were freshman and had recently come from high school, where the main form of thinking was likely empirical. 15 weeks of instruction is not sufficient to overcome a possible 12-year history of empirical thinking promoted by schooling. Hedegaard (2002) says that “theoretical knowledge and methods have not been predominant in either schools or the scientific traditions of the Western cultures.” (p. 30). Also, Davydov (1988c), in a review of thinking promoted by education in different epochs of humankind, remarks that bourgeois elementary schools privilege empirical thinking and
that theoretical thinking has been gradually removed from secondary mass-based teaching.

. . . education at bourgeois schools (just like education in other exploitative societies, for that matter) has two disparate levels of content. The first level includes a number of general cultural skills and habits. Although this level does contain certain elements of theoretical knowledge, on the whole it is directed toward the applied and utilitarian training of the pupils who basically belong to the underprivileged strata of the population. The second level is variously linked with academic and artistic skills, and is directed at the theoretical training of pupils who come predominantly from the ranks of the privileged. (Davydov, 1988c, p. 9)

Secondary schools teach theoretical thinking to the privileged⁵. The participants in this study are not privileged because of their low proficiency with L2, which might have hindered their process of acquiring theoretical knowledge, and if it was the focus of the schools they attended. One might also make the counter argument that they could have received theoretical knowledge in their home countries and in their L1. However, I would say that if this had been the case, this theoretical knowledge would have helped them in the process of acquiring this form of knowledge in L2, but there is no evidence that this was the case.

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⁵ Davydov’s discussion is mainly in terms of how theoretical knowledge becomes less accessible to the children of the non-dominant classes. But I think that alternative (innovative, non-mainstream) educational approaches, which might develop theoretical thinking and knowledge such as the Montessori approach, Friend’s school here in the USA and Piagetian schools in Brazil, for example, are private, expensive and restricted to the “privileged”. 
In addition, as seen in chapter 5, section 5.2, the students were immigrants and most had attended ESL programs in American schools. Although it is impossible to know how much theoretical thinking their secondary education provided them, based on the students’ theoretical thinking profiles that originated from this analysis, it is possible to hypothesize that they were not frequently exposed to this form of thinking in their prior education. Not accustomed to this type of thinking, the students might have found it easier to write about superficial, observable features of the phenomenon rather than to think in order to find explanations for them in the ACP.

Another explanation for the few signs of theoretical thinking lies in the students’ goals with the tasks. They could have conceived of them as just practice writing exercises in which the content really did not matter, and that what mattered was to comply with the norms of schooling and obtain a grade rather than to learn, or at most to write better. Most of the students did seem to have writing improvement as their goal for the course, but not development of theoretical thinking. That was the instructor’s goal for the students, but not theirs. Although they were frequently pushed to use more relations in their models and explain linguistic phenomena by means of a basic relationship, they were never told specifically that theoretical thinking was relevant for them. Thus, the students did not have a chance to reflect on this goal.

Also, it is important to consider the relationship between the students’ level of writing in English and their theoretical thinking. Their L2 writing hindered the analysis

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6 The fact that I as the researcher/instructor did not clearly reveal to the students the theoretical thinking goal of the course reflects the traditional practices of research in which the participant is seen as a subject rather than as an active participant in the study in which inevitably his/her goals and motives play a relevant role in the research.
and identification of signs of theoretical thinking. For this reason, further research should either employ more advanced L2 writers as participants or allow students to use L1 as a way to demonstrate the emergence of their theoretical thinking in the verbalization phase.

Theoretical thinking was also observed in their models. In the analysis of this sort of data, the students revealed more consistent development of theoretical thinking. This result occurred because (a) visualization is easier than writing and even easier than L2 writing, (b) theoretical thinking is best expressed in models (Hedegaard, 1990, p. 355), and c) the models did not demand that the students think of explanations that were not “ready-made”; all they had to do was to relate concepts on the paper. Obviously this does not invalidate the models as a source of data to study theoretical thinking. Models should be seen as a tool for the development of theoretical thinking (Davydov 1988 a, b, c, d.), which would be better grasped in problem solving tasks. As I said before, models engage students in evaluation of their learning and in challenging them to search for relations among concepts. However, problem-solving tasks for engaging students in applying what the models represent constitutes a more valid source of data to investigate students’ theoretical thinking emergence in its fullest form.

The number of instances of transitional phase was quite reduced: seven in Bhatia’s exercise and two in the obituary task. There could be some reasons for this fact. Firstly, the students in the course were thinking mainly empirically as the tables reveal. Secondly, the students might not have perceived the germ-cell models as tools to assist

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7 Obviously in this case, the instructor and the learners should have the same L1.
them in producing a response to the task. As was said before, the instructor did not always emphasize that the models had to be used. In addition, due to time constraints, it was not possible to provide extensive feedback on these tasks. Instead of discussing in detail the students’ answers to the tasks and how they could be improved with the utilization of the model, the instructor discussed Bhatia’s exercise and posted all the answers to the exercises on the university’s course website, Angel. In other words, the students did not see the goal behind the use of the germ-cell models: a hint to think. For this reason, they either thought empirically, which they were more accustomed to do, or they begin to show signs of the early stages of theoretical thinking (TT1 or TT2).

7.4 Analysis of theoretical thinking in the evaluation phase

The source of data for this phase included the answers to the problem situation question of the course given on 14th week of the course, which led the students to assess their level of comprehensibility of the ACP.

7.4.1 Analysis of the answers to the problem situation question of the course

The questions which follow were aimed at verifying the students’ understanding of the ACP that guided the instruction of this course (LANGUAGE ↔ CONTEXT).

We use language in a variety of situations and to achieve a wide range of goals. How do we use language to achieve these goals? How does the social situation affect our use of language? (problem situation of the course)
The unit of analysis for this data was the students’ comprehension of the ACP. The question asked of the data was the following: Does the student understand the ACP? The analysis also revealed three levels of development: empirical thinking or absence of theoretical thinking, the transitional phase, and signs of theoretical thinking. In empirical thinking, the students did not refer to the model representing the ACP. In the transitional phase the students referred to the model but did not show they understood it. The students who were developing theoretical thinking revealed their understanding of the relationship LANGUAGE ↔ CONTEXT and/or its variations. As the task does not elicit explanations for a linguistic phenomena but just understanding of the ACP the level elicited by this task was TT1. Table 7.4 provides an overview of the theoretical thinking development of the students in the answers to the problem situation question of the course:

Table 7.5

The development of students’ theoretical thinking in the answers to the problem situation question of the course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student/ stage of development</th>
<th>Empirical thinking</th>
<th>Transitional</th>
<th>TT signs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>√ TT1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cho</td>
<td>√</td>
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<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>√ TT1</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
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<td>Xn</td>
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<td>Ma</td>
<td>√</td>
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<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>√ TT1</td>
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<tr>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This table reveals that six students showed signs of theoretical thinking, one was in the transitional phase, and two displayed no signs of theoretical thinking. Below, the students’ non-edited answers are reproduced:

**Empirical thinking**

**Cho:** We use language to express our thoughts and feelings for announcing an event, convincing readers, persuading readers, informing audiences. Also we provide the facts to others. By using different genres, we can express the thoughts, feelings, and facts to our audiences to achieve our goals although the goals may be variety and different.

More language is needed here because it is necessary to convince the person to accept your opinion or idea. More language is needed to support the thesis. Use of certain words related to the content of the message, directive approach (American culture), use of fully developing sentences and formal structures, adjectives expressing, and using of transition word.

Cho indicates that genres are means to “express our thoughts” and “to achieve our goals,” but he does not link this with the ACP. For example, he could have connected “directive approach” and “formal structures” with tenor, and “fully developed sentences” and “us[e] of transition words” with mode.
**Ma:** We use language in a persuasive form of writing or persuasive speech. Depending on whom you are talking to and where you are, people in each area will respond to language on a different way due to some people having different opinions.

Ma does not refer to any of the models’ elements to account for the LANGUAGE ↔ CONTEXT relationship. Instead, he refers to people’s different opinions to explain different language use. In addition, he restricts himself to a persuasive use of language which is one of the several ways to use language.

**Transitional phase**

**F:** We use language to achieve in different ways, depending on the situation and also the kind of goal. The social situation is affected, by the use of tenor, field and mode, in the situation or the audience.

F’s first sentence is extremely confusing, probably because he either did not have a minimum understanding of the ACP that allowed him to write about it or more probably because he had difficulties in L2 writing that prevented him from expressing properly his understanding of the ACP. The second sentence refers to the elements of the model (tenor, field, and mode) but without further elaboration on this idea.

**Theoretical thinking**

**K:** We use apply language to the culture we currently live to achieve the goal in that society. In the other word, we use language and flow the discourse community of that society to express, announce, convince, persuading, informing the audiences.
Social situation does affect language we use in a genre. Different society has different culture and different way to use language. For example, there are cover letter in United State, but for most Asian countries, they don’t need cover letter when they apply for a job. The reason is because the United State have more large company and the applicants are more education.

Although K is confusing in the first part of his answer (“We use apply language to the culture we currently live to achieve the goal in that society.”), he manages to explain his understanding of the ACP in the second part. He is even able to provide an example (cover letters in the United States and in Asian countries) and provide explanations based on the context for them (“The reason is because the United State have more large company and the applicants are more education.”).

**M:** We can say the language refer to the field, tenor and mode from the context. They relate to each other. In a context, we have to have a goal. We can use the language as active to tell people what is the context about. The context of genre is also dependent on the social situation. Like different cultures, they would affect the genres. The genre would be different from the different cultures. Also, we can dependent on what kind of the genre to write. Like the cover letter or wedding invitation, we usually use the formal, and write the sentences in completely. If an announcement, we can do it informal, just use the key words.

M reveals essential relationships in her answer (“The context of genre is also dependent on the social situation. Like different cultures, they would affect the genres. The genre would be different from the different cultures.”). She provides as an instantiation of the
relation $\text{LANGUAGE} \leftrightarrow \text{CONTEXT}$ the cultural influence on genre (“The context of genre is also dependent on the social situation.”); however, she does not understand that field, tenor, and mode constitute the context (“We can say the language refer to the field, tenor and mode from the context.”) and does not provide examples of cultural influence on genre; rather she says “Like the cover letter or wedding invitation, we usually use the formal, and write the sentences in completely. If an announcement, we can do it informal, just use the key words”.

H: We use language in many ways to achieve our goals, like for example through News, Ads, Letters, Argumentative texts, Recipes, Essays, etc, which are different kinds of genres. The social situation affects the use of language so much. It is what determines what kind of language we have to use formal, informal, friendly, persuasive, etc. and it is pretty obvious because we would not talk to a president the same way we talk to our friends.

H showed signs of theoretical thinking by revealing his understanding of the basic relation (“The social situation affects the use of language so much.”) and provided some examples (“formal, informal, friendly, persuasive”). Another interesting aspect of H’s answer is his reference to the examples of genres in the first sentence. This reference indicates empirical thinking and reveals that theoretical thinking is emerging surrounded by the former. In fact, as I said before, empirical thinking seems to be the prevailing form of thinking utilized by these students in educational activity. It is also interesting to note
the use of the word “obvious” in the answer. This can represent a general feeling of the students towards the ACP; however, they do not know how to express the interrelationship between language and context in real writing situations and to use the ACP to explain phenomena.

**Chl:** The language use is referring to the field, tenor and mode of the context. Once we know the goals of the context, we should determine its purpose and how we approach our audiences. In addition, based on the variety of the situation, we might use interactive, spontaneous, casual language or language as action. We can use language in spoken, written way or combination of both depending on the social situation we get involved with. For example, the slang or informal language is not allowed to use during a professional literature discussion. Also, the way of how language use in announcement are somehow not appropriate to use in writing cover letters.

Chl shows understanding of the ACP in “The language use is referring to the field, tenor and mode of the context” and provides some examples (“the slang or informal language is not allowed to use during a professional literature discussion”).

**X:** We use language to express ourselves in oral or written forms. We must use the right language for specified genres. e.g., When it must be formal, we can’t make it informal. Social situation determines what kinds of language we should use. We use different language in different scene or to different audience.

X reveals understanding when she says the following: “Social situation determines what kinds of language we should use.” She also provides examples (“When it must be formal,
we can’t make it informal.”). However, she is not explicit about in which situations we should be formal or informal. Her understanding of the ACP is unidirectional: social situation affects language use rather than language also affecting context. Actually, this is a consequence of the course which focused much more on the influence of field, tenor, mode and culture on language (through genres) than the other way around as well.

**J:** To achieve the goals, we should use language in different ways. The way of using language is affected by diverse social situation. We do not need to use very formal and professional expressions, when we talk with friends. However, if we are in discussion or applying job interview, it would better to use very formal and professional language to achieve the goals. In addition, when we need to get people’s attention like in announcements, instead of using a bunch of formal and beautiful languages, one impressive picture can be more affective. We should use language in different ways to achieve a wide range of goals. “Learning about language means learning to choose. All choices are political” Martin (1989, pp. 62-63).

J’s understanding of the ACP is revealed by the sentence (“The way of using language is affected by diverse social situation.”) and he provides some examples (“We do not need to use very formal and professional expressions, when we talk with friends. However, if we are in discussion or applying job interview, it would better to use very formal and professional language to achieve the goals.”). Also he incorporates parts of the final message of the course in his evaluation. Although he did not reveal his understanding of
this quote, the quote drew his attention. He was the only student who referred to the political aspects of language use in this answer and in the third model of genre.

7.5 Discussion

In the same homework the students had to answer the problem situation question of the course; they had to draw for the last time their understanding of genre. By comparing these two sources of data, I found that some words of the model are presented in the answers: culture, field, tenor and mode. In two cases (M and J) the answer was an explanation of the model. F’s model revealed much more of his understanding of genre and the ACP than his answer, which was a mere repetition of models already seen in class. This fact corroborates the hypothesis that L2 writing proficiency might have hampered the students’ manifestation of their theoretical thinking.

I use the expression signs of the development theoretical thinking because such development happens slowly and is surrounded, embedded, and dominated by empirical thinking. For example, F repeats the wording of the problem situation question in his answer (“We use language to achieve in diferents ways, depending the on the situation and also the kind of goal.”) and in his model, he gives prominence to examples of genre (ads, announcement, recipes, etc) instead of the words that define genre more theoretically (context, field, tenor, mode). To explain field and tenor, he opens a larger box where he inserts examples of goals (to convince, to persuade, to inform, etc) and of ways to approach the audience (polite, persuasive, formally). Thus, his repetition of the words of the problem situation question of the course in his answer is surrounded by this
empirical thinking representation in the model. H behaves likewise as was seen in his answer above where he first mentioned examples of genre. I interpret this first mentioning of examples in his answer as the prevalence of empirical thinking when H thinks about genre and about the ACP.

According to their answers, some students did not understand what the context or situation was: Chl (“Once we know the goals of the context, we should determine what is the purpose of the context and how we approach our audiences.”); F (“We use language to achieve in different ways, depending on the situation and also the kind of goal. The social situation is affected, by the use of tenor, field and mode, in the situation or the audience.”); M (“We can say the language refer to the field, tenor and mode from the context.”). In addition, the students do not perceive that the goal is part of the context as well as field, tenor, and mode, and that the goal could be encompassed by field.

Also, it should be considered that none of the theoretical thinking responses given above explicitly recognized the ACP mentioned as the basic explanatory principle of linguistic phenomena, in other words, no one showed TT4. This is one more reason to claim that the data were revealing signs of theoretical thinking that emerged out of empirical thinking, the students’ main thinking pattern in educational activity.

The answers to the problem situation question revealed six signs of theoretical thinking compared to six in the wedding invitation task and three in the obituaries exercise. Bhatia’s exercise is not considered here because it contained a greater number of questions. This might have happened because applying the models and linking the
ACP with an explanation pose as much difficulty as verbalizing a complex topic through a language the students are not yet proficient in.

7.6 Development of theoretical thinking across the modeling, performance, and evaluation phases

Table 7.6 combines the results of the theoretical thinking analysis across all tasks: three models of genre (modeling phase), wedding invitation task, Bhatia’s task and obituaries exercise (performance phase), and the answers to the problem situation question of the course (evaluation phase).

Table 7.6

The students’ theoretical thinking development across the modeling, performance and evaluation phases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>St/task</th>
<th>Model 1 (the fourth week of the course)</th>
<th>Model 2 (12th week of the course)</th>
<th>Bhatia’s exercise (12th week of the course)</th>
<th>Obituaries exercise (12th week of the course)</th>
<th>Answers to the problem situation questions (14th week of the course)</th>
<th>Model (15th week of the course)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>ET</td>
<td>ET</td>
<td>Transitional</td>
<td>TT</td>
<td>TT</td>
<td>TT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cho</td>
<td>ET</td>
<td>TT</td>
<td>TT</td>
<td>Transitional</td>
<td>TT</td>
<td>ET</td>
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<tr>
<td>M</td>
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<td>TT</td>
<td>ET</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Transitional</td>
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<td>Transitional</td>
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<td>Transitional</td>
<td>Transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xn</td>
<td>ET</td>
<td>Transitional</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fr</td>
<td>ET</td>
<td>Transitional</td>
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<td>ET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ma</td>
<td>ET</td>
<td>Transitional</td>
<td>TT</td>
<td>ET</td>
<td>Transition</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>ET</td>
<td>TT</td>
<td>Transitional</td>
<td>ET</td>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>TT</td>
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<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>ET</td>
<td>Transitional</td>
<td>ET</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>TT</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>ET</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Transitional</td>
<td>ET</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chl</td>
<td>ET</td>
<td>TT</td>
<td>Transitional</td>
<td>ET=TT</td>
<td>ET</td>
<td>TT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chg</td>
<td>ET</td>
<td>TT</td>
<td>Transitional</td>
<td>ET</td>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The table indicates that most students, in at least one of the phases, revealed signs of theoretical thinking. No student remained in the empirical mode of thinking. F, Xn, Fr and D did not show signs of theoretical thinking but had instances of the transitional phase. In addition, these students did not submit several of the tasks, which hindered the identification of their level of development.

Figures 7.1 and 7.2 also reveal that there was not a definite path of development for the learners; each went through a unique route. All of the students showed regression at some point in their development. This confirms Kussman (1976)’s conception that development evolves in an ascending spiral and Vygotsky’s argument that it is revolutionary rather than evolutionary in nature. The classification of theoretical thinking in levels does not apply to the modeling phase. However, in order to provide consistent graphics, I determined that modeling reveal TT1 since it represents some theoretical understanding of genre.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>X</th>
<th>Transitional TT</th>
<th>TT</th>
<th>ET=TT</th>
<th>TT</th>
<th>TT</th>
<th>TT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>TT</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>TT</td>
<td>ET</td>
<td>ET</td>
<td>TT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ET= empirical thinking
TT= theoretical thinking
--- = student did not submit his/her task
Figure 7.1: Students’ development across tasks
Figure 7.2: Students’ development across tasks

º = the student did not submit the task
M1= model 1 of genre
WI= wedding invitation task
M2= model 2 of genre
2A, 2B, 2C, 3 = parts of Bhatia’s exercise
AP= answers to the problem situation question of the course
M3= model 3 of genre
ET= empirical thinking
TR= transitional phase
Considering just the students who submitted tasks from all phases of the course (K, Cho, M, H, Chl, and X), Cho and X developed the most with regard to theoretical thinking throughout the course (with 5 and 6 instances, respectively\(^8\)), whereas H and M with just 3 signs of theoretical thinking developed the least during the course. K and Chl remained in the middle position since they showed 4 signs of theoretical thinking each. Although M and H did not have all of Bhatia’s exercises analyzed – M’s 2a, 2b, and 2c could not be analyzed because they were done with a non-participant, and H did not submit exercise 3 – I selected them because they completed at least part of all of the exercises in all the phases.

Why did the students not reveal more signs of theoretical thinking? First, as was said before, 15 weeks of instruction is not sufficient to overcome 12 years of empirical thinking in the students’ previous schooling. As Hedegaard (2002) points out, theoretical thinking is not the main mode of thinking in schools or in “the scientific traditions of western cultures” (p. 30). Theoretical thinking takes time and is not easily grasped since “internal, essential relationships cannot be observed directly by the senses . . . they are not given in an available, established resultative, and dissociated being” (Davydov, 1990, p. 255). As was seen in the data, empirical thinking with its sensory, observable features rather than theoretical thinking with its essential relations regulated the students.

Qualitative studies on the development of theoretical thinking in elementary school children have been longitudinal and focused on the quality rather than the quantity of the development. This was the focus of this dissertation as well. Of the other eight

\(^8\) These numbers were obtained by adding the number of TT signs in figures 7.1 and 7.2.
students (Xn, Fr, N, D, J, F, Ma, and Chg) whose theoretical thinking was analyzed, three
(Xn, Fr, and F) showed no signs of this form of thinking. This finding is somewhat
compromised, however, since Xn and Fr did not complete most of the exercises. F seems
to have developed the least since he did most of the exercises (8 out of 10) but still
showed no signs of theoretical thinking. Three students (N, D, and Chg) showed one
sign of theoretical thinking but they also failed to complete all of the exercises. N failed
to complete three, D, two and Chg, only one of the exercises. This indicates that Chg
developed a minimum of theoretical thinking, considering that he only did not do one
exercise. Two students (Ma and J) showed three signs of theoretical thinking but J did not
do four of the exercises and Ma complete 9 of 10 exercises. For this reason, Ma can be
classified as in the middle position. J’s classification is compromised since he did not do
a considerable number of exercises.

Despite the time constraints and the fact that the course represented the
instructor’s initial experience with the new pedagogical approach, and not to mention the
students’ educational history in empirical thinking, two students (Cho and X) showed
fairly robust signs of development of theoretical thinking. Three (K, Chl, Ma) were in the
middle position and three (H, M, Chg) appeared not to develop very much at all. The
other six students (Xn, Fr, N, D, J, and F) present a difficult picture to decipher since they
did not do some or most of the exercises.

7.6 Concluding remarks

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9 This number was obtained by adding all the tasks in the X axis of the figures 7.1 and 7.2.
This chapter analyzed the students’ development of theoretical thinking in the genre-based course which adopted Davydov’s MAC approach. The analysis focused on the relations the students made in their models of genre, the explanations of the linguistic phenomena in the problem-solving tasks, and their understanding of the ACP in their responses to the problem situation question of the course. Thus, there were three sources of data for the analysis of this topic. The second source of data (problem solving tasks) was revealed to be the best with which to analyze the students’ theoretical thinking. The questions asked of the data were the following: (a) Does the learner seek relationships instead of categories in his/her model? (b) Does the learner’s model change over time? (c) Does the learner explain linguistic phenomena by employing the ACP? (d) Does the learner understand the ACP? (e) Does the learner understand the concepts of field, tenor, and mode? (f) Does the learner understand the interrelationship between field, tenor, and mode?

The analysis revealed that the students could be in two stages of development: a transitional phase and a theoretical thinking phase with empirical thinking being the starting point of development. However, the students who showed signs of theoretical thinking did not show it into its fullest extent (TT4). They did not reach the stage of recognizing the ACP as the basic explanatory principle of the communicative function of language in written and spoken modes. For this reason, the data revealed signs of the emergence of theoretical thinking out of prevailing empirical thinking. As Davydov (1988c) and Hedegaard (2002) pointed out, theoretical thinking is not the predominant mode of thinking in schools. As a consequence, to orient late adolescents, who possess a
long history of using empirical thinking, into theoretical thinking takes a great deal of
time and effort. Nevertheless, a few of the students developed some level of theoretical
thinking during the course.

At the end of chapter 3, I associated Davydov’s notion of activity, in particular
learning activity, with social change and with a view of ZPD as meaning-making activity,
and learning-leading-to-social-development. I also expressed my expectations that this
genre-based course could spark development at the ontogenetic level, and potentially at
the societal level as well. As could be seen through my analysis of the students’
theoretical thinking, the ontogenetic level rather than the societal level was approached
and some development at this level was detected.

Nevertheless, I believe that development of theoretical thinking can contribute to
social development as well since this form of thinking “permits a person to ‘move
beyond’ the confines of immediately observable everyday life” (Davydov, 1988c, p. 8),
and consequently, can boost critical thinking. Hedegaard (1995), in the questions she asks
in order to identify theoretical thinking (see 6.1), conceives of critical thinking as a clue
to detect theoretical thinking: “Does the child [learner] question the model’s borders?/
does the child [learner] criticize the content of the teaching?/ does the child [learner] have
a critical attitude to her own production and capacity” (p. 308)? Thus, critical thinking
could constitute an aftermath of theoretical thinking, and both forms of thinking could
lead to social development (ZPD as learning-leading-to-social-development). However,
the relation between theoretical thinking and critical thinking and how the former can
foster the latter remain to be studied.
Davydov (1988c) also associates theoretical thinking with social change. He actively participated in the Soviet school reform of 1984, which aimed to provide quality and equity in the Soviet educational system. He said: “. . . it is essential that a person be nurtured not only as the vehicle of a finite body of knowledge but, above all, as a citizen of socialist society who has adopted an active position in life” (p. 11). Davydov employed his pedagogical approach to implement a social change in the Soviet educational system and to promote individual agency in society. Hopefully, with the continuation of the studies on theoretical and critical thinking this social change can be realized.
CHAPTER 8
ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS’ WRITING IMPROVEMENT

Chapters 6 and 7 answered research question 1 by reporting on the analysis of students’ theoretical thinking development. The present chapter will answer the second research question (did the genre-based course promote improvement of students’ writing?) by analyzing students’ writing improvement. The students were selected for the writing improvement analysis based on an evaluation of their theoretical thinking development. Thus, six students (K, Cho, M, H, Chl and X) had their pre-tests and post-tests scored and analyzed qualitatively to answer research question 2. According to the analysis Cho and X showed the greatest development in their theoretical thinking skills during the course, M and H developed least and Chl and K were in the transitional phase. Chapter 5 detailed the methodology of data collection and analysis for this research topic.

8.1 The quantitative analysis

The scores given by the three raters are shown in table 8.1.

Table 8.1: Scores given by the raters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Pretest</th>
<th>Posttest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CL</td>
<td>AT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>1/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cho</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>1/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>2/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chl</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>2/4/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>2/1</td>
<td>2/1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CL = cover letter
AT= argumentative text
As reported in chapter 5, the inter-rater reliability was found to be the following: CL pre-test = 0.91; AT pre-test = 0.91, CL post-test = 0.83, AT post-test = 0.89.

The raters’ scores were averaged and the final scores are displayed in table 8.2:

Table 8.2: Final scores for the pre-tests and post-tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Post-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CL</td>
<td>AT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cho</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chl</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From this table, it is possible to see that all students improved their scores in cover letter writing and four improved their writing skills in the argumentative text. Two students earned identical scores for the argumentative text on the pre- and post-tests.

The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test indicates that students improved significantly in the genre cover letters (0.031) but not in the genre argumentative texts (0.125). These numbers indicate exact significance.

8.2 Discussion of the quantitative analysis

As mentioned, the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test reveals that students improved more significantly in the cover letter than in the argumentative text. This is no doubt the result of the amount of instruction students received: eight classes on cover letters and just three on argumentative texts. The cover letter instruction provided detailed information on the schematic structure of the genre and writing practice with an exercise.
in the joint construction of a letter, while instruction on argumentative texts focused only on reading samples of the genre and identifying its schematic structure.

8.3 The qualitative analysis of cover letters

The analysis of the cover letters will be based on whether students followed the rules for this genre in an American context. Different countries might have different rules to write cover letters; these differences, though addressed by the course, were disregarded here for the qualitative analysis of the texts.

8.3.1 Pre-test cover letters

The information provided below is based on manuals that offer tips on how to write cover letters (Beatty, 2004; Besson, 1996; Enelow & Kursmark, 2001; Hansen & Hansen, 2001; Yate, 2003). A cover letter has the following generic moves: heading, inside address, greeting, explanation of why the candidate is contacting the employer, the candidate’s exposure of his/her qualifications, candidate’s proactive statement, closing, signature, and enclosures.

The heading consists of the candidate’s complete name, address, and the date. The phone number and e-mail address are optional. The inside address includes the addressee’s title, company name and business address. The greeting follows the inside address; common forms are Dear followed by a title and last name (Dear Mr. Smith: ) or Good Morning: . The letter opens with a paragraph aimed at establishing rapport with the potential employer, and explaining why the candidate is contacting the employer. The candidate may simply state the position for which he/she is applying, mention some of
his/her qualifications, or reveal knowledge of the employer. In any case, the candidate
should entice the reader and show that he/she can benefit the company. “Your cover
letters thus need to be ‘reader aligned’ rather than ‘writer aligned’. They must address the
real needs of the prospective employer, not just your needs” (Beatty, 2004, p.10). The
opening is followed by a brief summary of the candidate’s qualifications, which should
be carefully selected to suit the employer’s needs (Besson, 1996, p. 28). The last part
should include a proactive statement mentioning when the applicant will contact the
potential employer to schedule an interview. The closing is generally a simple
‘Sincerely’. Enclosures mean that the letter has attached documents, such as writing
samples and required salary history (Besson, 1996, p. 31).

The students’ pre-test and post-test cover letters were analyzed for the presence of
all moves described above, except for signature and enclosures, and for the quality of the
three parts of the body of the letter: a) explanation of why the candidate is contacting the
employer, b) candidate’s summary of his/her qualifications, c) candidate’s proactive
statement. Signatures were removed from the letters so as not to reveal students’
identities and enclosures do not constitute an obligatory move of this genre. Only the
three parts of the body of the letter mentioned above were analyzed for quality since they
represent the main portion of text in the letter. Although the texts contained grammar
mistakes, they were not the focus of analysis. The present analysis aimed to evaluate the
quality of students’ writing with regard to their knowledge of, and their ability to apply,
the rules of the genre. Language problems such as confusing sentences and inappropriate
word choice were only considered in the analysis if they interfered with the performance
of the genre. Yet, this aspect of students’ writing was evaluated by the raters in the scoring of the texts.

Table 8.3 represents the presence of the cover letter moves in the pre-tests.

Table 8.3: Presence of moves in the pre-tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student/ move</th>
<th>heading</th>
<th>inside address</th>
<th>greeting</th>
<th>P1</th>
<th>P2</th>
<th>P3</th>
<th>closing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cho</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chl</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part 1= explanation of why the person is contacting the employer.
Part 2= exposure of the candidate’s qualifications
Part 3= candidate’s proactiveness

K’s letter does not contain a heading, an inside address, a proactive statement or a closing. The first part of the letter, in which the candidate should establish initial contact with the employer, does not follow the rules of the genre. Instead of showing knowledge of the company and/or mentioning how the candidate can be a positive asset, K introduces himself (“My name is K. I’m now a student of Penn State”) and says unnecessary things (“I’m looking for a job in the summer. This is my first summer I am looking for a job and I think maybe I could look for a job that interest me.”). Finally, he mentions the position in which he is interested, but in an inefficient way (“After I read your ads, I am very interest in becoming a lifeguards.”). He suggests he is not a lifeguard yet; and for this reason potentially disqualifies himself for the job. Then, he refers to his qualification as a swimmer (“I am a very good swimmer. I had got two metal for hundress free style while I we in high school.”), which corroborates the use of the verb ‘become’; he seems not to be a lifeguard yet, just a good swimmer. This is followed by
his address, which instead of being in the body of the letter should have been placed in the heading.

From what K wrote in the pre-test, it can be seen that he did not know how to compose a cover letter. Although he included parts one and two in his letter, the content is inappropriate. Introductions are not used in cover letters, and he needed to elaborate more on his qualifications to entice the employer. Likely, his letter would not be selected by a potential employer, since he seems not to have experience with this kind of job.

Cho’s letter does not contain a heading or a proactive statement. In the first part of the letter; he, similarly to K, introduces himself (“This is Cho, one of penn state students who study at major business and sale.”) and mentions the position for which he wants to apply (“I have great interests and abilities to be a part time sales representatives for Centre Daily Time.”[a local newspaper]). Cho is not aware that the initial contact with a potential employer should be enticing enough to get an interview. Briefly, he states his experience (“Also, I got sale experiences at working for Donkin Donuts, Restaurant, and Movie Center.”) and suits his candidacy to the employer’s needs (“I have my own PA license and insurance to drive a car. And I can work weekends and some evenings. In addition, I am very independent worker.”). However, his adequacy for the position is realized in a simple way. Instead of elaborating on the fact that he is an independent worker, and mentioning other qualifications that might interest the employer, he stresses only those qualities mentioned in the advertisement (possessing a PA driver’s license and insurance, availability on the weekends and some evenings). Cho’s letter is ineffective. Although he includes information required by the genre, such as the position he wants to
apply for and his qualifications, he missed the opportunity to elaborate on them and convince the employer to grant him an interview.

M’s letter does not contain the heading, the inside address, the proactive statement or the closing. It resembles a personal rather than a professional letter. She begins with a very informal greeting (“holle” - which probably means hello and “how are you doing?”) and mentions the position she wants to apply for (“I saw this new from a newspaper, than know you are hiring people representatives go out to sell newspaper.”). She continues describing her qualifications in a way that suits the employer’s needs (“I am a students at Penn State University. I have my all my classes at daytime from Monday to Friday. I can use my evening and weekend to get this job. Although I am a international student in United States, but I got my insurance three years ago. Also, driver license center give a honor from my driving. I also a safe driver.”). She elaborates on her ability to work independently (“I always work hard and get anything in order by myself. I don’t have accustomed to dependent on people. I always beat down problems by myself to get succeed.”). Although language problems are not the focus of the qualitative analysis, M’s low language proficiency impeded her ability to use the genre well. For example, the letter contains confusing (“I saw this new from a newspaper, than know you are hiring people representatives go out to sell newspaper.”) and incomplete (“When I was in High School or at College now.”) sentences. In addition, the letter has an informal and demanding tenor (“Please hire me.”). She also provides unnecessary information in a self-deprecating way (“Also sometimes need friends support.”).

H’s letter does not include a heading, inside address, greeting, proactive statement or a closing. He establishes initial contact with the employer by means of an introduction
and a statement of which position he is applying for (“I H. instructor of Soccer for the last 2 years would like to work for one of these camps where a instructor of soccer is needed.”). His opening is vague (“one of these camps”) and does not entice the reader at all in the first part. The second part of the letter is not well developed either. He mentioned three times that he worked as a soccer instructor for two years but does not expand on this information to convince the employer of his abilities. Moreover, he employs an aggressive tone (“Hopping [hoping] get hired H.”). M and H were the only students who employed an aggressive tone in their letters. Along with the other students mentioned above, H failed to promote himself and to entice the employer more successfully.

Chl’s letter does not have a heading, an inside address or a proactive statement. She opens her letter by introducing herself (“My name is Chl.”) and mentioning the position she is applying for (“I am writing this letter to apply for the position as Part-time Kiosk Sales representative.”) Similarly to the other students, she does not use the first paragraph to attract the employer, or show what she can do for the company. Although Chl describes her qualifications (“Currently I am a freshmen in Penn State University and major in Science. I am an social able and nice person as responsible as well.”/ “I think I am capable for them all. I will try my best to demonstrate my capability.”) she does so ineffectively, as she does not provide enough information to show the extent of her competence. Along with her qualifications, she attempts to praise the company, in an awkward sentence (“I have read the Centre Daily Times newspaper subscriptions and they are very interesting and attractive to me, which makes me feel like to share them with others. Hopefully they will enjoy these subscriptions as I do.”). The sentence is
awkward not because of grammar problems but because of the inappropriate use of the word ‘subscriptions’: her intention was to compliment the company but the focus should be on the quality of the newspaper content rather than on its subscription.

X’s letter lacks an inside address and a proactive statement. X begins the letter by only mentioning the position in which she is interested (“Seeing your job advertisement in newspaper, I want to apply for the part-time Kiosk Sale Rep. position.”). The applicant should mention which position he/she is applying for in the letter; however, openings such as in X’s letter or, for example, “I’m writing to you in response to your ad for a nutritionist in the Sunday Los Angeles Times.” are discouraged (Hansen & Hansen, 2001).

She is not able to entice the employer, to show how relevant her skills would be for the company. She does not use the letter to highlight and match them to the employer’s needs (“It is available to me to work after class, evening, and weekend. I have my valid PA driver’s license and insurance and have been driving independently for several years. I can read maps well to find any location. I am also good at time management. I will never be late. I always work hard in both study and jobs. I would try my best on everything I work on.”). She mentions qualifications by simply repeating what the job advertisement stated (PA’s driver’s license and insurance, availability on weekends and evenings). X is not aware that her letter should go beyond what the employer stated in the advertisement and show abilities and skills that would make her stand out from the other applicants. This student, similarly to H, Chl, and M, used the strategy of claiming one would do their best rather than explaining further the qualifications they have (“I would try my best on everything I work on.”).
In sum, the explanation of why the candidate is contacting the employer was realized by means of introductions (K, Cho, Chl, H) and of the reference to the position for which the students applied (Chl, Cho, H, K, M, X). One student employed an informal greeting (M). According to the feature of this genre, the initial contact should be better utilized to initiate a solid rapport with the employer, by enticing him/her. The candidate should show knowledge about the company, mention the position he/she is applying for, and why the candidate is worth an interview. The applicant should better use this first part of the letter for self-promotion and by focusing on how he/she can help the employer.

In general students were able to list their qualifications, but without any elaboration (Chl, Cho, H, M, X) that would convince the employer to schedule an interview. Some students only mentioned the requirements of the advertisement (M) and four (X, M, Chl and H) claimed they would do their best rather than revealing their qualifications more explicitly. H and M adopted an aggressive stance toward their audience and therefore deployed an inappropriate tenor for the genre. K and M employed self-deprecation. Most manuals on how to write effective cover letters suggest that aggressive and self-deprecating tones are not desired by American employers.

Both the quantitative and qualitative analyses indicate that the six students had little ability to use this genre.

8.3.2 Post-test cover letters

Table 8.4 displays the students’ performance in the post-test cover letters.

Table 8.4: Students’ performance on the post-test cover letters
K’s letter does not include the inside address or the closing. In his opening paragraph, he simply repeats part of the advertisement (“I am writing this reference to your ad on moday that looking for outgoing sales representative to sell newspaper subscription.”). He matches himself to the company’s needs by echoing what the company desires rather than fully explaining his qualifications to show how he can be an asset to the company (“I am currently looking for a part-time job at night and weeken. Also, I like to work independently, so this job fix me the best.”). He also does not elaborate on his qualifications (“Also, I like to work independently, so this job fix me the best.”). By repeating the wording of the advertisement (“looking for outgoing sales representative to sell newspaper subscription”/ “to work independently”) K indicates that he is not confident with writing in English and not aware of the inappropriateness of this practice. This part one of his letter will not entice a would-be employer.

K describes his qualifications elsewhere in his letter, mentioning important information that might attract the employer (“Though out my life, I travel alot, so I know many street and city. I have the PA driver’s license more than five years and I never have problem with my car insurance”) but he does not present the information in a convincing way. He mentions his present job, but does not say how this job has helped him grow professionally in a way that would serve The Centre Daily Times (“Now I am working in
a Printing company.”). He might confuse the reader when he mentions that his boss likes him ("Since I am a very responsible person, my boss like me alot and trust me in doing anything. I also received award in my company for coming on time everyday and never any day for you.") because he does not say why he is applying for a new job despite the fact that his present boss likes him and he received awards. Stating the reasons for changing jobs could allow him to express some of his qualifications such as seeking new challenges and his strong desire to get ahead. K should remember that any information included in a cover letter should be pondered and persuasive. K also makes the same mistake others made in their cover letters: claiming ability rather than proving it ("I belive all my work skill will best fix your qualification."). In contrast, the last part of the letter is proactive ("I will looking forward to call you on the coming week to schedual a best time for us to meet and discuss about my qualification.").

In sum, K was still not aware of how persuasive a cover letter in the United States should be. Both in parts one and two he misses the opportunity to provide information that could convince the employer to interview him. K improved his writing in this genre because in the post-test he did not start the letter with an introduction; he did not provide unnecessary information, and he tried to match himself to the company’s needs. This indicates a new awareness of the genre. However, he relied a lot on the wording of the advertisement rather than on his own writing. His ability to manifest/demonstrate his qualifications also improved. Moreover, he terminated the letter more professionally than in the pre-test. However, this improvement was not sufficient to increase his score considerably. K achieved 1 in the pretest and 1.5 in the posttest (see table 8.2).
Cho’s letter contains all the moves for a cover letter outlined in this analysis. Similarly to X in her pre-test, he begins the letter by only mentioning the position for which he wants to apply (“By reading the employing message on the newspaper, I am very interesting at being a part time Kiosk Sales Representatives for the Centre Daily Times.”). He then praises the company (“The Centre Daily Times is an equal opportunity Employer with growing business.”). The next sentence is confusing and makes the letter unattractive (“I am looking for out going sales representative to contribute its business.”). It is not clear if he wants to say that he is an outgoing salesperson who wishes to contribute to the *Centre Daily Times’* business, or he is simply repeating the statement that the *Centre Daily Times* is looking for an outgoing sales representative to contribute to its business. By copying the wording of the advertisement he makes the letter less appealing. Cho misses the opportunity to promote himself more by explaining why he is interested in the company, or why the company should be interested in him.

Cho describes his qualifications well (“As I am a part time student at Penn State, I have a very flexible schedule that can be compatible to work as part time Kiosk Sales Representatives. Also, I have been a newspaper sale for many years. So I earned a great experiences at this type of job. And I owned a PA driver’s license and insurance, in which can help me dealing with any transportation problems.”). He might have elaborated more on his independence as a worker (“Throughout my life I am a very independent worker.”). However, he tries to offer the company what it needs (“I have a very flexible schedule”/ “I can work at various locations at nights and weekends, even at special events.”). Furthermore, Cho is extremely proactive and self-confident in this letter; instead of stating his intention to call, he suggests a meeting with the employer (“I
am interested at this job, I will meet you on Dec. 28, 04.”). Overall, Cho’s post-test letter is better written because he does not use an introduction in the beginning of the letter and is more specific in his description of the qualifications. However, the letter still needs to be more enticing in the first paragraph. His score raised from 1.5 to 2.5 (see table 8.2).

M’s letter contains all the moves of the genre cover letters, but her opening is confusing (“I have learned about Centre Daily Times from a new paper.”/ It has a program for people who go out to sell stuff to people”). M seemed to show knowledge of the company by mentioning that the newspaper assisted people; and for this reason, she wants to join the team (“Thus, I want to join you to learn more experiences from this program.”). This shows that M understood the features of the genre (to show knowledge about the company, praise it) but did not have enough command of the language to do so properly.

In part two of the letter, she describes her qualifications (“I am a student in Penn State and major in Business. I have a very good grades from my courses. I have learned how to sell for stuff to people at my business class and work for a business company as a part time for one year.”) but she needs to elaborate on her abilities (“But I still think my skill.”). She tries to match herself to the requirements of the job (has a driver’s license, insurance, and availability on weekends). However, her language abilities prevent the letter from achieving its goals. M knows what the moves are but cannot realize them with the English proficiency she has.

In part three, she is proactive (“I will call you on next Monday to make sure my information.”) but her language problems persist. She repeated twice in the letter (in the first and in the third paragraphs) that she wants the job so that she will obtain more
experience. This is not appropriate: she should stress instead what she can offer the company, not explain how the company can help her grow professionally. M is not aware of what the employer wants to hear. She misses the point that a cover letter is “reader aligned” rather than “writer aligned” (Beatty, 2004, p.10).

M improved in some aspects but not in others. She did not use the informal greeting (How are you doing/ hello) or adopt a demanding tone as she did in the pre-test, but she was not clear about the position she was applying for in her post-test letter. She is aware of the three main moves of the letter in the post-test but realized them poorly due to her lack of English proficiency.

The fact that M understands the features of the genre but does not know how to realize them linguistically might lead one to ask whether it would be appropriate to teach genres only for proficient language speakers and writers. SFL would answer that it would not, since it is possible to teach language form through genres. By learning concepts of field, tenor, and mode language proficiency should be boosted. In this course, the instructor did not have time to assist the students in all their writing tasks (only the major assignments required conferences and drafts) and the instructor did not have time for detailed field, tenor, and mode analyses of students’ written texts. If M had had a chance to rewrite this text and to have conferences with the instructor, the final result would probably have been better. Although M and Cho obtained the same final score in the post-test (2.5), the qualitative analysis reveals that Cho’s letter is superior to M’s.

H’s letter contains all the moves of the cover-letter genre. However, in the opening, there is little improvement. Although he did not include an unnecessary introduction like in the pretest cover letter, H is still not able to develop the paragraph
according to the rules of the genre, that is, to explain why he is contacting the employer. The paragraph is vague, (“I am very familiar with some of the job that you are offering. Specially with soccer, therefore I would like to apply for it.”) and does not mention the position for which he is applying. In paragraph two it becomes clear that he is applying for a job as a soccer player not as a soccer instructor, which is actually what the employer needs. Thus, although he describes his qualifications well, he either misread the advertisement or just set as his goal writing for the sake of writing rather than facing the test as a real life situation. In the second paragraph he also claims competence rather than proving it (“and I think I have all the skills needed to do this job.”). H manages to be proactive in the third paragraph (“I will be calling you on Wednesday December 20, 2004, to set up the interview and discuss my qualifications and concerns.”).

H’s post-test letter does not have the demanding tone of the pre-test and he does not introduce himself in the letter. The presentation of his qualifications is more effective in the post-test and he is able to be proactive, which he was not in the pre-test. However, H is still not able to perceive that a cover letter must be persuasive, or understand how to construct such a letter with language and the appropriate selection of information. The qualitative analysis of H’s letter corroborates his score in the posttest (2).

Chl’s letter has all the moves of the cover letter genre and she has realized them reasonably well. In the first part of the letter, instead of introducing herself as she did in the pre-test, she mentions the good qualities of the company through the careful use of adjectives (“It is very impressive that The Centre Daily Times has become the best selling newspaper in Pennsylvania today. The high-quality printing, good teamwork, comfortable environment for workers, well-developed organization and the unique style
of the newspaper have become well known among families in Pennsylvania.”). Yet, she does not mention the position for which she is applying. Chl’s letter reveals her eagerness to work in the company, which may entice the employer (“These make me become more anxious to be part of your team.”). In paragraph two she manages to describe her qualifications appropriately, explaining what she learned in Business and Speech Communication classes and describing her experience outside the classroom. In the third paragraph, she explicitly mentions the position she is interested in (“I am seeking for a position as a part time sales representative at any kiosk locations.”) and is proactive (“In the next five days, I will call you to confirm your recieval of my resume and discuss my qualification.”).

In sum, Chl improved her writing from the pre-test to the post-test because the latter did not have introductions like the former, she praised the company, elaborated better on the qualifications, and was proactive. Chl’s letter was one of the best of the six post-test letters; during the course she proved to be one of the best writers in class, and she was able to construct an appealing letter. The outstanding improvement in Chl’s writing in this genre is corroborated by an increase in her score: from 1.5 in the pre-test to 3 in the post-test (see table 8.2).

X’s letter contained all elements of the genre cover letters. In her attempt to establish rapport with the employer, she shows knowledge of the company and praises it, but due to language problems, she does not do it well (“I used to join various camps when I was a student. Most of the staff I met there were employed by the Summer Camp Employment Inc. they strongly recommend the Summer Camp Employment Inc, which provides hundreds of job opportunities for summer activities in various north-east states.
It is well known as the best summer job age me.”). She was not able to praise the company clearly by mentioning, for example, how it provides good instructors to summer camps that she has attended previously. X explicitly states the position for which she is applying (“I hope I will get position as tennis instructor in PA by joining the Summer Camp Employment Inc.”). She describes her qualifications well (see paragraph two) and in a short but well constructed sentence she reveals excitement about her profession (“Tennis is my favorite sport and career.”). In paragraph three she is able to be proactive (“I will call later to confirm my information arrived.”).

X reveals improvement in her ability to write cover letters. Her post-test opening is better constructed because she attempted to show knowledge of the company and to praise it, and in paragraph two she managed to elaborate effectively on her qualifications. She did not use the strategy of claiming to have qualifications but instead attempted to prove that she had them in the post-test letter. She was also proactive. Although X achieved the highest score in the post-test (3.5), the qualitative analysis reveals that Chl’s letter is superior to X’s. X’s higher score is due to the average of two scores, whereas Chl’s score was averaged using three scores. Chl and X had the same raters: rater 1 assigned 4 to both letters and rater 2 assigned 3. Both raters seem to have overlooked the language problems X presented and focused only on her knowledge of the genre.

To summarize, according to the qualitative analysis Chl’s letter was the best, followed by X’s rather than the other way around as the scores show. However, both the scores and the qualitative analysis display K as the student who improved least in this genre.
8.3.3 Discussion of students’ writing improvement from the pre-test to the post-test cover letters

The analysis of the presence and quality of the moves required by the genre cover letters revealed that all students improved their writing in some aspect or another. Chl showed the most improvement in her letter and K showed least, a finding corroborated partially by the scores: K obtained the lowest score (1.5) and Chl, the second highest (3). All moves of the genre were incorporated in the post-test by all students, except K, who did not include an inside address or a closing in his letter. Both pre-tests and post-tests had the explanation of why the candidate is contacting the employer, but the move was realized differently in the tests. In the pre-test, students mainly used the first paragraph to introduce themselves and to state the position for which they were applying. In the post-test, four students (Chl, Cho, M and X) were able to mention good things about the company and all of them stated the position for which they would like to apply. Nevertheless, all students, except Chl, seemed unaware that a cover letter must be persuasive.

The description of each candidate’s qualifications in the post-test letters was more developed; however, the students did not include the right information or use it to promote themselves effectively. For example, K mentioned his current job but did not explain how it was helping him grow professionally or how this growth could contribute to the potential employer’s success.

Proactive statements were omitted by most students in the pre-test letters, but were included in the post-test. I consider this an easy move since it is composed of some formulaic sentences (I will call on… to set up an interview where we can further discuss
my qualifications. / Thank you for your consideration. / I will be looking forward to meeting with you to discuss further my qualifications and ways to help your company) which can easily be memorized by the students.

Overall the students acquired knowledge of the genre cover letter. They were able to perform the moves required by the genre despite their limited linguistic proficiency. Language proved to be problematic to some degree in all of the letters but was a major obstacle in M’s letter. Nevertheless, it can be hypothesized that one more form of knowledge is needed to write effective cover letters (or any genre) besides genre knowledge and language abilities. As was seen in the analysis of parts one and two, students did not sufficiently entice the reader. They did not appropriately select what to say and link it to the persuasive goal of the letter. Students still seem to lack a third type of knowledge: theoretical knowledge about genre.

Empirical knowledge of a genre means that the person knows the moves and its content to write in the genre. The students know that a cover letter has three extremely important moves: an explanation of why one is contacting the employer, a description of the candidate’s qualifications and a proactive statement. However, they have not learned yet the fundamental importance of persuasiveness. They still omit relevant information that may help ensure the success of a cover letter (a persuasive tenor following the rules created by a discourse community, which regulates the field – content – of the letter; a form of persuasion defined as self-promotion and displaying knowledge of the company rather than, for example, a South Asian view of persuasion, which is based on self-deprecation and adversary glorification). In other words, the students possessed empirical knowledge of the genre (the moves and their sequence) but not its theoretical knowledge.
Theoretical knowledge of genre means that students should employ the ACP, realized in this particular example of genre, to write in the genre. In this case the theoretical knowledge for cover letters is represented by the following:

*Figure 8.1: theoretical knowledge of the genre cover letter*

1. Discourse community
   - ↓ (ruling, determining)
2. Tenor (to be persuasive)
   - ↓ (ruling, determining)
3. Field (content of each move of the letter)

Before thinking about the organization of the letter and what to say, students must ponder the persuasiveness of the letter. This feature will determine the selection of what to say. In this case, the students should be aware of how tenor operates in this genre; that tenor (established by a certain discourse community) regulates the field (the content of each move) and that the goal of cover letters is to entice the reader. Everything that is said in parts one and two of the letter is meant to grab the reader’s attention, to make the letter stand out from the rest and to obtain the interview. The student should know that the cover letter is a tool for selection in this communicative situation and the more persuasive and self-promoting the letter is, the better the chances are the candidate will succeed. Hence, I hypothesize that three types of knowledge are necessary to write effectively in this and in any other genre: empirical knowledge of genre, theoretical knowledge of genre, and language proficiency.

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1 One might also ask about cultural frames of knowledge. In my view, this type of knowledge encompasses theoretical knowledge, given that it arises from ACP.
Chl might have these three types of knowledge\(^2\) and that might explain her improvement. The instruction she had based on MAC and SFL might have contributed to her improvement. The positive features of her letter such as persuasion, proper selection of information and adequate elaboration concerning her skills do not necessarily constitute evidence of theoretical knowledge of genre.

For instance, if a student does not construct a persuasive letter because he/she copied parts of the advertisement and did not elaborate on the necessary information, this can indicate several things: the student did not want to take the risk to write more because it was difficult, so he/she copied parts of the ad even though he/she knew this would affect the evaluation of the letter; he/she was aware that he/she had to be persuasive but did not know how, or did not have sufficient language proficiency, or even did not want to\(^3\); he/she interpreted the goal of this activity as simply to perform the task rather than to write as if the cover letter constituted a real need. Only an investigation of the writing process and how students use the stimulus given by the research is able to reveal what the lack of persuasion really means.

Analyzing the students’ cover letter models (see appendix O) and comparing them with their performance on the post-test does not provide a consistent relationship between theoretical knowledge of genre and improved writing performance. Chl’s model of cover letters reveals a combination of empirical knowledge of genre (information about the content of each move) and theoretical knowledge (notes about the field, tenor and goal in

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\(^2\) By the word knowledge I mean both declarative knowledge, the ability to verbalize what one knows, and procedural knowledge, the ability to put the knowledge to use. In chapters 6 and 7 I addressed what essentially is declarative knowledge in analyzing the learners’ theoretical models. In the present chapter, I address the proceduralization of this knowledge in their actual written performance.

\(^3\) During the conference for cover letters, some students were reluctant to be proactive due to cultural factors. How ESL students perceive the rules of a genre due to culture is a topic of further investigation to be discussed in the conclusion.
the genre). In her model, she confuses field with mode, but for goal she writes: “to entice the interview to get to know you better”. Thus, she might have had this goal in mind when she wrote the post-test cover letter, making the text more persuasive.

Although X’s model does not fully address theoretical knowledge of genre – she does not mention how tenor is realized in the genre cover letter –, her writing performance was very near Chl’s. Despite the fact Cho’s and K’s models of cover letters were very similar they differed in a very important aspect: Cho’s model contained the word ‘persuasion’ under tenor while K’s did not. Assuming that they might have remembered the model while writing the post-test, the word ‘persuasion’ might have served as an affordance that contributed to Cho’s better writing performance. H’s and M’s models did not represent any theoretical knowledge of the genre cover letters; however, M received a higher score than H. As I did not investigate the writing process itself, it is difficult to know what resources students used to write the post-test letter.

The instructor constantly addressed the importance of persuasion in this genre, but it seems students have not internalized it yet to an extent to which they could apply this knowledge to write more effective cover letters. As the analysis of theoretical thinking showed, the students were still in the process of development. The genre-based course provided to some extent all three types of knowledge. But due to time constraints, the linguistic knowledge was less focused; for example, the work with students’ texts to analyze cohesion, thematic progression and their confusing sentences was carried out in a limited way.

Students extensively studied the features of the genres and used procedural models showing the empirical view of genre to complete their major writing assignments.
Although the instruction focused on theoretical knowledge as well the instructor did not highlight specifically the germ-cell models or the ACP manifested in the genre cover letter or ask that they be employed in the writing tasks. For example, the instructor could have provided the students with the model represented in figure 8.1 and they could have been asked to look at it while writing cover letters. During the 12th week of the course, the instructor promoted a discussion about the concept of discourse communities and how this governs tenor and field but the teacher’s model, which represents the relationship between these concepts, was not used in writing cover letters.

8.4 The qualitative analysis of students’ argumentative texts

The analysis of the presence and quality of the moves of the genre argumentative text relies on Hacker (1999). Similarly to the qualitative analysis of cover letters, language problems will only be considered if they interfere in the performance of the genre. Although this author does not approach the argumentative text as genre or its parts as moves her book represents an extremely influential ‘manual’ on the writing of argumentative texts4; and for this reason was employed to evaluate students’ writing quality in this genre. According to Hacker, the argumentative text has the following parts, not necessarily in this sequence: introduction, thesis statement (preferably at the end of the introduction5), argumentation, conclusion, establishing common ground, showing opponent’s view, and rebuttal (dealing with opposing arguments).

4 I consider this book a manual on college writing since it is widely adopted by universities. Her tone, similar to the manuals on cover letters, is prescriptive.
5 Hacker (1999) recommends the following, which was also addressed in our classes: “In the United States … a direct approach is usually appreciated; when you state your point as directly as possible, you show that you value your reader’s time” (p. 16).
For the introduction and thesis statement, she prescribes the following: “… the most common strategy is to open the paragraph with a few sentences that engage the reader and to conclude with a statement of the essay’s main point. The sentence stating the main point is called a thesis” (p.13). The thesis should be “a generalization, not a fact; it should be limited, not too broad; and it should be sharply focused, not too vague” (p.15). The argumentation should be supported with plenty of evidence (facts, statistics, examples, and experts’ opinion, for example). The conclusion should “echo your main idea, without dully repeating it, … summarize your main point, pose a question for future study, offer advice, or propose a course of action” (p.16-17). Common ground should be established to entice the opponent (p.43). The opponent’s view should also be displayed and should be refuted (p.43).

8.4.1 The analysis of the pre-tests

Table 8.5 shows the presence of the moves of the genre argumentative texts in the pre-test.

Table 8.5: Students’ performance on the pre-test of argumentative texts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student/move</th>
<th>Introduction</th>
<th>Thesis</th>
<th>Argumentation</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
<th>Common ground</th>
<th>Opponent’s view</th>
<th>Rebuttal</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cho</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>M</td>
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<td>H</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chl</td>
<td>X</td>
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</table>

K’s text has introduction, thesis statement, argumentation, and conclusion, but they are not well executed. The introduction does not set the context for the thesis
properly, since it does not engage the reader. Although the introduction concludes with the thesis statement, it is not phrased with appropriate words. “Good and bad part” could have been replaced with ‘advantages’ and ‘disadvantages’, for example. This indicates the student might have an underdeveloped vocabulary in L2. The argumentation needs further development, since he pointed out just one advantage and one disadvantage for the standardized test. Further, he does not develop the relationship between cheating and testing. This short argumentation is followed by a brief conclusion, which simply repeats what was said in the argument. In sum, K has an understanding of some of the moves of the genre; however, he does not develop them well. The use of transitional words in the text (first of all, also, all in all) indicates a formulaic use of these words to provide cohesion to the text. The qualitative analysis confirms the low score K obtained (1) (see table 8.2 for all scores).

Cho also uses four of the seven required moves of the genre: introduction, thesis, argumentation, and conclusion. His introduction is interesting, since it relates language to culture (“English is represented west culture and Chinese is represented East culture”) but does not explain this relationship further to engage the reader appropriately. He also does not explain why learning English is an obstacle. His text does not have a thesis that reveals his opinion about the value of these strategies as the prompt required; instead his text supports a simple fact (“I have used some ways to develop my English abilities.”). Hacker (1999, p.15) refers to this type of thesis as “factual.” Cho’s argumentation supports this factual thesis by expressing one idea per paragraph and indicating this structure by using transitional words (first of all, in addition, finally), at the start of each paragraph.
The conclusion introduces some new ideas ("being patient and responsible to our study") since Cho does not associate the strategies used with the idea of patience and responsibility. In contrast, the conclusion attempts to provide a message to the reader: "If we spend our times and being patient and responsible to our study, we will smile at the end to be a winner. Also, It is not only on English, It can be everything in our life!".

Cho shows understanding of the five-paragraph essay but was not able to construct an appropriate thesis statement. The five-paragraph essay has the following format: introduction with a three-part thesis, three body paragraphs (one for each point of the thesis and use of transitions between paragraphs) and conclusion which summarizes the text (Chuppa-Cornell, 1996; Foley, 1989). This formulaic writing in the use of the ‘genre’ five-paragraph essay and in the use of transitional words constituted a pattern students followed to carry out the pre-test. The qualitative analysis also corroborates the score obtained by Cho (1.5)

M misunderstood the assignment prompt and, instead of writing a text about the strategies she used to learn English, she seems to argue about the relevance of ESL courses for bilingual and multilingual speakers. She knows the general organization of the five-paragraph essay, but does not show argumentation in her text. Her introduction is not appealing due to language problems (wrong verb tense, lack of verbs, miss-punctuation) and some loose sentences ("I am a Asian American."/ "In this class are either bilingual or multilingual speakers.") that interfere with her message. She finishes the paragraph with an unclear thesis ("In this class are either bilingual or multilingual speakers. because this class can help us learn more about the English, it will take it easy to learn, and we can easier to understand the skill."). In fact, this thesis is factual; it does
not reveal the students’ stance about the topic. She points out three advantages of ESL classes (a) “class can help us learn more about the English”, b) “it will take it easy to learn”, c) “we can easier to understand the skill”) which guides the subsequent organization of the text. Each paragraph that follows begins with part of the ‘thesis’. However, this strategy does not improve the quality of the text as she is not able to support the points she raised. Her conclusion is basically a repetition of the ‘thesis’. She uses a good sentence (“ESL class is Very important to improve the people who is English as a second language”); however, it loses value since she did not show how ESL courses/programs are relevant to bilingual or multilingual students’ lives. M’s low score (1) confirms the low quality of the text.

H initiates his text with a factual thesis (“As a bilingual student I have tried some strategies and techniques to help me develop my English language abilities.”) and provides some evidence to support his argumentation (the use of bilingual dictionaries and songs to enrich his vocabulary) in the first and second paragraphs. The conclusion is redundant (“The strategies bilingual students use are many. Every bilingual or multilingual student has many strategies to develop their English language abilities,”) and introduces a new idea (“but there are a couple of them that are better and easier to use than others.”). He mentions the better and easier strategies, though he has not referred to them in his argument nor has he made a statement about them in his thesis. Yet, the last sentence of the conclusion is appropriate and would be more effective if he had used the adjective “important” to convert his factual thesis into one that revealed stance. The score H obtained (2) corroborates the low quality of the text.
Similarly to Cho and M, Chl produces a typical five-paragraph essay. Her organization becomes even more formulaic with the use of transitional words “first”, “second” and “third”. Although she developed her argument well, she did not construct a thesis that reveals a stance (“There are couple ways [strategies to learn English] that I would like to share with you.”). Actually, Chl uses a tenor quite consistent with this thesis. The thesis, through the use of the words “share” and “you”, lends a didactic tenor to the text. This tenor is effectively maintained through extensive use of the first and second person pronouns and of the imperative form (“make friends with native English speakers”/ “don’t be afraid” / “ask them to help you”) throughout the text. Nevertheless, she is not aware that these linguistic forms are inappropriate for argumentative texts. Her conclusion rightly does not add new ideas or repeat the thesis, and is also in tune with the didactic tenor she used in the text (“hopefully they can help someone else too”).

On one hand, Chl wrote a coherent text, since she used appropriate linguistic forms to achieve her goal of writing a didactic text on English-learning strategies. Whether the use of these forms and this goal was conscious or not is impossible to determine. On the other hand, Chl produces a typical five-paragraph essay, with formulaic transitional words to introduce the arguments (first, second, third), inappropriate tenor and introduction for the genre argumentative text, and a factual thesis statement. The final score she obtained (3) corroborates the quality of her text as identified in the preceding analysis.

X wrote a text in the five-paragraph format. Her introduction could have been more appealing, for example, by focusing more on her personal struggle to learn English.

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6 Future research should address this issue since Dayvdov’s approach nourishes students’ control of their actions. Thus, it is relevant that students should use the concepts of field, tenor, and mode consciously in writing.
and setting a good context for the thesis. Her thesis is also factual (“I have found some ways to improve my English.”). Like Cho, M, and Chl, she managed to support the factual thesis and organize this argument neatly (one idea per paragraph). However, the format limits the development of her ideas and she uses formulaic transitional words (first, then, third). Although transitions are necessary for effective writing, the use of these words as a formula such as “all paragraphs should start with a transitional word” (first, second, third; or first, then, finally) is problematic. Her conclusion does not introduce any new ideas and refers back to what she said (“Above are just some of the good ways …”); nevertheless, this, as the entire text, is I-focused, which is not an appropriate tenor for this genre. Her score was 1.5 and confirms the low quality of the text identified in the qualitative analysis.

In general, students showed the ability to support a thesis, even though it was factual, and to construct organized texts. The neat organization stems from the utilization of the fixed five-paragraph format, which is an adaptation of the argumentative text genre to a school genre for assessment purposes. Students were unaware of the other moves of the genre: establishing common ground, displaying the opponent’s view, rebuttal and the restatement of the thesis. The argumentation of some students (K, M, and H) needed to be developed further in order to support the thesis. Despite of the organization, most texts were poor in quality because content needed to be developed and linguistic problems occurred, especially in M’s text.

Students likely employed the five-paragraph format because this was likely the form of writing that was taught and practiced in their school and it is a suitable writing formula for timed writing tests (Chuppa-Cornell, 1996; Kuehner, 1990). Moreover, as
this writing was done in class and students knew they were being tested for placement purposes, they were not interested in taking the risk to write more extensively (some students did not even write five paragraphs – K and H). The more they wrote, the more mistakes they were likely to make; and consequently, their placement might have been jeopardized. Thus, the five-paragraph mode might be an appropriate ‘genre’ for the testing situation.

In sum, students did not have empirical knowledge of the genre argumentative text (they knew a simplified school version of it) and obviously did not possess theoretical knowledge of the genre, which refers to the social purpose of this genre and how tenor, field, and mode are combined in it. M also struggled with language deficiencies; her texts contained many errors in language usage.

8.4.2 The analysis of the post-tests

Table 8.6 shows the presence of the moves of the genre argumentative text in the post-tests.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student/move</th>
<th>Introduction</th>
<th>Thesis</th>
<th>Argumentation</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
<th>Common ground</th>
<th>Opponent’s view</th>
<th>Rebuttal</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cho</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>M</td>
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<td>H</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chl</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>X</td>
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K includes an opponent’s view in his introduction (“Many students think that why should they take physical or humanity course while they are majoring in Engineering.
How can these courses be helpful for their major? The thesis shows stance in the use of the modal ‘must’ (“there are some reasons that every student must take physical or humanity education.”) and is supported with some evidence. The first argument is confusing (“What Kenisiology have to do with math or science. So if a university takes away the physical or humanity course, they have to cancel out the math and science course for Kenisiology too. That will be unfair for the student who major is Kenisiology Math and Science.”). He is not able to explain clearly the fairness issue as it relates to broad-based education. In contrast, the second argument is supported well with the testimony of a student. The conclusion restates what was previously discussed. In sum, K reveals some improvement in writing argumentative texts by inserting a new move (the opponent’s view) and by constructing a thesis with a stance, rather than just a factual one. This slight improvement is supported by a small increase in his score from 1 in the pre-test to 1.5 in the post-test.

Cho’s text contains all the moves of an argumentative text. The introduction is realized in one sentence, which is copied from the assignment prompt (“In American Universities, students are required to take courses outside their major to develop a broader approach to learning.”). Unlike the pre-test, the post-test thesis reveals his opinion about the issue (“Although taking some courses not related to the major is time consuming, students gain much more benefits rather than spend.”). Despite the poor proficiency in the language, he attempts to express the opponent’s view (“Now, there is a view to say: It is not necessary to take minor courses, these courses too much times, and not relate to major.”), establishes common ground (“We know that taking the minor courses are the consuming but they are necessary.”), and rebuts the opponent’s view
(“The minor courses provide very fundamental knowledge and skills to prepare the major courses.”) with evidence.

He employs appropriate arguments to convince the reader of his opinion: a) the value of foreign languages to a business career, b) the benefits of physical education for health, c) the entertainment provided by minor courses, d) the relevance of a minor in the job search. The conclusion provides a sense of closure to the text. To summarize, Cho improved his writing noticeably; he learned the schematic structure of argumentative texts, constructed a thesis with a stance, and developed appropriate argumentation. However, he still has problems with the English language. His score increased from 1.5 to 2.5.

M’s text is in the five-paragraph format with the following moves: introduction, thesis statement, argumentation, and conclusion. Her introduction is very brief and does not entice the reader, for it provides obvious information (“Students study at universities have to take their courses. The courses have to retate to their majors.”). The thesis shows a stance through use of the adjective “good” and simply blueprints the organization of the text (“That is good for you because you can improve and learn more skill for yourself, get more experiences, and can see what happen outside your major.”). Her low-level of language ability prevents her argument from being effective. Her conclusion simply restates the thesis. M shows little improvement from the pre-test to the post-test. Her writing is still restricted to the five-paragraph essay format; her linguistic abilities make it difficult for her to develop the moves appropriately and clearly. Her only improvement is that she constructed a thesis with a stance in the post-test. This slight improvement is corroborated by her scores: she obtained 1 in the pre-test and 1.5 in the post-test.
H reveals little improvement as well, since his thesis remains factual (“I have improved my writing and speaking skills by doing simple thinks like reading in my free time, singing, and writing in my diary.”) and he writes in the five-paragraph essay format: two paragraphs for the introduction, a three-pronged thesis developed in two paragraphs, and a paragraph for the conclusion. The only improvement detected was the addition of an introduction in the post-test. In fact, this introduction is appealing to the reader since H was able to highlight the relevance of the topic under discussion (“I, as a bilingual student, have learned that learning or adopting a new language is not easy. And it could become something very frustrating, specially when nobody understands what you say.”). In both tests he was I-focused, which is not an appropriate tenor in this genre. His score did not change, receiving a (2) on both tests.

Chl revealed considerable improvement in her text. She shows two moves of the argumentative text: an opponent’s view (“People might think that ESL classes offer easy assignments and all basic stuff.”) and a rebuttal (“That’s not true.”). In addition, she does not use the formulaic transitional words (first, second, third) like in her pre-test. Her introduction is quite appealing since she is able to establish some credibility with the topic (“through out the entire process of learning English, I have already found some of the strategies that actually could help me to develop English skills.”). The thesis statement reveals a clear stance through the use of the adjective ‘helpful’ (“In my opinion, attending ESL classes and communicating more with native English speakers are very helpful for learning English.”). The argument is effective and convincing, and the conclusion not only summarizes the text but also offers advice (“We cannot be too anxious to learn everything in English in a short time, we have to do it step by step.”).
Both her tests reveal that Chl is a writer able to use different tenors in her text: the pre-test was didactic and I-focused, whereas the post-test was more impersonal, suitable to the argumentative text required by college writing assignments. Nevertheless, Chl’s scores did not reflect this improvement verified in the qualitative analysis: she obtained 3 in both tests. Chl’s texts were the only ones that had a 2-point discrepancy and for this reason were scored by a third rater. All raters scored her pre-tests and post-tests the same: 2 (rater 1), 4 (rater 2) and 3 (rater 3). This indicates that all raters failed to detect sufficient improvement to warrant a change in score, despite the fact that my analysis shows a fair amount of development.

X’s text contains an introduction, a thesis with a stance (“Broad-based education is sufficient to help students to developed broad-based knowledge and abilities which are very important elements for success.”), some argumentation, and a conclusion. Her introduction is appealing because it is informative (“In our college study, besides the courses required by our majors, we still have to take many other courses for general education and some course for election. General education courses includ general science, humanity, arts, and social study. For elected credits, we can choose some course out of the major field and general study, but which we are interested in. The U.S college education are combited with these three compaits; it is called broad-based education.”). Her argumentation is reasonable, but she does not relate her second argument with the thesis. It is not clear how more choices and opportunities provided by broad-based education can lead these students to success. Her post-test is somewhat we-focused, whereas the pre-test was I-focused. The conclusion restates the thesis, and is to some degree confusing, due to misspelling. In summary, X improved her writing in some
aspects (the introduction, the thesis, the use of transitional words) but not in others (the focus on the first person pronoun, weak argumentation, and a somewhat confusing conclusion). Her score increased from 1.5 to 3.

In the pre-test, four students (Cho, M, Chl, and X) wrote in the five-paragraph format, while in the post-test two students (H and M) wrote in it. Although Chl wrote just four paragraphs in the post-test the text was not in the five-paragraph mode, since it contained moves of the argumentative text such as opponent’s view and rebuttal. Thus, what identifies a text as manifesting the five-paragraph format is not only the presence of five paragraphs but also the formulaic use of language: three-pronged (factual) thesis, formulaic transitional words, and absence of the moves establishing common ground, opponent’s view and rebuttal. The fact that H wrote in the five-paragraph format in the post-test but not in the pre-test indicates that he knew this type of writing by the time of the pre-test. Nevertheless, he might not have used it because of some anxiety caused by the test, or lack of ideas to come up with an introduction and one more argument to support the thesis. Also, H, aware of his writing problems, might have wanted to remain at the same level and consequently, might have decided not put so much effort into the test. The qualitative analysis of the texts reveals that Cho and Chl improved noticeably, whereas M and K showed little progress. According to the scores, Chl and X improved most and M and K least.

8.5 Discussion

The qualitative analysis of the pre-tests and post-tests in the genre argumentative text revealed that students, in general, improved their writing. Chl and Cho improved
considerably, while M and K improved only slightly. Cho incorporated all the moves of the genre in his text, and Chl inserted all moves, except for establishing common ground. Cho’s and Chl’s texts developed appropriate argumentation, which could be identified by the presence of the opponent’s view move. The few number of students who improved (2 out of 6) is mostly likely by the fact that they received little instruction on this genre.

Argumentative texts were taught for just three classes during the 13th and 14th weeks of the course when the moves of the genre were given and excerpts of Hacker (1999) were read and discussed. Students read three samples of the genre, carried out linguistic analyses, and identified the genre parts. The teacher posted the answers to these exercises in Angel. The instructor also emphasized cultural differences in mastering this genre, such as the direct approach preferred by Americans (Hacker, 1999, p. 16) and the indirect approach employed by some eastern cultures (Hinds, 1990). Thus, the little time spent on this genre was not enough to encourage students to abandon the five-paragraph format (most likely nurtured by their previous writing instruction) or to incorporate new moves of the genre.

These students still need more extensive work with language to improve their writing. The instructor attempted to help them improve their proficiency through linguistic analysis of the different genres studied, and by raising their awareness of the choices the language system offers the user. Unfortunately, as the course had perhaps an overly ambitious set of goals (to develop theoretical thinking, to teach generic moves of the genre, to improve their language abilities, and to encourage more control in their actions) there was not sufficient time for extensive language-focused work.
In the analysis of the cover letters, I hypothesized that students needed three types of knowledge to write effectively: empirical knowledge of genre, theoretical knowledge of genre, and linguistic knowledge. Empirical knowledge consists of knowing the generic moves of the genre, whereas linguistic knowledge is language proficiency. Theoretical knowledge refers to the knowledge about how the ACP is realized in the genre under focus. In other words, to write well in the genre argumentative text a student needs to know that this genre has a social purpose, which is to provide a particular perspective on a certain debatable issue, and to convince the reader about the thesis, or at least, make him/her see the problem from a different perspective. In addition, students were not aware that the field, tenor and mode have specific combinations in this genre. This was also certainly a consequence of the lack of time available for a thorough treatment of the genre. I will return to a discussion of the matter of time in the concluding chapter.

Four students (K, M, H, X) did not fully absorb the empirical knowledge of the genre argumentative texts, since they only provided introduction, thesis, argumentation, and conclusion in their texts. Regarding linguistic knowledge, M was the most lacking and language-related problems clearly hindered her writing in the genre. Cho and Chl seemed to have developed some theoretical knowledge; as they constructed a convincing text with appropriate arguments.

Similarly to the relationship between the students’ models and their performance, in the cover-letter genre, there is no consistent relationship between models and performance in the case of argumentative texts. Both Cho’s and Chl’s models of argumentative texts\(^7\) contained theoretical knowledge: goal of the genre as “to persuade people to accept your opinion” / “to persuade the audience about thesis” and tenor

\(^7\) See all six argumentative models in appendix P.
realized as “rebuttal, build a common ground, view audience as a panel of jurors”/ “establishing common grounds, straightforward, value audience’s time”. This information might have served to help them write their texts.

In contrast, X’s model did not have any reference to theoretical knowledge but she could argue reasonably well. H’s model did not have any reference to theoretical knowledge and M mentioned “convince the reader” but without linking it to the word goal. H and M did not write a typical argumentative text but, a five-paragraph essay. K’s model addressed theoretical knowledge; he stated the goal of the genre as “to convince people or opposite viewer to accept your opinion”. His argumentative text had an opponent’s view and some argumentation. Future studies should investigate how information registered in the models assist the writing process.

The instruction did not seem to have a considerable influence on the students’ abilities of organization and argumentation. In the pre-tests they neatly organized their writing in accordance with the five-paragraph format and a somewhat-supported factual thesis. However, the instruction affected some students’ perception of argumentative texts (Cho and Chl), since they inserted the other moves taught, and all students, except for H, constructed a thesis that revealed a stance rather than a fact. The number of arguments did not increase from the pre-test to the post-test, probably because these tests constituted timed writing tasks, where students had 65 minutes to generate ideas, write, and revise.

8.6 Concluding remarks
The statistical test Wilcoxon Signed Ranks detected that students improved significantly in the genre cover letters (0.031) but not in the genre argumentative texts (0.125). This difference can be explained by the fact that all six students raised their scores for cover letters, but four maintained their scores for argumentative texts (H and Chl). Chl and X improved most and K and H improved least in the genre cover letter. In the genre argumentative text, X improved most and K and M improved least.

The qualitative analysis showed that two students (Chl and X) improved the most in the genre cover letter, while two (K and M) improved the least. Regarding the genre argumentative text, two students (Chl and Cho) improved the most and the same two students (K and M) showed the least degree of improvement. In general, all students improved their texts in both genres in one aspect or another. The significance found for cover letters can be explained by the fact that students had more instruction on cover letters than on argumentative texts, which, because of the complexity of its schematic structure, requires a great deal more instruction than was allotted in the course.

The next chapter will focus on the students’ meaning-making process captured by their logs.
CHAPTER 9

STUDENTS’ MEANING MAKING PROCESS IN THE GENRE-BASED COURSE

Chapters 6 and 7 discussed the development of the students’ theoretical thinking, while chapter 8 presented test results supporting six students’ writing improvement. The present chapter aims to address the third research question posed at the outset of the study (How did the students make sense of the genre-based course?) and the importance of the meaning making process for studies in development. I should point out that due to the scarcity of data to answer this question, the present chapter offers more speculations than definitive answers.

9.1 The relationship between the meaning-making process and development

Vygotsky (1987) acknowledged the importance of a meaning making process in the development of the individual. In chapter 7 of *Thinking and Speech* he considers the word “meaning” as the unit of analysis of verbal thinking (p.244), distinguished meaning (stabilized form of meaning) and sense (personal meaning)\(^1\) and claimed that “the meaningful word is a microcosm of human consciousness” (p. 285).

A. N. Leontiev, adopting the Vygotskian distinction between sense and meaning, recognizes the constitutive role of meaning and sense in human consciousness and associates personal sense with motive:

Suppose a student reads the literature recommended to him. That is a conscious, purposive process. Its conscious aim is to assimilate the content of this literature.

\(^1\) See Wertsch (2000) for an interesting account of the theoretical traditions behind this distinction.
But what personal sense does this aim, and so the corresponding activity, have for the student? That depends on what the motive is that stimulates the activity realized by his action. If it consists in preparing him for his future profession, the reading will have one sense for him, but if it is simply, for example, to pass an examination, then the sense of the reading will understandably be quite another one … (Leontiev, 1981, p. 229)

If in the consciousness of the subject external sensitivity connects meanings with the reality of the objective world, then the personal sense connects them with the reality of his own life in this world, with its motives. Personal sense also creates the partiality of human consciousness. (Leontiev, 1978, p.92-3)

Leontiev considers personal sense as constitutive of motive; it is the route to accessing it (Leontiev, A. D. 2002, p.53). Objective meanings and personal sense are dialectically related.

In addition, Leontiev, A. N. (1978) recognizes that a disturbance in the individual’s embodiment of personal senses in meanings constitutes a disorganization of the individual’s consciousness:

In its most naked forms the process about which we are speaking [ embodying personal senses into meanings] appears in conditions of class society and struggle for ideology. Under these conditions personal meanings reflecting motives engendered by actions of life relationships of man may not adequately embody their objective meanings, and then they begin to live as if in someone’s else’s garments. … As is known, as distinct from the life of society, the life of the individual does not ‘speak for itself’, that is, the individual does not have his own
language with meanings developed within it; perception by him of phenomena of reality may take place only through his assimilation of externally ‘ready’ meanings – meanings, perceptions, views that he obtains from contact with one or another form of individual or mass communications. This makes it possible to introduce into the individual’s consciousness and impose on him distorted or fantastic representations and ideas, including such as have no basis in real practical life experience. Deprived of this basis they find their real weakness in the consciousness of man: and turning into stereotypes, like any stereotypes, they are so resistant that only serious real life confrontations can dispel them. But even dispelling them does not lead to averting disintegration of consciousness or its inadequacy; in itself it creates only a devastation capable of turning into a psychological catastrophe (p.93).

The individual’s consciousness is dialectically constituted by external meanings and personal senses of these meanings. A disarrangement in this relation affects consciousness.

Galperin explains the subject’s mental activity in terms of the steps of internalization that transform the material/ized action into ideal form. One of these steps is verbalization where meanings play a fundamental role. Verbalization, and consequently a meaning-making process, allows the conversion of the material into external speech and then to the ideal through inner speech. The process of meaning making confers upon internalization its transformative character. “. . . the properties that have been selected are consolidated in words and become their meaning. At that point a separation of these properties from objects becomes possible, as does their use as
abstractions and as comprehensively developed verbal objects” (Talyzina, 1981, p. 75).

In other words, language and meaning allow the person freedom from the physical presence of objects.

Moreover, meanings present in the individual’s mental activity prevent the mind from being just “a conglomerate of images – an unnecessary and unintelligible reduplication of the material world” (Galperin, 1989, p.56). Speech mediates the material and the ideal forms of the action and allows the content of objective reality to enter consciousness (Galperin, p. 52). The individual’s activity does not occur because of his/her unique idea or action but as a consequence of his/her life in practical activity and the meanings he/she can give to it (personal senses). These meanings arise from a repertoire of possibilities offered by ideological discursive formations that the person was exposed to in his/her practical activity. Thus, the individual will not develop a personal sense out of the blue but from activity in the external world. Hence, from a sociocultural theoretic perspective, language and meanings play an important role in mental activity and consciousness. Galperin recognized this in his claim that the verbal stage of internalization mediates the conversion of material/ized actions to an ideal form. Nevertheless, he did not fully explore this role of the meaning-making process and its possible relationships with internalization.

Newman & Holzman (1993) also acknowledge the importance of meaning-making processes for the individual. For these scholars “[t]he meaning in the emerging activity (…) is what is essentially human” (p.87), what allows the human to reorganize his/her environment by making sense of it (p.86); thus, this process confers agency on the individual. A meaning-making process is so crucial to Newman & Holzman’s
interpretation of Vygotsky’s ideas that for them the ZPD is a “meaning-making/learning-leading-development” and revolutionary unity (p.90). For them “meaning-making is how learning does and can come to lead development” (p.87). Without meaning making there is no development.

Lightfoot & Cox (1997) discuss two current trends in sociogenesis, and consequently, in internalization studies: the socio-interactionist and the symbolic action approaches. The former uses microgenetic methods to analyze child-child or adult-child interactions; for this trend development lies in the social interaction. In contrast, the symbolic action approach conceives of the individual as “an ensemble of relations” (Lightfoot & Cox, 1997, p.12). Their methodology is hermeneutic/interpretative since the focus of research lies on the semiotic processes employed by individuals. Individual and sociocultural changes occur exactly in this meaning-making process (p.16). The research approach is “oriented not toward social interactions per se, but toward the symbolic meanings that they express and that children impose on them” (p.15).

This symbolic action perspective, which, in Newman & Holzman’s words, would be meaning-making activity, is compatible with Vygotsky’s Marxist dialectical view of the mind, since Vygotsky conceives of internalization as the trigger for human development and sees individuals and their social environment as dialectically related. The monistic relationship between the individual and society can be explored in the meaning-making activity of the individual, where meanings come from external discourses provided by society and its institutions. The individual in these external
contexts should be able to remake sense of the world and the meanings given from outside in order to have agency.²

In contrast with the previous authors, Davydov and colleagues do not evaluate their students’ meaning-making process by considering how they react to the approach. For example, Davydov & Markova (1983) interpret individual differences in learning activity “as a correlation of different levels of formation of the components of educational activity” (p.68). In other words, individual differences are seen only in terms of how the components of educational (learning) activity – tasks and learning actions, including actions of control and evaluation – are manifested in the learners, rather in terms of how the learners make sense of the approach.

The dialectical pedagogical approach assumes that motivation towards learning will take place if learning effectively influences the child’s interests by means of problem situation questions, problem-solving tasks that refer to their lives, social interaction (cooperative work), explorative work, and subject matter whose scientific concepts can be linked to students’ everyday concepts (Hedegaard, 1990; Hedegaard et. al., 2001). However, all this seems to ignore the fact that there is no guarantee that motivation will arise since a person engages in meaning-making activity to develop his/her own motives out of this external motivation. External and internal motivations are dialectically related and influenced by the fact people are meaning-making beings. Implementing this approach with late adolescents, who are strongly influenced by previous traditional forms of instruction, represents an additional challenge since their motivation and meaning-making process are highly affected by the previous educational Discourses (Gee, 1999) to

² See Nicolopoulou (1997) for an example.
which they have been exposed. For this reason, it is extremely relevant to investigate how the students participating in the genre-based course made sense of MAC.

The meaning-making process does not mean that students adopt the teacher’s goals and motives. Both the instructor and the learners are different people; they have distinct experiences, histories and interests. Rather, a meaning-making process should comprise students’ search for their own meaning of what is happening to them, how they make sense of this experience, and how it contributes to their interests, lives and cognitive development.

9.2 Analysis of the data

Although the students mentioned several topics such as specific tasks, the models, the scientific work board, the classes, and homework assignments in their logs, in my view the themes that are most relevant as a means to evaluate the course are the following: the three genres taught (announcements, cover letters, argumentative texts), the ACP, and the classes.

9.2.1 The three genres

The students tended to consider the three genres taught as the main content of the course, placing less importance on the ACP. X and Cho did not perceive announcements as a useful genre to be learned and complained about the time spent on it.
X: But why we just spend 2 busy (xxxx)\textsuperscript{3} weeks on such difficult subject [argumentative text] but more than a month on the announcement what didn’t make much sense to us….\textsuperscript{4}

This is the last week of classes but we just started the third unit which is the most difficult one why she wast so much time on announcement?

Cho: Although announcements would not be useful in our future, she just wanted to spend time on it.

She overspends time on announcements.

K mentioned announcements in his log but without complaints.

K: Now I had learn some basic genre such as announcement and cover letter.

Although, it seems easy, it was not one you look deeply into it. Especially is the cover letter.

M did not address this genre in her log while Chl mentioned it to compare it with the difficulty of other genres.

Chl: To most of us we think that cover letters and argumentative texts are more complicated than announcements.

N and Xn do not see announcements as useful to learn either:

N: I do not think I learned anything yet in this English class because we are focusing and in to different kinds of announcements and I do not see how I could prove my writing skill and English grammar.

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\textsuperscript{3} Handwriting was illegible.

\textsuperscript{4} This and all the other excerpts from students’ logs are non-edited.
Xn: I don’t understand why we spend a lot of time on those topics. I don’t think that is really helpful for everybody. … not everybody need to know how to make an announcement … I still think they are not helpful for me.

J has an opposite opinion:

J: I believed what I would learn from the class is what I already know, because the ‘announcement’ consists of quite simple content. However, it was my misunderstanding. There were many new parts that I didn’t know such as the announce, construction, content and the use of language. I knew the difference that came from using different type of language. I mean the full sentence and short sentence. Although I’m learning from class, I wonder how it can be good at my writing skill.

J’s words indicate a tension between learning and the course content which has helped him to learn. He recognizes he is learning from the unit on announcements but is not able to relate it to any improvement in his writing. This tension is also present in N’s words mentioned above and in the following excerpt:

N: I told them [parents] that English class in college is so easy but the thing is I’m not learning how to write, but learning how to apply or how do a job application letter.

I don’t understand why we are studying this subject [obituaries]. These assignments have not yet improve my perfection of learning anything.

It is interesting to note that for N writing is not learning different genres; he does not perceive that by learning how to write a cover letter and announcements he is also learning how to write and to use language effectively. It is possible that he does not make
sense of genres as a way to learn how to write due to his past history, when he may have considered writing instruction to be the same as grammar instruction. This past history might be preventing him from seeing the connection—established by the instructor—between the content taught (the ACP manifested in different genres) and writing skills.

Xn does not see the genres introduced in the beginning of the course through the poster board session (third week of classes) as a useful way to learn how to write:

**Xn:** I don’t understand why we spend time on those topics [the genres presented in the poster board]. I don’t think that is really helpful for everybody. For example, not everybody need to know how to make an advertisement. Also not everybody need to know how to make an announcement. … I still think they are not helpful for me.

In contrast, other students considered argumentative texts and especially cover letters as relevant genres to learn:

**X:** We started the second unit finally. This time we are doing something more meaningful, because we are here to (xxxx) to apply for jobs. What we learn will be really useful, I hope! But why don’t we learn to do resume first?

It is interesting to observe the use of “finally” in the excerpt above, which indicates the students’ dissatisfaction with the time spent on announcements.

**Cho:** It is very essential issue we have to learn. Job application letter is a great tool for us to get hired. …

A cover letter is really important for applying a job in future. Since I learn this important tool I may have a good effect for applying a job. …
I suggest her that she need spend more time on cover letters and argumentative texts. These topics are very necessary for us.

M: The cover letter is very important for everyone to apply the jobs when you need.

Chl: Learning cover letter is very important because in the future after we graduate from college, we need to apply the job for living.

Chg: This information [on cover letters] is so important to me and I will use it in the future.

These testimonies indicate that, of the three genres chosen, cover letter was the genre most linked to their vocational activity, which is the leading activity of this stage development. Vygotsky (1997) points out that adolescence is the transition from learning to work activity. Also the genre cover letters appeared to be the most motivating for the students with regard to learning how to write. Since argumentative texts were not fully covered, students did not provide extensive comments about them. X saw the argumentative texts as difficult (see her quote about announcements in the beginning of this section) and Cho perceived it as necessary (see quote above). However, Xn’s opinion contrasts with these testimonies:

Xn: Now we doing cover letter on this class. But I don’t think that helpful for me.

J recognizes he is learning new things, but does not connect it with his writing improvement.

J: Although I’m learning from ESL class, I wonder how it can be good at my writing skill. (repeated twice on 9/16/04 and 11/1/04)

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5 The concept of leading activity is explained in chapter 3.
Xn, N and J seem to see no relevance in genres for improving their writing. It is likely their past writing/language instruction, focused on grammar, preventing them from seeing the genre as helpful and the key to becoming a sophisticated writer. These excerpts illustrate the dialectical (tense, conflicting) relationship between external meanings and personal sense. In this case, the external meaning acquired through past instruction determined the students’ personal sense about the new experience of learning how to write by means of genre: irrelevant, useless, not helpful.

In fact, J signals this past educational history of writing as correct grammar:

**J:** Writing in full sentence means that I should use correct grammar.

During the semester, the instructor justified to students why she spent more time on announcements. The goal was to use an easier genre to teach more complex concepts such as field, tenor, and mode, and lead students to more easily perceive what generic moves are. However, as can be seen from the examples above, and probably because of their histories, the students did not understand these goals or the goals with the ACP.

### 9.2.2 The ACP

Students mentioned the abstract communicative principle of the course but they were not aware of its role in learning: to constitute a basic essential explanatory principle for linguistic phenomena and for efficient use of language. Cho repeated the definitions mentioned in class:

**Cho:** I learned much more details on announcement and the social context or language we used in the announcement. And goal and content of announcement
determined the tenor, relationship of writers and readers. Also, we know how to express a language in much better form …

The goal of a cover letter which is the field. It affects the tenor and mode. Tenor is how you approach to the reader. It is the language and context which you use. The field, mode and tenor are associated with each other. They influence the way we use language to attain our goals in variety range. …

We know the relationship of field, tenor and mode affect the language and context we use in our genres. They are influenced by cultures. It means different cultures have different way of using language and culture. And the field, tenor and mode are interrelated in the genre cover letter understanding under culture.

Chg refers to the ACP in a confusing text:

*Chg:* By relating our goal, knowledge of cover letter is not what we are looking for; in fact, more important information is to examine how the context affects the way language is used. Therefore, to be clearer, I am supposed to compare it with my model of announcements. Finally, I find out there are many differences between them.

Chg seems to refer to the ACP by simply pasting together disconnected ideas: importance of the ACP and comparison of the models of announcement and cover letter (given as homework assignments). He used the adjective “important” but from this excerpt and what he writes later (reproduced below) we cannot assume that Chg thought the ACP was important. He was able to verbalize coherently his understanding of the ACP, but just in empirical terms by comparing how LANGUAGE ↔ CONTEXT is manifested in announcements and in cover letters
**Chg:** An announcement needs to be short and clear, so people won’t get bored in it. And it use beautiful and fantastic pictures (...). However, it is a different story in a cover letter. The writer’s and the audience’s names, addresses, and dates are needed to be written down in the beginning of the letter (...)

and reducing the ACP to a format:

**Chg:** “How does the context affect the way language used?” This was the question had been asked so many times during we study genre. However, it is very important to realize that what the correct answer was fo that. Such as an announcement and a cover letter, they had different format. Therefore, the context would be different.

It can be seen that Chg thinks of the basic relationship as just superficial observable differences in the way language is used in these genres. There is no abstraction of this relationship (abstraction of the ACP); in other words, Chg does not perceive that the relationship LANGUAGE ↔ CONTEXT is essential, basic, and explanatory for any linguistic phenomenon. The same happened to Cho, the student who most mentioned the ACP in his log. But he does not perceive that understanding the ACP may help improve his writing and enable him to become a better language user.

In the first quote Cho says “Also, we know how to express a language in much better form” without linking better expression of language to knowing the ACP. The mere repetition of definitions seen in class (tenor meaning the relationship between the reader and the writer) or of relations among concepts (field, tenor and mode are interrelated) represents empty ventriloquism of the content, without reflecting its usefulness. Cho and Chg exhibit a passive stance toward the knowledge since they do
not question why the ACP was taught or show to what extent they really understood what they simply repeated. Hence, they make sense of the ACP by making it empirical rather than recognizing its abstraction (generalization guided by theoretical, not empirical, thinking). This constitutes evidence that empirical thinking regulated students, and for this reason the analysis of chapters 6 and 7 did not reveal a pronounced development of theoretical thinking in the learners.

The present study did not investigate the students’ writing process, and for this reason it is not possible to know to what extent Cho used the ACP in his writing. In the qualitative analysis of students’ writing, he showed some improvement in cover letters and considerable improvement in his post-test argumentative text, where he used all the moves of the genre and addressed the audience with convincing argumentation. In the analysis of chapter 8 I hypothesized that Cho might have theoretical knowledge of genre which seems to be corroborated in the log data, where he reveals awareness of audience when he writes:

**Cho:** -Of course, samples was much better than mine (...). My invitation letter only had one paragraph and not providing enough resource for reader.
-I tried to make my words friendly to get closed to readers. [while writing the letter of invitation]
-Moreover, I write the cover letter to compete the others. I should show I am better for this job. Therefore, I should approach to the recruiter in a positive formal way. The language should be persuasive not demanding.

Although what he said above refers specifically to invitation and cover letters, it is possible to hypothesize that this awareness of audience, which was revealed when he
wrote these texts, was transferred to argumentative texts in the post-test, resulting in an improved performance, as the qualitative and quantitative analyses indicate. Nevertheless, this sense of audience seems detached from the ACP, for example, from tenor. It seems that what is learned is put in locked compartments in the mind, where no interrelationships are established. The ventriloquism addressed on the previous page has no applicability. In sum, Cho seems not to conceive the ACP as useful; it is just a set of content taught, deprived of practicality.

K also refers to the ACP through definitions:

**K:** The field was the goal and context of the invitation. Second the tenor was the write, audience and how the write approach the audience. How the write approach the audience mean what kind the text it use to attract the reader. How to be more presnative [sic] and formal or informal. Field is the goal of the announcement which mean what is the event of it. Mode is the use of language in that announcement. For example, key word, mispunctuation, fast communication, directive language.

It is very important element when we write a cover letter because if the mode not good than the whole letter we be not good too.

and through the recognition of its importance to writing skills:

**K:** To evaluate myself that what I know or our performance, I think the best way is to ask our self questions about how much do I know before writing a kinds of genre. I will ask some questions such as what is this genre’s field which is the content and goal, what is it tenor which is the audience and writer and the ways to approach audiences. What is the genre’s mode, which is the layout, sentence
structure, and how are they related to each other. Beside all these, I still have to look if this genre have discourse community or not. Discourse community were the people who discover the rules of different genre. For example, the cover letter has discourse community because it had rules and the writers must following those rules, otherwise he or she will not get the reader attention. Therefore, I evaluate myself by keep asking what is this genre and what should I do to convince the audience.

K sees the ACP as useful, as needed for writing, since he would ask himself what the field, tenor, and mode were for the genre in which he had to write before writing. This meaning-making reveals he has theoretical knowledge of genre, as he is aware that genres have field, tenor, and mode and for each genre they are realized differently – as indicated by the question “what is this genre’s field?” Nevertheless, it is not possible to know if he asked himself these questions while he wrote the pre-tests and post-tests since, as I have said, this study did not focus on the students’ writing process. As was explained in chapter 8, theoretical knowledge of genre means the realization of the ACP in a certain genre; for example, knowing that the tenor of a cover letter in the United States should be persuasive through self-promotion, or that a certain genre has a discourse community. The qualitative and quantitative analysis of K’s letters in chapter 8 show that he has not improved very much.

K also reveals theoretical knowledge of argumentative texts:

K: -I can see that argumentative text is just like powerful weapon that sometimes can convince many people to be in your side. …
When you write try to think that the audience was not agree with you and your job is to make the audience change their mind.

Theoretical knowledge is demonstrated through his awareness that the main goal of an argumentative text is to change the audience’s mind by being persuasive; hence, he must be conscious that the arguments should be carefully chosen in order to convince the audience. In his pre-tests and post-tests, the arguments were somewhat effective; however, this alone was not enough to guarantee good quality in writing and did not prevent K’s low linguistic proficiency from hindering the clear expression of his arguments. In addition, it is not possible to know if K perceives how tenor, field, and mode are realized in the genre. To summarize, Cho, Chg, and to a lesser extent K, conceive the ACP as isolated content, detached from any need.

X also recognized the usefulness of the ACP:

X: I did write a biography for a scholarship before. But I didn’t considered much about these problems [where/how are the mode, tenor, field would be? Who is the audience? What is the goal?]. Maybe that was why I was not selected it.

M, D, N, J, and Xn do not refer to the ACP at all. Chl recognizes the usefulness of the ACP:

Chl: This [applying the ACP] is a very good suggestion that I believe I will write an organized cohesive error free text by using it.

Yet, it is not possible to know if Chl consciously employed the ACP to write; this is a topic for future studies. Her entry also reveals that she sees the ACP as part of a traditional view of writing: as error free, grammatically correct text. The instruction she had was not sufficient to make her conceptualize writing differently.
Five students did not mention the ACP in their logs. This notable absence indicates either that the students did not pay attention to it or that they attended to it but because of a lack of full understanding were unable to write about it. The lack of meaning making of the ACP might explain the low level of development in theoretical thinking detected in chapters 6 and 7. As students did not properly understand the ACP they did not have a chance to make sense of it.

However, this recognition of the ACP did not prevent students from misinterpreting the instructor’s teaching actions. For them, teaching a basic relationship which is manifested through different concrete forms represented sameness and lack of content:

**D:** I don’t think it is necessary for us to do thing over and over again. I hated this class [11/30/04].

**Xn:** Because from beginning of this semester to now [10/5-7/04] we are still talk about the announcement. Announcement , announcement , announcement. Every class is the same ….

**Cho:**- My feeling of this class is this class is talking the same stuff again. T [the instructor] always give some topic which is overlap couple of days ago. I knew she want us to be easily to understand how to use a language but the class is really slow. We can’t be improve a lot in this class. After the semester we will have some regular classes, it requires us adjust to be in first speeding …

-This course requires great amount of work and time. We spend many times to complete our homework assignments. She also cover many topics in this course. However, she doesn’t focus on a right topic. She overspends time on
announcements. I suggest her that she need spend more time on cover letters and argumentative texts. These topics are very necessary for us. It is better to manage a good time for all the units that need to cover for next semester.

X: I didn’t get the sense why we had to do it again and again [the definition questions]. What language and writing to us will not change by learning these (xxxx) in this class. What I wrote this time is very similar to last time.

It is interesting to observe that Cho is aware that this is a non-mainstream course, and for this reason he seems to feel it should have little impact on his learning. From this quote, he seems to deny himself the possibility of engaging in different educational experiences that might affect his development. He does what he is asked to do, but this is not something that will likely affect his personality or his life. In other words, he views “learning as an end-in-itself” (Newman and Holzman, 1993, p. 86). His meaning-making process represented in this quote does not promote development, but goes against it. In contrast, he recognizes the importance of the ACP but still relating it to a concrete genre (“It is really important to understand how to use a language and context in cover letter.”). His meaning-making process is contradictory and dialectical since he simultaneously devalues and values the ACP. And, he only values it as long as it is related to concrete objects, that is cover letters. Interestingly, this contradiction does not prevent him from developing theoretical thinking; Cho was one of the students who developed it most in the data set.

Likewise, X does not see the chance to engage in meaning making by answering the definition questions. She interpreted the questions as mere useless repetition and missed the opportunity to reflect about how what she was learning (the ACP and its

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6 See lesson plan in the appendix B.
manifestation in different genres) could make her perceive language and writing differently.

Cho’s quote above also reveals what the course really was for him: a series of exercises on announcements, cover letters, and argumentative texts. This student did not perceive that the ACP was as relevant as the concrete genres taught. Cho’s words might represent how the other students viewed the content of the course: it taught three genres (announcements, cover letters, and argumentative texts) rather than exploring a basic relationship (the ACP) manifested in three empirical genres.

Chl also reveals tension in her meaning-making process. In the quote shown before (“This [applying the ACP] is a very good suggestion that I believe I will write an organized cohesive error free text by using it.” – 11/9-11/04) she sees the ACP as useful, but simultaneously she sees no relevance in it.

Chl:- it wasn’t the first time that she asked the same questions over and over again to the texts. 11/2/04
-I don’t like the way she kept repeating asking the same questions on doing all kinds of homeworks that are based on same problems. 11/30/04

The tension displayed by Cho’s and Chl’s meaning-making processes indicates that, similarly to cognitive development, making sense of the world is a dialectical process, where conflict, and contradiction between external meanings and personal senses exist, leading to a constant change in the process.

At other moments Chl also revealed awareness of the relevance of audience, which is a sign that she possesses theoretical knowledge of genre and might explain her noticeable improvement in writing, verified in chapter 8.
Chl: … there are some difficulties while I’m writing the letter. That’s possibly first of all, I don’t know how to address the person I write to. Second it seems to be simple that I just wrote that I want to invite him/her to attend the event. I wonder if there are more details I should add to the letter. Third, I also wonder I should or should not write the theme or the brief description of the event on the letter. I don’t want to end up writing an essay as a trash wasting a person’s time to read it. Afterward the letter may be makes the person who read it losing interest in the event and would ignore it as a junk mail. …

-My opinion is the audience is the main factor that determines the language use in announcement.

9.2.3 The classes

While I reviewed the entire course using the scientific work board I asked the students to evaluate the course. Of the 10 logs analyzed, just Chl evaluated it.

Chl: Overall, we appreciate her teaching.

This might have happened because of the work load students had at the end of the semester. As they knew I would not read the logs, they skipped the assignment. However, their action of not evaluating the course also indicates their non-commitment to the meaning-making process that the log was intended to spark. Their goal was to do the assignment, that is, to keep the log in order to receive a grade, rather than to engage in any meaningful meaning-making process that could show evidence of their real motives for the learning activity they were experiencing. Once more, they denied themselves the

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7 See for example D’s comment: “… even though I have nothing to say but I still have to write something in order to get the grade that I want”.
opportunity to engage in meaning-making activity and to contribute to the improvement of the course by providing insightful comments and suggestions.

Positive comments about the course were more frequent at the beginning of the semester, when expectations were high and the experimental teaching had not yet challenged their traditional way of learning.

**Cho:** -This class made me to have a very clear purpose to learn this course, because I just started our class….  
-Our instructor also provided some essential information on using the language. Should it be formal or informal? Friendly or strict? Should we use passive voice? Etc. I learned a lot of stuff!

**N:** -This class is getting better than it was (09/16/04)  
-So far this class is pretty good (09/16/04)

**K:**- I really like the way she explain and discuss with us like that. …  
After that she started to asked student about their idea and opinion. Well I think it is a very great way for us to practice speaking English and think deely of the way to improve our English. In the class, I felt very comfortable because the way she teach make me remember my ESL teacher in H.S. [high school]. That make me participate more and I really enjoy it. …  
-After the discussion we learned a lot.

**M:** We also learn something else\(^8\) to let us to know around this society world. These information is so useful for us when we out off the college to work at the society.

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\(^8\) Not explained in the log.
To conclude, the analysis revealed that Cho, Chl, Chg and X were the ones who engaged most in meaning-making processes in their logs. H did not write about the course in his log and M limited herself to summarizing the lessons and to expressing positive comments about several exercises, such as the revision of classmates’ letters (“Fixing the context [the sentences] is not easy to do for me but I am still trying and XXX will help me too.”) and some exercises on cover letters (“She [teacher] write down the questions all about how the cover letter is. These are really good questions we are trying to answer all the questions but they are so hard to get the point to answer them.”). D provided few comments about the course and Xn commented about the scientific work board (“But I don’t know what is that purpose for. That made me feel confuse what is the relationship between these scientific work board and writing. That is the part I don’t understand.”9) and genres (“What I want to say about genres is not easy to understand and know how to write them./ But I don’t understand why teacher teach us that [ads]. … I think she just want to introduce genres.”). J provided more comments related to his difficulties in learning English and in participating in class. N’s handwriting was very illegible and the few comments I could read were reproduced in this chapter. The analysis also showed that Chl, Cho and X had contradictory opinions about the ACP.

9.3 Discussion of students’ meaning-making process

Chl, Cho, and X engaged actively in making sense of the course and its elements in the log. However, due to the scarcity of data, it is not possible to relate consistently this

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9 This is a good example of the way the methodology of data collection affected the data obtained. Xn’s comment is insightful in the sense that the connection between the scientific work board and writing was not made clear. If the instructor had read the logs during the course, she could have fixed that sooner and maybe raised his motivation for the course.
meaning-making process with development. The information available is that Chl improved the most in her writing according to the qualitative analysis, and X, improved the most in her writing according to the scores assigned by the raters. X was also the most developed with regard to theoretical thinking. Cho improved both in writing skills and theoretical thinking.

The logs show that there is a conflict between genre-based teaching and students’ history of learning. This might have prevented them from fully appreciating the importance of the ACP for cognitive development and language proficiency, especially in writing. The ACP was interpreted as by the students as ‘sameness’ and contradicted their past educational experiences, where the goal is quantity of content covered, but not necessarily its quality. The students are used to measuring the success of learning and teaching by the different topics the teacher is able to convey, rather than by how this learning promotes development.

The genre-based course adopted Davydov’s approach, which challenges the traditional way of teaching content. In this approach, disciplines are rethought and rearranged to better develop theoretical thinking by means of the movement from the abstract to the concrete. What matters in Davydov’s approach is to understand fully the ACP by studying its different manifestations in the concrete rather than teaching context x, y, z of a particular discipline. Students, accustomed to the traditional way of teaching, interpreted the several different manifestations of the abstract in the concrete as a repetition of content, a class that is not moving, isolated from their own needs. They were incapable of recognizing that despite its sameness there were also many differences to be
identified, and that through learning the ACP better language proficiency could be achieved.

Clearly, students’ goals did not match the instructor’s. While students ultimately aimed to improve their writing, the instructor also targeted the development of their theoretical thinking. However, the instructor never directly told them about her goal and the need to develop this type of thinking, or more extensively showed the applicability of the ACP as a way to increase their motivation. As a consequence, the students did not perceive the ACP as very useful and, for this reason, theoretical thinking did not develop noticeably among the 14 participants considered in the present study. For those who did show some signs of development, it appears that the process was unconscious.

I consider the process unconscious for two reasons: a) the students had contradictory opinions about the ACP; they still did not realize its function, and b) some students did not mention the ACP, which might mean that it was not significant for them or that they did not understand it at all. The process of developing theoretical thinking identified in chapters 6 and 7 displays an unconscious developmental process where students had not yet reached its most advanced stages, characterized by awareness of the role of the ACP in explaining linguistic phenomena and increasing language proficiency. This corroborates Vygotsky’s (1987) claim that conscious awareness is a later stage in the course of development. With more time and perhaps more effective pedagogical mechanisms their awareness of the importance of ACT might have become conscious. However, at this point, this remains speculative.

Assuming that students commented, in their logs, about what was relevant to them or about what captured their attention, and considering that they did not refer to the
ACP as frequently as the genres taught, it is reasonable to claim that they did not pay enough attention to the ACP. Since they did not focus on this crucial component of the course, they did not make much sense of it. They mostly represented it as “empty verbalism” (Vygotsky, 1987, p.170), that is, as ready-made definitions without any needed purpose. Not making much sense of it prevented the students from establishing goals regarding the ACP; as a result, it was not considered part of their learning activity.

The external meanings given by the students’ past educational history affected their personal senses about the new experience provided by the genre-based course. This influence generates a conflict that characterizes meaning making (or personal sense, to be faithful to the Vygotskian distinction) as a dialectical process. The students’ past history was so powerful that it prevented them from engaging in reflection in their logs. Some students did not comment about the classes at all, and others provided only a few comments. This signals that current education is not nourishing in these learners the practice of searching for their own sense of their experiences; to have control of the dialectical relation between external meanings and personal senses.

One of the unfortunate, but not surprising, findings of this study is that the students’ past educational experience was sufficiently powerful to prevent them from engaging further with the object of study and instead of reaching a zone of proximal development they remained locked in “a zone of bourgeois stagnation” (Newman & Holzman, 1993, p.92), where meanings are stabilized, accepted, repeated, and perpetuated and the meaning (personal sense)-making activity is blocked. As a result, motive formation founded on the individual’s control of the dialectical process of
meaning making, and on cognitive-social development is jeopardized, and possibly eliminated.

The research procedures implemented in the study, due to requirements imposed by the university’s human subject’s board, prevented the instructor from reading the logs, and consequently, to engage students in reflecting more on the course. This methodology aimed to provide a non-threatening environment for their free expression of ideas, suggestions, and opinions, yet, the students ended up expressing previous discourses to which they were exposed. Some even denied themselves the possibility of making sense of the course (Cho). This illustrates the dialectical relationship between research and context, addressed in chapter 5. The instructions given to the participants allowed a certain type of data to emerge. Had the instructor interfered in the process through dialogued logs, the responses might have indicated a very different attitude toward the course.

MAC has been mainly applied in elementary-school settings where children have not yet internalized traditional forms of learning and teaching. Applying this pedagogical approach to late adolescents is especially challenging. The teacher should emphasize much more extensively the function of the ACP to motivate students to be interested in it, and to see it as relevant content to be learned, so that development of theoretical thinking can take place and past educational experiences can be overcome. Moreover, mechanisms should be created to promote conscious awareness development (theoretical thinking development included) in learners. As Markova (1979) points out, the learner should control his/her own learning, in other words, one should know what and why one is doing what one is doing. This could be accomplished by explicitly asking students to use the
ACP in their writing tasks and in problem solving exercises; as a result, the ACP application would be more visible to them. Also, discussions in class about the approach itself, and dialogued logs could be effective ways to influence the students’ meaning making process and possibly to overcome their habits formed as a result of experiences.

Another issue that should be explored is the relationship between the meaning-making process and development. Schooling should enable students to control actively the dialectical process of meaning making; and consequently, to increase their level of awareness about their motives for learning. This conscious awareness of motive formation could lead to more cognitive-social development.

Although announcements did not motivate students to write they can still be used to engage students in thinking more theoretically about genre. For future implementations of the genre-based course easy and everyday genres should constitute the initial units of the course and more complex genres, demanded by tertiary education should be utilized later.

9.4 Concluding remarks

Students expressed their opinions about the classes, the genres taught and the ACP, revealing that they are meaning making beings affected by previous discourses. Some students (Cho, Chl and X) were active in their meaning-making process as they questioned the content and the need to learn it, while others mainly summarized the classes or simply did not do the task. Students in general accepted the teacher’s pedagogical goal to improve their writing but not to develop theoretical thinking. Simultaneously, they were not able to interpret the genre-based course outside the
influence of their past educational experiences. The tension between the new course and this history characterized the meaning-making process as dialectical. Some students (Chl, Cho and X) saw the ACP as useful and at the same time as repetitious. Others (N and Xn) refused to accept genres as an instructional procedure for writing instruction.

In sum, the analysis of students’ discourse in this meaning-making activity reveals how influenced their personal senses were by the external meanings (discourses) of past educational history, and how learning is detached from development. As Newman & Holzman (1993) state: “Without this revolutionary activity of meaning making (…) then learning ceases to lead development; instead, it replaces development”. Hopefully, as students are meaning-making beings and development is endless, taking place throughout history in society, the experience provided by the course might eventually take its place in their educational history and be meaningful for them.
CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSION

This, the final chapter of the study, will encompass the following topics: a) summary of the study, b) contributions of the study, c) evaluation of the genre-based course implemented for this study, d) directions for future research.

10.1 Summary of the study

This dissertation reports on the findings of a study on the effects of a genre-based course on the development of writing ability among ESL students enrolled in a freshman-level writing course. Specifically, the study considered development in three domains: theoretical thinking, writing improvement, and the meaning-making process. The analysis of students’ models of genre and written answers to problem-solving tasks and to the problem situation question of the course revealed that they developed their theoretical thinking ability to some extent. Of the six students who completed at least part of all the exercises in the phases of modeling, performance, and evaluation, two showed the greatest degree of development, while two remained in a transitional phase and two showed very little evidence of development. Even in the case of students showing development, they only exhibited signs of moving away from empirical thinking and did not fully develop their capacity to think theoretically about genre.

Writing improvement for the students was investigated by means of a quantitative analysis of the scores assigned by raters, who employed two holistic 4-point scales (one for cover letters and one for argumentative texts). Scores for the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test showed that students improved significantly in writing cover letters (0.031) but not
significantly in composing argumentative texts (0.125). The analysis of the presence and quality of the moves of these genres in the students’ texts revealed that in some specific aspects, they improved their writing, but did not completely abandon the five-paragraph format.

The students’ meaning-making process, evaluated by analyzing the content of students’ logs, consisted of a dialectical relationship between external meanings and personal sense. As the instructor did not interfere in this meaning-making process – to ensure a non-threatening environment in which students could freely express opinions about the course – external meanings, influenced by past educational experiences, based on empirical thinking and on a conception of writing instruction as grammar instruction, prevented students from either perceiving genre-based instruction as writing instruction or from noticing that the course possessed as its main focus the ACP that would provide the basic explanatory principle of linguistic phenomena. In other words, external meanings manifested in D(d)iscourses prevented students from engaging actively in making sense of the new experience provided by the genre-based course, and from having control over the dialectics involved in this process, i.e. to deploy fully their agency.

10.2 Contributions of the study

The study contributed to the following areas of pedagogically-based research: a) second language writing assessment, b) second language writing instruction, c) genre studies, d) investigation of the development of theoretical thinking, e) investigation of the meaning-making process. The study contributed to the field of second language writing
assessment by providing genre-sensitive scales for the assessment of cover letters and argumentative texts. The results revealed a noticeable improvement of writing in the genre cover letters using a genre-based course. However, these results are restricted to the small sample of students participating in the study (6 out of 14 participants). Moreover, this study also provided insights to the field of second language writing instruction by creating an innovative course which combined a SFL view of genre and the MAC pedagogical approach. Although the SFL school of genre analysis has been utilized in the United States, especially at the Georgetown University German Department, and the MAC approach (an activity theory derived pedagogy) has been employed extensively in Russia and Europe, the combination of the two perspectives to teach writing was, to my knowledge, non-existent prior to the present study.

This study also suggested more theoretically driven reflections about the linguistic phenomenon of genre and an integration of its three perspectives: EAP, SFL and the New Rhetoric which usually view genre from an empirical perspective. In other words, these schools focus on the textual features (schematic structure/generic moves) of the genre, or on the phenomenological features of the social activity surrounding the genre, without seeing it as a linguistic phenomenon explainable by the ACP (the basic relationship LANGUAGE ↔ CONTEXT). Genre encompasses not only surface features of a text or the social action that determines these features, but both, and should be seen in a dialectical perspective. Any type of genre (announcements, cover letters, argumentative texts, letters to the editor, etc) is a manifestation of the ACP, which can be represented by a germ-cell model, which I describe as theoretical knowledge of genre. This form of knowledge, along with linguistic (grammar) and empirical (schematic structures)
knowledge of genre, suggests a way to write more effectively. This study hypothesizes that all three kinds of knowledge are needed for effective writing (defined according to the rules of the discourse community of a particular genre).

Another contribution of this study regards the method of investigation of the development of theoretical thinking. Previous studies approached this through the analysis of students’ actions. The present study showed that students’ discourse (manifested in their language performance in problem solving exercises) constitutes a valid and rich source of data to study theoretical thinking. It also operationalized four levels of the development of theoretical thinking; the validity and applicability of these levels may be verified in future investigations and with other types of data.

The study also investigated the learners’ meaning-making process during the course. The analysis revealed that although the SCT/AT literature acknowledges the importance of this process to investigate cognitive development (see chapter 9 for a review of the positions), this topic still requires further research to establish consistent connections among cognitive development (theoretical thinking included), ZPD, zone of social development (ZSD), and meaning-making activity. The study showed that external meanings control the students’ meaning-making activity, preventing them from wishing to or needing to make sense of the experiences around them. If little or no meaning making process takes place, then no ZPD can be established. As a result, less meaning making, less development, less social development and more stagnation become the norm. The student should convert the meaning-making process to a meaning-making activity, characterized by the need to make sense of the world.
10.3 Evaluation of the implementation of the genre-based course

The implementation of the genre-based course was successful despite the fact that it had some drawbacks. All seven steps of this approach were accomplished, with some of them occurring more frequently than others. Problem-solving questions, modeling, and acts of control and evaluation were common; however, the course should have engaged the students in more exploratory learning and in more problem-solving tasks where the ACP models could be employed to explain linguistic phenomena. Given more problem-solving tasks the students probably might have more readily noticed the role of the ACP in writing and in explaining linguistic phenomena. In this way, students might have more fully developed theoretical thinking.

The fact that the genre-based course was the initial experience of the instructor with such an approach to writing instruction presented certain difficulties (e.g., timing problems) that likely had an effect on the learning outcome. Although the course was carefully designed on paper experience comes only with praxis. In addition, as the instructor had three goals with this course (to nourish the development of theoretical thinking, to nurture students’ control and evaluation of their learning, and to improve writing) in a short period of time (15 weeks), she constantly had to spend time on some tasks or opt to focus on one feature of the course rather than another. For example, verbalization was not adequately stressed and the conflict between rules and creativity in genres was only explored in cover letters. More tasks to develop theoretical thinking should be developed for future courses. Unfortunately, the literature rarely describes such tasks (an exception being Engestrom, Hakkarainen & Seppo, 1982) and as a consequence the instructor did not have access to a sufficiently rich set of resources in this important
area. By designing her own tasks where the ACP is employed to explain linguistic phenomena, the instructor gained experience which will be invaluable for future iterations of the course.

Also, the instructor opted to give the students the ACP rather than to elicit it from them through tasks. She did so because of time constraints and despite the fact that this action fed the students ready-made knowledge, which is not recommended in the MAC approach. However, throughout the course, the instructor encouraged the students to redraw their procedural models using the interrelated concepts of field, tenor, and mode. In addition, there was not sufficient time for students to explain their models, to revise one another’s texts, to work more extensively with argumentative texts in unit 3, to review and close every class, or to keep asking the self-appraisal/control questions.

Some considerations should be made regarding the future implementations of such a genre-based course. Although announcements did not motivate students, I still think that simple and everyday genres should form the initial unit of the genre-based course. These should be followed by more complex genres, demanded by tertiary education such as essay examinations, critiques, synthesis of multiple sources (Johns, 1995, 1997; Horowitz, 1986b; Leki & Carlson, 1997). Another option is to construct a syllabus around the concept of families of genres. For instance, a course could be designed to teach the argumentative text in which letters to the editor (which are basically reactions to a text), the argumentative text, and its critique could be taught in this sequence. Another example is the job-search genre family: resumé, cover letters, and letters of recommendation. But in any of the cases, this study strongly suggests that
Davydov’s claim that theoretical thinking requires not an isolated course but a reform at the curricular level is well founded.

MAC is a time- and energy-consuming approach since it has ambitious goals which, rather than being realized in a limited number of operations, demand time for its full completion. It is challenging because specific tasks to develop theoretical thinking must be designed (not only tasks for writing improvement, which are easily found in textbooks) and explorative learning must be promoted. MAC does not teach content via ready-made definitions, but through engaging students in activity by means of tasks that operationalize learning actions. Nor does MAC accept traditional content organization of an object of learning. Rather, it reconfigures content by identifying the abstract concept of the discipline and building the learning process from the abstract to the concrete, instead of the other way around. As development needs time to mature, MAC is best implemented in longer term sequences of courses than was possible in the course under discussion (cf. Markova (1979)’s 10-year study; and Hedegaard (2002)’s three-year study).

Some tasks used in the course had flaws in implementation. For instance, in the wedding invitation task, the instructor could have explicitly told students to employ the germ-cell model to carry out the exercise. She also could have first discussed with them an excerpt from Johns (1997), which emphasizes the relationship between text and context. In these cases the instructor could have stimulated students to explain the phenomenon based on the context; as a result, students could have revealed what they were able to do with assistance (ZPD). Also, the question of the task could have been better presented to make clear to students that they should explain the differences and
similarities rather than just describing them. One way of reformulating the task is as follows: What is a wedding invitation like in your country? How do you explain the differences and/or similarities between wedding invitations in your country and in the USA? Use the germ-cell models given to assist you in writing an explanation.¹

The course could also have engaged students in a quasi-investigation of the social action surrounding the genre such as cover letters and obituaries in their own cultures. By exchanging information with their classmates from different cultures, they would have a better opportunity to understand, with concrete examples, version four of the germ-cell model (see chapter 4): different cultures realize the same genre in different ways.

Likewise, the interconnection of field, tenor, and mode could also have been explained by using the two obituaries given as examples. Later, they could have used the models to explain the differences and similarities found in obituaries in their country and in the United States.

The problem situation question for each unit should not have changed and should have been consistent with the operationalization of the course. The problem situation questions of the course and unit 1 emphasized the influence of context on language while the questions for units 2 and 3 highlighted the mutual influence of both language and context (see chapter 4 for details). The course explored the influence of context on language to a much greater extent than vice-versa. Consequently, this distinction should have been made clear to the students.

I consider the genre-based course successful in developing students’ theoretical thinking ability for two reasons: a) several students showed signs of theoretical thinking

¹ The original version was as follows: These are examples of American wedding invitations. What is a wedding invitation like in your country? How do you explain these differences or similarities?
emerging out of their normal empirical form of thinking, and b) some students reached stages TT1 and TT2 and a few reached stage TT3. There was no smooth transition from empirical to theoretical thinking because development is an unfolding dialectical process, which includes progress as well as regression to earlier forms of development. In addition, 15 weeks were not sufficient to overcome the students’ more traditional educational experiences that stress empirical thinking, or to permit me to fully develop tasks and procedures to better nurture their theoretical thinking.

Concerning students’ writing improvement, I also think the course was a success especially with regard to the genre cover letters. Both the quantitative and qualitative analyses revealed noticeable improvement in cover letters and to a less significant extent in argumentative texts. Regarding the meaning-making process, the findings are worrisome because most of the students indicated that they did not spend time reflecting on the course, and the ones who did were reluctant to make sense of the new experience. Their previous educational history, which defined learning as content transmission rather than as learning-leading-to-development and as a meaning-making activity, seemed to impede them from fully appreciating the genre-based course.

In fact, two findings are very problematic: students’ lack of motivation to make sense of the new experience they were facing, and their prevailing orientation to think empirically although they were in tertiary education. This circumstance lends support to the claim made by Dayvdov (1988c) and Hedegaard (2002) that theoretical thinking is not emphasized by Western school systems. It also supports Newman and Holzman’s (1993) argument that psychology and education have ignored the concept of ZPD as learning-leading-to-development. The fact that signs of theoretical thinking began to
emerge over the course of the 15 weeks rather than to develop more robustly is likely a consequence of the students’ struggle to confront and overcome their history as empirically motivated learners.

10.4 Limitations of the study

In addition to the drawbacks in the implementation of the genre-based course the analytical aspect of the study also had some other limitations: a) the use of L2 writing as the principal means of investigating theoretical thinking, b) a small number of students (six) selected to have their writing evaluated, c) other sources of data not analyzed, d) evaluation of the final product of writing by means of pre-tests and post-tests without investigation of the process through which they were written.

L2 writing clearly hindered the students’ expression of theoretical thinking as discussed in chapter 7; in the next section I will consider ways to overcome this problem. Although six students had their writing evaluated, the other eight should have their pre-tests and post-tests analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively to obtain a more complete picture of the writing ability of the group. This did not happen because having all 14 students’ tests scored would have placed an undue burden on the raters. It was felt, as mentioned in chapter 5 that a representative sampling of written texts would be appropriate to determine if the course had an effect on writing performance.

Other sources of data were not analyzed in this study. The writing reports, the conferences, the drafts of the major writing assignments can be studied to investigate the students’ writing process of the major writing assignments. The development of theoretical thinking can also be studied through students’ actions in the learning activity
captured in classroom and conference recordings. The transcripts of these recordings might reveal a more complete picture of the development of students’ theoretical thinking. For example, during the discussion of the cover-letter genre, a student asked the instructor why they had to follow the rules. At another point, the instructor asked students to move beyond the empirical features of the genre wedding invitation highlighted by Johns (1997). The analysis of these interactions can reveal the ongoing development of the students’ theoretical thinking. Also, meaning-making activity could be analyzed in the students’ discourse, registered in these recordings as well.

It is also relevant to point out that the IRB (Institutional Review Board of the Office for Research Protections) of the university where this research was conducted prevented the instructor from having access to the logs during the course. While this is important for obvious ethical reasons, it had the unfortunate consequence of preventing the instructor from gaining access to information on how the students were making sense of the course, which might have allowed the instructor to more appropriately promote student development. If the approach advocated in this study is implemented in non-experimental settings, full access to the learner logs is essential.

As Vygotsky (1978, 1979, 1987) writes, psychological development should be approached genetically, that is, in its formation as it is unfolding in real time. The scores and the qualitative genre analysis of the texts reported in chapter 8 do not depict fully the students’ writing improvement. More investigation on the process of writing should have been conducted. For instance, the students’ assumptions about the purpose of tests taken might lead to different interpretations of the results.
If students had seen the tests as just in-class exercises without major risks for their course or careers, they might have written only to comply with the task, and even carelessly, if they wished. On the other hand, if they viewed the tests as real-life challenges, they would be more concerned about doing their best. Writing a cover letter in the classroom as just a pedagogical exercise is not the same as writing such a letter when one is on the job market and facing the real need to write this type of letter. The pedagogical test is not as risky as the real cover letter. However, some students could have thought the following: “although this test is just an exercise I have to take it seriously so that I learn how to apply for jobs when the real need arises”.

They could also approach the test as just a pedagogical exercise, similar to other writing assignments where the main concern would be to carry out the task, writing for the sake of writing without considering issues of content and pragmatic appropriateness. These possible different goals students might have for the pre-tests and post-tests could lead to distinct interpretations of the same final score.

Let’s take as an example K, who obtained 1.5 in the cover letter post-test. This score would mean different things depending on the goal K had in mind while taking the post-test. If he had perceived the test as just an in-class activity, this score might have under represented his writing improvement, since he might not have done his best. If he saw the test as an opportunity to learn something that might be useful for him when he really had to write a cover letter, he probably would have done his best and the score would more accurately represent his writing improvement. If he had perceived the test as just a pedagogical exercise rather than a test that would affect his life, the score again might have misrepresented his writing improvement. It would have measured his writing
performance partially, since it related only to the pedagogical environment of writing assignments, where previous education might have affected his goals and performance. This leads us to believe that the writing assessment of final products (whether qualitative or quantitative) only makes sense if the context in which they were written is investigated as well.

10.5 Directions for future research

The present study generated the following topics for future research: a) to further verify the hypothesis of the positive influence of theoretical thinking knowledge of genre on writing; b) to search for a better environment for the investigation of theoretical thinking, where L2 writing does not represent an obstacle to the clear expression of ideas by the students; c) to investigate more consistently the relationship between psychological development and meaning-making activity in a MAC environment; d) to investigate the writing process from a genetic dialectical perspective (Vygotsky, 1978); e) to explore the cultural influence on the appropriation of genres; f) to define the relationship between theoretical thinking and critical thinking.

This study hypothesized that theoretical knowledge of genre as well as empirical knowledge of genre, and linguistic knowledge is needed to write effectively. For example, the writer’s conscious use of field, tenor, and mode in writing should be further investigated through oral verbalization while writing (similar to think-aloud protocols or private speech) or immediately after the writing task via stimulated recall interviews.

Theoretical knowledge of genre could also be investigated through the comparison of three groups of students: group 1 (the control group), group 2
(experimental 1), and group 3 (experimental 2). The control group would receive no special treatment in their writing instruction, whereas group 2 would receive a SFL genre-based instruction, and group 3 would be taught writing by a combination of SFL and MAC approaches. The influence of theoretical thinking, through theoretical knowledge of genre, on writing improvement would be studied by analyzing the writing process rather than just evaluating pre-tests and post-tests. Learners would be observed during their writing process through recorders that would capture their spontaneous private speech\(^2\) before and after being offered a tool to aid the task: the germ-cell models, which represent the ACP and its manifestation in a particular genre. In other words, Vygotsky (1978)’s genetic approach would be utilized to study development and language proficiency in its unfolding process.

One can argue that SFL is promoting theoretical thinking in students because it teaches the concepts of field, tenor, and mode. Yet, this is not true since, firstly, it does not aim to develop this form of thinking and, secondly, it does not employ an adequate pedagogical approach to teach these concepts theoretically. SFL conceives field, tenor, and mode empirically, as part of a linguistic theory, rather than as part of the abstract concept of a discipline (communication). The Australian school provides a linguistic theory that, if taught using the MAC approach, has the potential to develop theoretical thinking in learners. That is the gap this dissertation tried to fill by combining these two approaches.

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\(^2\) Smagorinsky (2001) reconceives the use of thinking aloud protocols from a sociocultural theory perspective. This methodology can be used, but with the assumption that speech mediates thinking instead of transmitting the thought (conduit metaphor), as believed by the information-processing perspective. I think that besides adopting different assumptions when using this procedure, it must also be spontaneous, since that will reveal the mediational role it has. Instead of asking students to verbalize their thinking continuously, the students would be instructed to verbalize it if they needed, that is, when thinking aloud really represented a tool to assist the solution of the task. Another thing to consider is the fact that verbalization affects the thinking process itself, consequently interfering in the very object of study the researcher wants to investigate.
pedagogies to promote an optimal environment in which to teach writing and simultaneously to develop theoretical thinking.

Another research topic that stems from this dissertation research relates to the investigation of theoretical thinking. This study had a drawback since it investigated this form of thinking via L2 writing, a tool in which students were not very proficient. As a result, a mediational tool that the students are more comfortable with should be employed: L1 or L2 speech provided a sufficient level of proficiency has been achieved. Obviously, the instructor and the researcher would have to know the L1 of the students.

This dissertation also showed the need to investigate further the relationship between meaning-making activity and psychological development. A genetic approach in its fullest form should be employed to study the meaning-making activity of the students while they are receiving instruction in a MAC environment. The instructor’s intervention in this process should be more pronounced, for example, he/she should ask questions of the students and guide their reflection process. This would encourage students to focus on reflecting about the course—instead of writing about non-pertinent topics, as happened in the course—to expand their ideas, and ultimately to confront the conflict between external meanings and personal sense. This intervention should be seen not as an attempt to control the students’ meaning-making process or determine which meanings they should accept, but rather to allow students to control their meaning-making process, which can permit formation of a conscious motive and ultimately more control over their learning process. By having control of their actions and development, it is hypothesized that students should not only be in ZPD (as meaning-making activity, learning leading to development, Newman & Holzman, 1993) but also in ZSD (zone of social development).
In ZSD individuals are active meaning-making beings without denying themselves the opportunity to make sense of new experiences; the meaning-making process becomes an activity, reflecting a real need to make sense of the world rather than just accepting external ready-made meanings as their internal finished personal senses. As a consequence, learning leading to development can occur with a minimum of hindrance. Moreover, in ZSP dialectics rather than dualisms constitute an alternative lens to interpret and possibly change the world.

Appropriate ways to investigate the relationship between meaning-making activity, and psychological and social development need to be found. Certainly this is a process that takes time, where close and careful observations of individuals in history (i.e. during a certain period of time) and in society (i.e., engaged in different activities that compose his/her life) should be conducted. MAC should provide tasks that engage students in meaning making activity (rather than just a meaning-making process) such as dialogued logs, self-evaluation, and reflection tasks. Through these exercises the instructor could spark students’ investigation of the external meanings that compose their opinions about a particular subject, the content of the classes, MAC, and other topics of interest. The feasibility of these practices and their effect on helping students be more active agents in social life should be investigated by observing the learners’ behavior in other settings and other social activities beyond the MAC class.

Another issue that should be investigated is the students’ writing process. Although it has traditionally been the object of study of the process writing approach SCT/AT perceive process-writing differently. While the former aims mainly to study the process of writing to construct a cognitive model of this skill and assumes a conduit
metaphor of language (see footnote 2 above), the latter aims to study the process of writing as a genetic dialectical process to better comprehend the product (the written text), and adopts a view of language as a mediational psychological tool. In order to grasp this writing process, spontaneous private speech protocols and stimulated recall interviews should be utilized to investigate the writing process that resulted in a final product.

The cultural influence in the appropriation of genres also constitutes an interesting topic for research. In the process of writing cover letters, I noticed that some students did not write the proactive statement of the third paragraph in their first drafts. In the conference, I asked them why they did not do so, despite the fact that their procedural models of cover letters included that move and the instruction focused extensively on it. They answered that they thought such a statement to be very aggressive and that it would not be well received in their home countries. Thus, although students were aware of how the genre should be constructed, they were reluctant to conform to certain aspects of it due to cultural differences.

Another interesting issue is how a certain culture reacts to the introduction of a new genre. Although Brazil does not use cover letters to search for jobs, this genre is being introduced there through translations of American manuals. It is relevant to investigate how this genre is being introduced and appropriated by Brazilians, how they interpret persuasion based on self-marketing and the proactive statement, whether the textual features of the genre are modified in its practice there, and if the social action of the job search is being remodeled by the introduction of a new genre.

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In chapters 3 and 7, I reflected that theoretical thinking could be a way to develop critical thinking, and consequently, to bring about more social development. The relationship between these two forms of thinking needs to be investigated, for example, through close observation of the students in the classroom and in other environments to verify to what extent they are questioning the subject matter, taught via MAC, and other fields of inquiry.

10.6 Concluding remarks

This dissertation offers several topics for future investigation in the area of writing and of development. It showed some possibilities regarding how to promote learning-leading-to-development in current educational contexts where the learning became equated to high grades and to the acquisition of compartmentalized knowledge. Despite a considerable number of constraints such as time, instructor’s inexperience, students’ prevailing empirical thinking, and the use of a limiting tool for students’ expression of theoretical thinking (L2), some students developed signs of theoretical thinking and engaged in some sort of meaning-making process. So, there is a light at the end of the tunnel.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDIX A

THE COURSE SYLLABUS

SPCOM 004 – ESL writing Fall 2004
Instructor: Marília Mendes Ferreira
Office Hours: Sparks 312, cubicle #1 Thursday 3-4 pm and by appointment.
Office phone number: 863-0031
e-mail: mmf161@psu.edu

Course Description: This is a composition course for beginning/intermediate level non-native speakers of English. Students will become familiar with the various stages in the process of writing by participating in a variety of writing activities which will enable them to: 1) gather ideas from their own experience as well as outside sources, 2) organize their ideas according to the purpose, audience and subject of written texts, 3) critically read and revise written texts, 4) edit written texts for grammatical accuracy and 5) communicate their ideas in well-organized and well-edited compositions. This course is based on the concept of genre. You will study deeply three genres that will allow you to get a conceptual understanding of what genre, language and writing are. The genres are the following: announcements, cover letters and argumentative texts.

In addition to the genre theory guiding this course, the instructor, following principles of activity theory for pedagogy, will ask you to do metacognitive tasks which aims to develop your own autonomy as language learners. This explains the course requirement of logs and some questions you will answer during the exercises given to you. You will also draw models in this class. The goal of these models are not only to visualize the concepts taught and how they are related but also to be used as a tool for better writing.

Required Text:

Course Requirements:

Homework 30
Participation 15 (in class activities – 7.5/ log – 7.5)
Three Formal Writing Assignments
Unit 1 – 15% 10 (assignment) + 5 (writing report)
Unit 2 - 20% 15 (assignment) + 5 (writing report)
Unit 3 - 20% 15 (assignment) + 5 (writing report)

100%  

1) HOMEWORK (30): These include all exercises assigned as homework as well as the metacognitive questions accompanying them. I will not accept any late work. If you
anticipate an excused absence, you must turn in any work due before your absence. If you have an unexpected excused absence, you must speak with me or a classmate about any homework assignments that will be due the next class meeting.

2) PARTICIPATION (15): it includes exercises given in class along with the metacognitive questions and the log. The log is the record of what you learned and your evaluation of the classes. I will have access to this log only after the grades are posted. However, to motivate you to keep writing in the log, I will check it every Tuesday. The log aims to unblock you as writer. They are similar to journals, and there is not need to be concerned about grammar mistakes or organization of ideas. So if you keep this log on a weekly basis you will have 7.5 marks. The other 7.5 marks refer to in-class activities.

3) THREE FORMAL WRITING ASSIGNMENTS (DRAFTS AND FINAL VERSION)
You will write three formal writing assignments throughout the semester. The content and organization of each assignment will be determined by you and your instructor during the semester. Each assignment will be preceded by at least two or three drafts. Drafts will be handed-in and you may participate in a variety of writing conferences, peer-reviews and in-class revising activities. Drafts will not be graded but will be figured into the final grade. You will also submit a writing report along with each final version. This writing report aims to make you design better ways to write, and apply the concepts taught to this planning and also to solve problems you may find. In other words, the writing report also has the goal to make you a more autonomous language learner and writer.

** As you can see most of the grade lies on the process of writing, on participation in class, in homework rather than in the formal assignments themselves. This is so to make you committed to the whole process which is expected to make you improve your writing. Thus, if you are doing your homework, keeping a log and doing the exercises in class, you will have good chances to be submitting good quality final versions of the assignments.

**ASK if you have any questions about an assignment or a concept covered in class. Outside of class time, you can send me an e-mail message, see me during my office hours, or schedule an appointment to meet with me. Enjoy your semester!

Grading Scale:
A = 93-100%
A- = 90 - 92%
B+ = 87-89%
B = 83-86%
B- = 80-82%
C+ = 77-79%
C = 70-76%
D = 60-69%
F = 0-59%
ATTENDANCE POLICY: you are allowed 3 absences during the semester (so use them carefully!). More than 3 will be affecting your final grade negatively. If you arrive 10 minutes after the start of the class you will lose marks in the homework section.

ACADEMIC HONESTY: The Pennsylvania State University defines academic dishonesty as including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating of information, or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students. Students who engage in academic dishonesty will be penalized and may risk failure of this course.

The Pennsylvania State University encourages qualified persons with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities. If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation in this course or have questions about physical access, please inform the instructor as soon as possible.
APPENDIX B

SAMPLES OF THREE LESSON PLANS (LOG OF THE ACTIONS AND OPERATIONS) OF THE GENRE-BASED COURSE

Abbreviations used in this lesson plan:
T= teacher
St= student
Sts= students

LESSON PLAN: 09/14/04
COURSE: ESL 004
CLASS 04:

Recent work:
This is the first day of class, since the other ones were either testing or ice-breaking activities.

1- Objectives:
   1.1 To familiarize stts with the digital recorders.
   1.2 To introduce the scientific work board (the model for the activities we will be engaged in class).

2- Organization:
   This class will start with a brief explanation on how to use the digital recorders. Then the scientific work board will be explained.

3- Rationale:
   This class is important for subsequent classes since the scientific work board will be used extensively in class and is part of the theoretical framework adopted to teach not both content but also to foster self-orientation mechanisms in the learners.
   The rationale of this course is based on Davydov(1988a,b,c,d)’s approach of the ascent from abstract to concrete. For this reason the scientific work board will be explained in the beginning of the course and the concept under focus will be shown as a tool to achieve certain needs, in this case, of communication. Perhaps the students will think that the board is too childish, since it contains drawings, and with no apparent usefulness. Therefore, I must be prepared to explain them the importance of this board, on what occasions we will use them, and why. I have to point out that it is going to be used to study language, writing and genre in this course, to write the writing reports assigned with each unit assignment and to make them more controlled with their learning.
   Students might think the concept of genre vague as they won’t receive any ready-made definitions. This theoretical approach does not recommend these definitions
since they represent a summary of the knowledge given to students without them being engaged in the process of discovering it. In case they ask for a definition I should tell them that they can write down their definitions (hypotheses) and through the classes they will discover more things about genre that might change these definitions. The important thing is to understand and establish relations among what is being taught rather than a ready definition from a book that does not represent what they experienced with the concept.

3- Presentation:
Lesson steps:
1) Explanation on how to wear and use the digital recorders. (10’)
2) T gives sts two notebooks (the notebook for notes and the one for the log. (10’)
3) T explains the model of activities that will guide the whole instruction. The model will be called the scientific work model. (55’)
   3.1 T elicits from sts the following:
   - the content of this course
   -is this content relevant for you? Why?
   -T: “in this course we will investigate how language works, specially in written texts and based on them, we will write our own texts in English. So our classes will be based on investigation procedures. Who usually investigates?
   -St:
   -T: what is possible to investigate here in this classroom?
   -St:
   -T: what do we know about English? Writing?
   -St:
   T: so what will we investigate then?
   St:
   T: how will we investigate? For example, how do scientisists investigate the stars? The human body? Using what means? T puts the symbols on board.
   St:
   T: in the process of investigation, we end up discovering something. What do we do then? How do we know if it is a new discovery or not?
   St:
   T: so in the process of research, the investigator has second thoughts, doubts. He also should know what he knows and what he doesn’t know. How does he do that?
   St: studying, comparing his work with others, reviewing the literature.
   T: provides the research activity model to students and emphasizes it will be use throughout the semester.
   3.2T: asks sts to fill out the board in class (or if there is not time as hw).
   Who is investigating? T and students
   What is being investigated? Language, writing and academic writing
   What do we know? What don’t we know?
   What are our hypotheses about what we don’t know?
What means can we use to solve this problem? To answer this question?
St: come up with problem situation questions
T takes note of them.
T points out that as the course lasts only 15 weeks, it is not enough to study everything about language. So in this course they will focus on the basic relationship of $\text{LANGUAGE} \leftrightarrow \text{CONTEXT}$.
T: “how can we investigate this phenomenon?”
St/T: “by means of types of text. in this case written because it is a writing course.”

T elicits from Sts the problem situation question. T writes on the board the problem situation to this course: *We use language in a variety of situations and to achieve a wide range of goals. How do we use language to achieve these goals? How does the social situation affect our use of language?* Sts copy that on the top of the page in their notebooks.

4) Quasi-investigation phase:

3.1.1 Sts design ways to answer this question. T asks students: how do you think we can answer this question?

3.1.2 Sts make hypotheses. What are these goals? How do we use language to achieve them? They take note of the goals.

4) T provides the copy of the scientific work board and sts stick them in their notebooks.

4- Homework:
No homework will be given unless time does not allow me to finish the plan.

5- Assessment:
There is no formal assessment in this class.

**LESSON PLAN: 10/07/04**
**COURSE: ESL 004**
**CLASS 11: COMPUTER LAB CLASS**

Recent work:
Sts analyzed the announcements in terms of field, tenor and mode and the generic moves of the text. They were also evaluated in this activity by the instructor.

1- Objectives:
1.1 to evaluate sts’ understanding of the concepts of field, tenor and mode by practicing linguistic analysis of another announcement.
1.2 to lead sts to rewrite the announcements to target a different audience or to make them more appealing or persuasive.
1.3 to provide more practice with self-appraisal/control questions
2- Organization:
There will be a review session followed by the transformation exercise where sts will rewrite the announcements to target different audiences and to make them more appealing or persuasive. The class will end with the closing session.

3- Rationale:
The practice of linguistic analysis is important for them to understand the context variables of field, tenor and mode, and consequently, to see how language and context are interrelated. The transformation exercise is very important because this will allow sts to see the relationship between purpose of a text (part of the context) and the language used in it. They will have a chance to see that depending on the audience chosen, the announcement needs to be more persuasive or appealing to transmit the message effectively.

4- Presentation:
Lesson steps:
1) Sts give the copies of the announcement and the linguistic analysis to sts. (5’)
2) T reads to sts an example of linguistic analysis of the announcement “Get Involved” and solve sts’ doubts about it (15’)
3) T assigns the homework. (5’)
4) Review session: (10’)
   4.1 T asks sts’
      - why did I give these linguistic analysis exercises (in class, as homework and her example in class) to you?
      - how does it relate to our scientific work model?
5) Transformation exercise: (35’)
   5.1 warm-up
      5.1.1 T shows again the Comparative Literature Lunch On announcement and asks:
      - who is the audience of this announcement?
      - would you stop to read this announcement?
      - is it catchy?
      - what would you do to make it more appealing?
      5.1.2 T and the sts rewrite this announcement.
   5.2 practice
   5.2.1 Sts in pairs go to the T’s pile of announcements and choose one for rewriting.
      Read the announcement you chose and rewrite it in three different ways: 1) to make it more persuasive, 2) to make it more appealing, 3) to target a different audience.
      Before self-appraisal/control question: what are the steps you will take to do this exercise?

      After some minutes T provides the following orientation schema:
1) get your model for the announcements and take a look at its elements.
2) Identify these elements in the announcement.
3) T shows her model of announcements and link the transformation elements in the model to Tenor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>context</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FAST, STRAIGHTFORWARD</td>
<td>- Directives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- key words, no full sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- visual language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- when, where</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- some use of passive voice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5) Transformation 1: to be more persuasive
3.1 is the announcement appealing? Why(not)? (evaluation)
3.2 think of elements that can be used to make it more persuasive: advantages?, features? , prizes? reasons
6) Transformation 2: to be more appealing
   4.1 is this announcement appealing? Why(not)? (evaluation)
   4.2 think of elements that can be used to make it more appealing:
   visuals (pictures, capital letters, bolding), language (more
   information), colors
7) Transformation 3: to change the audience
   5.1 who will be the new audience of this announcement?
   (professors, graduate students, undergraduates, women, men?, etc)
   5.2 think of elements that can be used to change the audience:
   visuals, language (will the audience be addressed explicitly in the
   announcement or not?)

During: how is this schema helping you do the task? What else are you using to
do this task? Are the models helping? Why(not)?

After: what were the steps you took to do this task? what did you use to do this
  task (schema,model, explanation, etc)? Explain how these resources helped you
do the task. How do you evaluate your performance in this task?

5- Homework:
   5.1 Sts finish this task if they didn’t in class.
   5.2 Sts bring their models drawn in a transparency for presentation in the
   following class.

6- Assessment:
With the transformation exercise, T will evaluate the sts’ understanding of the context
variables (field, tenor and mode) and how they are related.

7- Materials needed:
-COPIES OF LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF ‘GET INVOLVED’
-TRANSPARENCY OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE LUNCH ON
ANNOUNCEMENT.
- PILE OF ANNOUNCEMENTS
-SELF-APPRAISAL/CONTROL QUESTIONS ON SLIP OF PAPER TO BE GLUED
ON NOTEBOOK.
-COPIES OF THE ORIENTATION SCHEMA TO BE GLUED ON THE NOTEBOOK.

Lesson Plan: 12/02/04
Course: ESL 004
Class 26:

Recent work
Sts were explained the context of situation of this genre and its generic moves. They are working on the first draft of their argumentative text.

1- Objectives:
1.1 to collect the third set of definition data
1.2 to compare the three genres saw in this course (announcements, cover letters and argumentative texts). (moving from the concrete to the abstract)
1.3 to review the goals of this course and what we have done.
1.4 To provide sts with a final message of the course.
1.5 to give sts PSU evaluation

2- Organization:
Sts will answer for the third and last time the definition data questions. This will be followed the T leading a comparison of genres saw in this course. Afterwards, T will lead sts to think about what defines the word genre (based on the concrete samples of 3 types of genre that we have seen in the course). Next the scientific work board will be shown again and T-sts will wrap up what was seen in this course. A final message of the course will be given to sts.

3- Rationale:
The rationale behind the definition data collection was explained in the methodology part of this dissertation.
The comparison of the genres is very important since it represents the movement from the concrete instantiations of language use to the abstract level of genre. With this task, I intend to make sts perceive common aspects among the genre that can help them define genre by themselves and see common recurrent features in the linguistic phenomenon. It would be important to do this with the models, but due to time constraints and the thanksgiving holiday sts didn’t have time to draw the argumentative text model for this class.
The closing session with the scientific work board filled out by T and Sts gives a sense of closure to the course, which also started with this scientific work board. I think it can be a good opportunity for sts to evaluate what they learned, their performance and the approach. However, their evaluation of the approach can only be expressed in the log. They can also perceive their needs and for this reason set goals for their writing improvement, for English proficiency and for ESL 015 course.

4) Presentation:
Lesson steps:
1) Definition data collection: (20’)
1.1 Sts answer the following questions on a sheet of paper:
-What is language for you?
-What is language used for?
-In what situations do we use language?
- How does the social context affect the way we use language? Give some examples, please.
- What is writing for you?
- what do people write for?
- What do you write for?
- Do you have any difficulties with writing? if so what are they?
- How do you define genre?
- How do context, language, genre, field, tenor and mode relate to one another?

2) Comparison of the genres (announcements, cover letters and argumentative texts): (20’)
2.1 T asks sts:
- what do these genres have in common?
- what is the common feature you find in the social context of these genres? Straightforward, or direct approach (Hacker), no waste of time. Linked to the capitalist view of Time is money.
2.2 T emphasizes to sts that although the genres are different there are common essential things that characterize the general concept of genre.
2.3 T points out the Hacker’s note on p.16, the rules read about cover letters and the fast, straightforward communication of announcements. All these characteristics refer to the American rhetoric or style of writing.
T’s version of models:

Genre in USA → fast, straightforward communication

Genre in X country → ??? (maybe different from the USA)

3) Feedback on hw 15 (5’)
3.1 T provides feedback about hw 15 and sts’ need to think about what defines the concept of genre. T assigns part 3 of the hw: to draw their understanding of genre.

4) Closing session: (20’)
4.1 T shows sts a transparency of the scientific work board for the class and read with the sts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who investigates?</th>
<th>We</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| What do we investigate? | Language ↔ context  
Important relation to study because any instance of language use (oral or written texts) will be affected by the social conditions surrounding the text and vice-versa. As Johns (1997) says: “no text can be considered autonomous or free from the |
various social and cultural factors that contribute to its production” (p.43). Genre (announcements, cover letters and argumentative texts). We read different genres (obituaries, wedding invitations).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What do we know? What don’t we know?</td>
<td>Sts’ Self-evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do we hypothesize about what we don’t know?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What means do we have to study what we don’t know?</td>
<td>To study other genres; to verify what genres are important for us to know to write and to read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do we evaluate what we know/ our performance, what we learned, the approach?</td>
<td>(to be answered in the log)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2 T shows on a transparency the message of this course for the sts:

Martin(1989:62-3)

“Conscious knowledge of language and the way it functions in social contexts (…) enables us to make choices, to exercise control. As long as we are ignorant of language, it and the ideological systems it embraces control us. Learning about language means learning to choose. All choices are political. We don’t write or talk just to pass the time away. (…) Knowledge is power. Meaning is choice. Please, choose.”

4) PSU evaluation (10’)

1- Homework:

5.1 Sts should answer the problem situation question of this course and submit it electronically:

*We use language in a variety of situations and to achieve a wide range of goals. How do we use language to achieve these goals? How does the social situation affect our use of language?*

5.2 draw a model for the argumentative texts

2.3 draw a model for the concept of genre.

6- Assessment:

The definition data is a form of assessment of sts’ conceptual understanding of the content taught in this course. The comparison of the three genres will be an evaluation of their theoretical thinking development and their ability to move from the concrete to the abstract and vice-versa. The closing session will a form of assessment of sts’ level of control.
7- Materials needed:
COPIES OF THE QUESTIONS FOR THE DEFINITION DATA
COPIES AND TRANSPARENCY OF THE SCIENTIFIC WORK BOARD WITH
GOALS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR OUR COURSE.
TRANSPARENCY OF THE FINAL MESSAGE OF THE COURSE
APPENDIX C

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS PROMPTS

WRITING ASSIGNMENT PROMPT (UNIT 1)

We have studied the genre inviting by means of an announcement. We read, analyzed and wrote texts belonging to this genre in this unit of the course. Moreover, the linguistic concepts of field, tenor and mode, and how they are related and affected by the social context of text production were explored.

For this assignment, you have to create two announcements inviting two different audiences for the same event. The writing of this announcement should be for a real person or organization (tenor). For example, if you take part in an organization in PSU or in town you can prepare an announcement fulfilling their needs (to invite for a lecture, a series of workshops, blood drive, etc). If you don’t participate in any organization, you and I will contact people from the announcements we read and identify their needs for announcements and write one for them. Once we settled this, you will have to choose another audience (an imagined one) to address the same event. Remember that you should determine how you will address your audience (tenor) and how that affects your linguistic choices. Your announcements should be one page long and should contain both verbal and visual resources to make it communicative and appealing to your audiences. The mode is given to you: announcement. However, mode also refers to the lay out of your text, how it is organized, what is prominent in the message and what it is not.

Remember the obligatory moves of this genre are the following:
- attention getter
- invitation
- time, place, date
- not a move but obligatory for this assignment:
use of visuals( colored paper, pictures, highlighting (capitalization, bolding)

Optional moves:
- reference to the sponsors of the event
- provision of the contact information
- persuasion
- additional information about the event

Linguistic resources for
Field: lexical items referring to invitation, event, location, time, date, audience
Tenor: use of punctuation, directives, passive voice, adjectives
Mode: key words, restricted use of full sentences, highlighting resources (capitalization, bolding)
Due dates:
Draft 1: 10/14/04 by midnight
Draft 2: on the day of the conference
Conferences: 10/18, 19, 20/04
Final version + report: 10/23/04

In your folder, you should provide the first and second drafts, your final version and your writing report.

Instructions to write your writing report:

Firstly, a writing report is a description of the procedures you employed to accomplish this assignment and of the ways you used to check your work. What you have to do is to answer the following questions as clearly as possible in three moments of your writing process: 1) before starting writing the assignment, 2) during the writing process, 3) after you finished your final version. The questions are the following and a writing template will be given to you to assist you in the process:

1) Before start writing:
-Do you think this assignment is difficult to do or not? Why (not)?
-What are all the steps you will take to write this announcement? In other words, what is your plan of action for this assignment?
-What is the criterion you will choose to select your audiences and the event to be announced?
-What are the problems you foresee to write this assignment?
-What will you do to solve them?
-How will you check your work? How will you know you are on the right track?
-What means will you use to write this assignment? Models, charts, concepts, explanations, conferences, individual meetings? List any other means that you will use.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Your answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>What is the task?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>What are the means (resources) I have to do it? Models? Explanations? Samples of texts? Assignment prompt?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulties</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>What are the problems I am facing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>What do I do to solve them? (means)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>How do I know the problem is solved?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>How do I know my text is</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
good enough for submission?

- Additional comments you might want to make:

Date completed: ______/_______/_______

2) **During writing:** we recommend that you answer these questions after you receive your drafts (1 and then 2) commented by your teacher.

Answer the following questions at any moment and as many times as you need:
- What are the difficulties you are facing? For example, are you facing any difficulties regarding vocabulary, sentence structure, organization of the text, the generic moves of the text? ___/___/___
- How are you solving these problems? For example, what are you doing to solve your sentence structure problems in this text? problems in organizing this text? in fixing what your teacher asked you to fix in the first draft/second draft? ___/___/___
- Having in mind your difficulties, what are the steps you will take to continue writing your assignment? ___/___/___
- How do you evaluate your work at this moment in terms of language used, audiences chosen, complying with the demands of the prompt. ___/___/___
- How are the models drawn in class helping you write this announcement?
- Are the means you are using to evaluate your work effective or not? Why(not)? Do you have a model of an announcement to compare with yours? Is anybody providing you feedback on your writing?
- After the conference, what is your plan of action now? What are the steps you will take to this task?
- Additional comments you might want to make:

___/_______/_______

3) **After the final version is completed:**
- What were the actual steps you took to do this assignment? In other words, what means did you use to write this assignment?
- Was this assignment difficult? Why(not)?
- How did you check your work while doing it? How did you know you were on the right track? Did you compare your work with another announcement, or with your classmates’ work? Did your teacher’s (or any other person’s) feedback help you check yourself/ improve your text? How?
- How did the models drawn in class help you write this announcement?
- Additional comments you might want to make:
COVER LETTER WRITING PROMPT

In unit 2 of the course, we focused on the genre cover letters (job application letters). We studied how language and context are related in it by doing a field, tenor and mode analysis of the letters. We read, analyzed and wrote texts belonging to this genre.

For this assignment, you will write a job application letter based on a job wanted ad, which can be related to your major or not. Hence, the first thing you have to do is to find this ad and then write your letter. Your letter should contain all the generic moves we studied. The employer should be addressed formally and politely (tenor). Your text should be concise (mode), non-demanding (field), emotionally neutral (tenor) and should refer to the qualities of the company (field). Your letter should be tailored to the employer’s needs as well. You should not have any mistakes in this genre either.

Your letter should be one page long.

Obligatory moves:
- Heading
- Inside address
- Greeting
- Explanation of why you’re contacting the employer
- Summary of your experience, accomplishments and qualifications
- Initiative to make contact with the employer
- Closing

Optional moves: (does not affect your grade in this assignment)
- Quotation in the beginning of the letter
- Title
- Reference to results
- Enclosures and copy

Linguistic resources for:
- Field
- Tenor
- Mode

Due dates:
- Draft 1: 11/09/04 electronically by midnight
- Draft 2: in conference
- Final version + report: 11/21/04 electronically by midnight
The grading criteria is available in Angel.

In your folder, you should provide the first and second drafts. This is due on 11/22/04 (Monday at the box placed at the door of 312 Sparks)

Instructions to write your writing report:

Firstly, a writing report is a description of the procedures you employed to accomplish this assignment and of the ways you used to check/evaluate your work. What you have to do is to answer the following questions as clear as possible in three moments of your writing process: 1) before start writing the assignment, 2) during the writing process, 3) after you finished your final version. The questions are the following:

4) **Before start writing:**
- Do you think this assignment is difficult to do or not? Why (not)?
- What are all the steps you will take to write this announcement? In other words, what is your plan of action for this assignment?
- What is the criterion you will choose to select your audiences and the event to be announced?
- What are the problems you foresee to write this assignment?
- What will you do to solve them?
- How will you check your work? How will you know you are on the right track?
- What means will you use to write this assignment? Models, charts, concepts, explanations, conferences, individual meetings? List any other means that you will use.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the task?</th>
<th>To write an announcement</th>
<th>How do I do that using language and non-verbals?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What should I do to carry this out?</td>
<td>I have to think about audience, content, creativity, write in one page, organization, being straightforward</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do I need to carry this task out?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How can the model help me do this task?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the problems I am facing?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>What should I do to solve them?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do I know? (?)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What don’t I know? (?)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Additional comments you might want to make:

Date completed: _____/_______/_______
5) **During writing:** we recommend that you answer these questions after you receive your drafts (1 and then 2) commented by your teacher.

Answer the following questions at any moment and as many times as you need:

- What are the difficulties you are facing? For example, are you facing any difficulties regarding vocabulary, sentence structure, organization of the text, the generic moves of the text? _____/_____/_____
- How are you solving these problems? For example, what are you doing to solve your sentence structure problems in this text? Your problems in organizing this text? in fixing what your teacher asked you to fix in the first draft/second draft? _____/_____/_____
- Having in mind your difficulties, what are the steps you will take to continue writing your assignment? _____/_____/_____
- How do you evaluate your work at this moment in terms of language used, audiences chosen, complying with the demands of the prompt. _____/_____/_____
- How are the models drawn in class helping you write this announcement?

- What are the means you are using to evaluate your work effective or not? Why(not)? Do you have a model of an announcement to compare with yours? Is anybody providing you feedback on your writing?
- After the conference, what is your plan of action now? What are the steps you will take to this task?
- Additional comments you might want to make:

6) **After the final version is completed:**

- What were the actual steps you took to do this assignment? In other words, what means did you use to write this assignment?
- Was this assignment difficult? Why(not)?
- How did you check your work while doing it? How did you know you were on the right track? Did you compare your work with another announcement, or with your classmates’ work? Did your teacher’s (or any other person’s) feedback help you check yourself? How?
- How did the models drawn in class help you write this announcement?
- Additional comments you might want to make:

_____ /_____/_____

**ARGUMENTATIVE TEXT PROMPT**

We have studied the genre of argumentative texts. We read and analyzed texts belonging to this genre in this unit of the course. Moreover, the linguistic concepts of field, tenor and mode, and how they are related and affected by the social context of text production were explored.
In this course, a recurrent discussed topic referred to how culture affected the construction or even the existence of some genres in certain societies. We saw examples in wedding invitations, obituaries, cover letters and less deeply in argumentative texts.

For this assignment you will use the concepts of Field, Tenor and Mode to write a 3 page argumentative text on the following topic: **the cultural influence on genres**.

Hence, to write this assignment you have to consider the relationship between culture and language and how they influence each other. In our classes, we discussed how the immediate social context and to some extent culture affected the way people use language in writing (announcements and job application letters). You should look for convincing examples of genre being affected by culture. They can be from the classroom, from our exercises and from your own personal research among members of your culture.

You should determine the goal of this argumentative text (do you want convince someone about your thesis? do you want make people take some action about this issue? and its audience (faculty in PSU, international students community in PSU, English 5 instructors, writing teachers for example) and how you will approach it. You should also focus on how you will use language (cohesion, how your sentences will start) to achieve your goals. In addition, **you will have to explain how you used these concepts to write this assignment**.

The text should be 3 pages long, it should have an introduction, a thesis statement, arguments and evidences to support the thesis, restatement of the thesis, opponent’s views and a conclusion (obligatory moves).

Optional move: (not going to affect your grade)
Rebuttal

Due dates:
Draft 1: **12/2/04 by midnight and in Angel**
Draft 2: in the conference: **12/6/7/8**
Final version + report: **12/14 by midnight and in Angel**

The grading criteria and writing report are available in Angel.

In your folder, you should provide the first and second drafts, your final version and your writing report. You should submit your folder until 12/13/04 at the box placed at the door of 312 Sparks.

**Instructions to write your writing report:**

Firstly, a writing report is a description of the procedures you employed to accomplish this assignment and of the ways you used to check/evaluate your work. What you have to do is to answer the following questions as clear as possible in three moments of your
writing process: 1) before starting writing the assignment, 2) during the writing process, 3) after you finished your final version. The questions are the following:

7) Before starting writing:

- What are all the steps you will take to write this announcement? In other words, what is your plan of action for this assignment?
- What are the problems you foresee to write this assignment?
- What will you do to try to solve them?
- How will you check your work? How will you know you are on the right track?
- What means will you use to write this assignment? Models, charts, concepts, explanations, conferences, individual meetings? List any other means that you will use.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the task?</th>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>What are the problems I am facing?</td>
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<td>What should I do to solve them?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What do I know? (?)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What don’t I know? (?)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Additional comments you might want to make:

Date completed: _____/_____/_____

8) During writing: we recommend that you answer these questions after you receive your drafts (1 and then 2) commented on by your teacher.
Answer the following questions at any moment and as many times as you need:
- What are the difficulties you are facing? For example, are you facing any difficulties regarding vocabulary, sentence structure, organization of the text, the generic moves of the text? _____/_____/_____
- How are you trying to solve these problems? For example, what are you doing to solve your sentence structure problems in this text? Your problems in organizing this text? in fixing what your teacher asked you to fix in the first draft/second draft? _____/_____/_____
- Having in mind your difficulties, what are the steps you will take to continue writing your assignment? _____/_____/_____
- How do you evaluate your work at this moment in terms of language used, audiences chosen, following the demands of the prompt. ___/___/____
- How are the models drawn in class helping you write this announcement?
- What are the means you are using to evaluate if your work is effective or not? Why(not)? Do you have a model of an announcement to compare with yours? Is anybody providing you feedback on your writing?
- After the conference, what is your plan of action now? What are the steps you will take to do this task?
- Additional comments you might want to make:

9) After the final version is completed:
- What were the actual steps you took to do this assignment? In other words, what means did you use to write this assignment?
- Was this assignment difficult? Why(not)?
- How did you check your work while doing it? How did you know you were on the right track? Did you compare your work with another announcement, or with your classmates’ work? Did your teacher’s (or any other person’s) feedback help you check yourself? How?
- How did the models drawn in class help you write this announcement?
- Additional comments you might want to make:

___/_______/______
APPENDIX D

WRITING REPORT TEMPLATES

UNIT 1

WRITING REPORT TEMPLATE

When I received the writing assignment prompt on ____/___/____, I initially thought the task would be __________________________ because __________________________. For this reason, I delineated the following plan of action: __________________________________. In particular, I would select the following criteria to choose my audiences: __________________________. And also I would use the following criteria to choose my event to be announced: __________________________.

Because of my difficulties, which are ______, I foresaw the following problems: _______________________ / I didn’t foresee any difficulties in this assignment because __________________________. To overcome these difficulties I would do the following: __________________________.

Regarding checking my own work, I would do the following to keep track of what I was doing: __________________________. From the resources (conferences, English 5, models, notes on the notebook, grammar book, dictionaries, etc) I had, I would use the following to write this announcement ___________ because ________________. I would not use ______________ because _____________________.

After having my first draft/second draft corrected by the teacher (circle only one; you should write a paragraph for each draft corrected) on ___/___/___, I set the following goals for this writing task: __________________________. I was also facing the following difficulties: (sentence structure)_________________________; (text organization) ___________________; (generic moves) ___________; (grammar in general) ___________; (vocabulary) ___________; (other, specify please) ___________. Thus, I decided to do the following to solve them: (sentence structure)_________________________; (text organization) ___________________; (generic moves) ___________; (grammar in general) ___________; (vocabulary) ___________; (other, specify please) ___________. / I didn’t have any difficulties at this point because __________________________.

I mostly evaluate my work as________________________. I was using the following to assess my work: __________________________. In particular the models were/ were not helping me do this task because __________________________.

After the conference held on ___/___/___, I realized that I still have the following problems __________________ and the following would be my plan of action: __________________________. / I realized I didn’t have any problems or things to fix in my piece because __________________________.
I evaluated the plans of action I made previously for this assignment and I concluded that the following worked because . However, the following didn’t work because . I planned to do the following but I didn’t because .

I finished my assignment on . To sum up, what I did to write this assignment was the following: . Some of the steps mentioned above, which are , were not taken because . Overall, I think this assignment was because and my text is in good/reasonable/poor shape to be submitted because .

The way I checked my work was . In my opinion, what helped me most to write this text was the following because .

This is a suggestion. You should adapt the template to the information you will provide. The criteria to grade the writing report will be: clear and expanded elaboration of the information required.

UNIT 2

WRITING REPORT TEMPLATE

When I received the writing assignment prompt on , I initially thought the task would be because . For this reason, I delineated the following plan of action: . In particular, I would select the following criteria to choose my job wanted ad: .

Because of my difficulties, which are , I foresaw the following problems: / I didn’t foresee any difficulties in this assignment because . To overcome these difficulties I would do the following: .

Regarding checking my own work, I would do the following to keep track of what I was doing: . From the resources (conferences, English 5, models, notes on the notebook, grammar book, dictionaries, etc) I had, I would use the following to write this announcement because . I would not use because .

After having my first draft/second draft corrected by the teacher (circle only one; you should write a paragraph for each draft corrected) on , I set the following goals for this writing task: . I was also facing the following difficulties: (sentence structure) ; (text organization) ; (generic moves) ; (grammar in general)
I mostly evaluate my work as _________________. I was using the following to assess my work: ________________. In particular the models were/ were not helping me do this task because _________________.

After the conference held on ___/___/___, I realized that I still have the following problems ________________ and the following would be my plan of action: ________________./ I realized I didn’t have any problems or things to fix in my piece because _________________.

I evaluated the plans of action I made previously for this assignment and I concluded that the following worked ________________ because ________________. However, the following didn’t work ________________ because ________________. I planned to do the following but I didn’t ________________ because _________________.

I finished my assignment on ___/___/____. To sum up, what I did to write this assignment was the following: _________________. Some of the steps mentioned above, which are ____________, were not taken because _________________. Overall, I think this assignment was/was not difficult because ________________ and my text is in good/reasonable/poor shape to be submitted because _________________.

The way I checked my work was ________________. In my opinion, what helped me most to write this text was the following ________________ because _________________.

OBS: This is a suggestion. You should adapt the template to the information you will provide.
The criterion to grade the writing report will be the following: clear and expanded elaboration of the information required.

UNIT 3

WRITING REPORT TEMPLATE

When I received the writing assignment prompt on ___/___/___, I initially thought the task would be ________________ because _________________. For this reason, I delineated the following plan
of action: ____________________________. In particular, I would select the following criteria to elaborate my thesis statement: ________________________.

Because of my difficulties, which are ________, I foresaw the following problems: _______________________; I didn’t foresee any difficulties in this assignment because __________________________. To overcome these difficulties I would do the following: ________________________.

Regarding checking my own work, I would do the following to keep track of what I was doing: ________________________. From the resources (conferences, English 5, models, notes on the notebook, grammar book, dictionaries, etc) I had, I would use the following to write this argumentative text ______________ because ________________. I would not use ______________ because ______________________.

After having my first draft/second draft corrected by the teacher (circle only one; you should write a paragraph for each draft corrected) on ___/___/___, I set the following goals for this writing task: ________________. I was also facing the following difficulties: (sentence structure) _______________; (text organization) _______________; (generic moves) _______________; (grammar in general) _______________; (vocabulary) _______________; (other, specify please) _______________. Thus, I decided to do the following to solve them: (sentence structure) _______________; (text organization) _______________; (generic moves) _______________; (grammar in general) _______________; (vocabulary) _______________; (other, specify please) _______________. / I didn’t have any difficulties at this point because ________________.

I mostly evaluate my work as ________________. I was using the following to assess my work: ________________. In particular the models were/ were not helping me do this task because ________________.

After the conference held on ___/___/___, I realized that I still have the following problems _______________ and the following would be my plan of action: _______________. / I realized I didn’t have any problems or things to fix in my piece because ________________.

I evaluated the plans of action I made previously for this assignment and I concluded that the following worked _______________ because _______________. However, the following didn’t work _______________ because _______________. I planned to do the following but I didn’t _______________ because ________________.

The assignment requires me to use the concepts of field, tenor and mode to write my argumentative text. I am using these concepts in the following way (the instructor wants you to explain in details how you are using the concepts of field, tenor and mode to write the argumentative text): ** this part is fundamental to be filled out in order to get a good grade in the writing report assignment.**
I finished my assignment on ___/____/____. To sum up, what I did to write this assignment was the following: _______________________. Some of the steps mentioned above, which are __________, were not taken because _______________. Overall, I think this assignment was/was not difficult because ____________________ and my text is in good/reasonable/poor shape to be submitted because ________________.

The way I checked my work was __________________. In my opinion, what helped me most to write this text was the following ___________ because ________________.

This is a suggestion. You should adapt the template to the information you will provide.
The criterion to grade the writing report will be: clear and expanded elaboration of the information required.
APPENDIX E

HOLISTIC SCALES

HOLISTIC SCORING 4-POINT SCALE FOR COVER LETTERS

4 (very good) A cover letter in this category has the following:

- The cover letter is a very good sample of the genre. It contains all the following moves: (minor)- Heading, Inside address, Greeting, Closing - and (major) - Explanation of why one is contacting the employer, Summary of one's experience, accomplishments and qualifications, Initiative to make contact with the employer. The letter can have mistakes in the minor moves but not in the major ones.
- The message required by each generic move is fully conveyed. The sequence of information is very appropriate to the genre. Information is appropriately extended, enhanced or further elaborated.
- The writer efficiently tailors the letter to the employer’s needs. The linguistic forms (lexical items, verbs, adjectives, adverbs) used are very appropriate to the audience, i.e., they provide a formal and polite tone to the letter. The letter is concise, non-demanding, emotionally neutral, and refers to the quality of the company.
- The clauses are fully integrated within the sentence. There is use of different types of sentences (simple, complex, compound). Sentences do not always start with I. The text is cohesive. No linguistic errors (word choice, grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc) are found in the text.

3 (good) A cover letter in this category has the following:

- The cover letter is a good sample of the genre. It contains more than half of the 7 moves. Two of the major moves (Explanation of why one is contacting the employer, Summary of one’s experience, accomplishments and qualifications, Initiative to make contact with the employer) have a quality ranging from high to medium.
- The message required by one major move is not fully conveyed. The sequence of information is somewhat appropriate to the genre. Information is somewhat extended, enhanced or further elaborated
- The writer somewhat tailors the letter to the employer’s needs. The linguistic forms (lexical items, verbs, adjectives, adverbs) used are almost totally appropriate to the audience, i.e., they provide an almost formal and polite tone to the letter. The letter is not one of the following: concise, non-demanding, emotionally neutral, and refers to the quality of the company.
- The clauses are almost fully integrated within the sentence. Sentences do not always start with I. The text is almost totally cohesive. Some linguistic errors
(word choice, grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc) are found in the text, but they do not interfere with its comprehensibility.

2 (reasonable) A cover letter in this category has the following:
- The cover letter is partially satisfactory. It contains half of the 7 moves. The letter has one to two of the major moves (Explanation of why you’re contacting the employer, Summary of your experience, accomplishments and qualifications, Initiative to make contact with the employer) present but its quality will be from medium to low.
- The message required by 2 of the 3 major generic moves are not fully conveyed. The sequence of information is somewhat appropriate to the genre. There is some use of language which extends, enhances or elaborates on the information.
- The writer partially tailors the letter to the employer’s needs. The linguistic forms (lexical items, verbs, adjectives, adverbs) used are somewhat appropriate to the audience, i.e., the letter is somewhat informal, but the tone is still polite. The letter is not two of the following: concise, non-demanding, emotionally neutral, and refers to the quality of the company.
- The clauses are somewhat integrated within the sentence. The text is somewhat cohesive. The lay out of the text partially resembles a formal letter. The letter tends to be I centered. A considerable number of linguistic errors (word choice, grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc) are found in the text which may or may not interfere in the text comprehensibility.

1 (poor) A cover letter in this category has the following:
- The cover letter is poor. It contains less than half of the 7 moves. In addition, none of the major moves (Explanation of why one is contacting the employer, Summary of one’s experience, accomplishments and qualifications, Initiative to make contact with the employer) will be present or all the major moves are realized with poor quality.
- The message required by each major generic move is conveyed in a restricted way. The sequence of information is inappropriate to the genre. Information is inefficiently extended, enhanced or elaborated.
- The writer tailors the letter to the employer’s needs in a limited way. The linguistic forms (lexical items, verbs, adjectives, adverbs) used are inappropriate to the audience, i.e., the letter is very informal, but the tone is still polite. The letter is not three or more of the following: concise, non-demanding, emotionally neutral, and refers to the quality of the company.
- The clauses are integrated within the sentence in a limited way. The text is barely cohesive. The lay out resembles a formal letter in a limited way. The letter is I centered. A lot of linguistic errors (word choice, grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc) are found in the text and which interfere in the comprehensibility of the text.
HOLISTIC SCORING 4-POINT SCALE FOR ARGUMENTATIVE TEXTS:

4  **(very good)** An argumentative text in this category contains the following:

- The text is a very good sample of the genre. It contains all of the major generic moves (setting the context for the thesis statement (introduction); thesis statement; argumentation supporting the thesis statement, and conclusion) and at least 2 of the 4 minor moves (opponent’s view, rebuttal to the opponent’s view, establishing common ground, restatement of the thesis). All or almost all of them are developed well.
- The message required by each generic move is fully conveyed. The sequence of information is very appropriate to the genre. Information is appropriately extended, enhanced or further elaborated. The introduction sets the context for the thesis. The thesis has almost all the following features (contains “generalization demanding proof of further development”¹, is narrowed enough to be fully developed in the number of pages allotted, is sharply focused, reveals the writer’s stance about the issue). The argumentation fully supports the thesis with plenty of evidence (statistics, testimonies, examples, invented examples, personal experiences, stories). The conclusion provides a strong sense of closure to the text.
- The text efficiently entices the audience. The linguistic forms (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs) used are very appropriate to the audience and to the writer’s goal. The opponent’s views are represented in a strategic way. If rebutted by the writer, the rebuttal should be polite and convincing.
- The clauses are almost fully integrated within the sentence. There is a wide variety of sentences (simple, complex, compound). Sentences start with a variety of different words. The text is considerably cohesive. Almost no linguistic errors (word choice, grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc) are found in the text.

3  **(good)** An argumentative text in this category contains the following:

- The text is a good sample of the genre. It contains either: a) a thesis + argumentation + either an introduction or conclusion + at 1 minor move, b) Or it contains the 4 major moves without the minor ones.
- The message required by 3-4 of the major moves is fully conveyed. The sequence of information is appropriate to the purpose of the genre. Information is somewhat extended, enhanced and further elaborated. The introduction somewhat sets the context for the thesis. The thesis has 3 of the following features (“contains generalization demanding proof of further development”, is narrowed enough to be fully developed in the number of pages allotted, is sharply focused, reveals the writer’s stance about the issue). The argumentation almost fully supports the thesis with plenty of evidence (statistics, testimonies, examples, invented examples, invented

examples, personal experiences, stories). The conclusion provides a good sense of closure to the text.

- The text almost efficiently entices the audience. The linguistic forms (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs) used are somewhat appropriate to the audience and to the goal of the writer. If the opponent’s views are represented they are represented in a strategic way.

- The clauses are almost fully integrated within the sentences. There is variety of sentences (simple, complex, compound). Sentences start in somewhat different ways. The text is considerably cohesive. Almost no linguistic errors (word choice, grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc) are found in the text.

2 (reasonable) An argumentative text in this category contains the following:

- The text is partially satisfactory. It contains 3 of the major moves or it contains either a thesis without support or argumentation without a clearly stated thesis but with an introduction and a conclusion.

- The message required by 2 of the generic moves is partially conveyed. The sequence of information is somewhat appropriate to the genre. Information is partially extended, enhanced or elaborated. If there is thesis it has 2 of the following features (contains “generalization demanding proof of further development”, is narrowed enough to be fully developed in the number of pages allotted, is sharply focused, reveals the writer’s stance about the issue). The argumentation partially supports the thesis with some evidence (statistics, testimonies, examples, invented examples, personal experiences, stories). The conclusion provides some sense of closure to the text.

- The text barely entices the audience. Most of the linguistic forms (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs) used are inappropriate to the audience and to the goal of the writer. If the opponent’s views are represented they are not represented in a strategic way.

- The clauses are not always integrated within the sentence. There is little variety of sentences (simple, complex, compound). There is some variation in how sentences start. The text is somewhat cohesive. A considerable number of linguistic errors (word choice, grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc) are found in the text.

1 (poor) An argumentative text in this category contains the following:

- The text is poor. It contains 2 of the major moves.

- The message required by all the major generic moves is conveyed in a restricted way. The sequence of information is inappropriate to the genre. Information is inefficiently extended, enhanced or elaborated. There is no thesis, and if there is one it has 1 or none of the following features (contains “generalization demanding proof of further development”, is narrowed enough to be fully developed in the number of pages allotted, is sharply focused, reveals the writer’s stance about the issue). The argumentation supports the thesis in a very limited way or not at all. There is little evidence. The conclusion barely provides a sense of closure to the text or does not close the text at all.
• The text does not entice the audience. The linguistic forms (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs) used are very inappropriate to the audience and to the writer’s goal. The opponent’s views are not represented.

• Most of the clauses are not integrated within the sentence. There is no variety of sentences (simple, complex, compound). There is limited variation in the way sentences start. The text is barely cohesive. A lot of linguistic errors (word choice, grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc) are found in the text and they interfere in the comprehensibility of the text.
APPENDIX F

PRE-TESTS

For cover letters:

PRE WRITING ASSESSMENT/ IN CLASS ACTIVITY (1 MARK) 09/09/04

This writing assessment consists of two parts. In the first part, you are asked to write an announcement and, in the second part, you should write a job application letter. This test DOES NOT AFFECT YOUR GRADE OR YOUR PLACEMENT in this course. You have 65 minutes to take the test.

PART 1 - Announcement:
Create an announcement to communicate one of the following to an audience. You should choose the audience of your text. For example, your announcement can be addressed to The Penn State University students, or to the local community, or to your department.
/ - An international students association is going to promote a cultural event about your country.
- A professor is going to give a talk in your department/college.

PART 2 - Job application letter
Read one of the following job ads and write a letter applying for that job.

a) Part-Time Kiosk Sales Rep

$8.00/hour + Commission
25 Hours Per Week

The Centre Daily Times is looking for outgoing sales representatives to sell newspaper subscriptions at various kiosk locations in retail and grocery outlets and at special events. Interested candidates must be able to work weekends and some evenings, have a valid PA driver’s license and insurance, and be able to work independently. Transportation Vehicle provided.
Call 814-231-4606.

CENTRE DAILY TIMES
(Chairman of the Board of Directors)

b)
WRITE YOUR NAME AND EMAIL ON TOP OF YOUR PAPER
IF YOU HAVE TAKEN ESL 004, PLEASE MARK IT ON YOUR PAPER
Placement Exam Prompt
ESL 004/015

The purpose of this in-class writing sample is to ensure that you have enrolled in the most appropriate writing course for your writing abilities. **Please take this assignment seriously—this in-class writing sample will determine if you stay in this course or get moved.**

A group of writing instructors and the ESL Course Supervisor will evaluate your ability to express your ideas in written English and NOT the ideas themselves. Your writing sample will be judged on its organization, how clearly you express your ideas, the examples/support you provide, and the sophistication and variety of your grammar and vocabulary usage.

**Directions:** Please read the topics carefully and choose ONE. Write a well-developed essay responding to the question you chose. If you have any questions, ask your instructor. Remember to organize your ideas before you begin to write and remember to give examples and/or support for what you write.

Take at least 5 minutes to proofread your paper before turning it in. You may use this paper to make notes. Good luck!!

You have **75 minutes.** BE SURE TO PUT YOUR NAME AND EMAIL ADDRESS ON YOUR ESSAY!!

**TOPICS:**

1. We have all taken standardized tests to assess our abilities and to get into various schools. Write an essay with a clear thesis about the value or weaknesses of standardized testing. Be sure to support your ideas about testing with sufficient details and evidence.

   OR—

2. Students enrolled in this class are either bilingual or multilingual speakers. Write an essay with a clear thesis about the strategies or techniques that you have used to develop your English language abilities. Be sure to support the value of these strategies or techniques with sufficient details and evidence.

   OR—

3. Students in American universities are required to take courses outside their majors to develop a broader approach to learning. Write an essay with a clear thesis about the value or weaknesses of a broad-based education. Be sure to support the value or weaknesses with sufficient details or evidence.
APPENDIX G

POST-TESTS

For cover letters:

PART 1 - Announcement:
Create an announcement to communicate one of the following to an audience. You should choose the audience of your text. For example, your announcement can be addressed to The Penn State University students, or to the local community, or to your department.
- An international students association is going to promote a cultural event about your country.
- A professor is going to give a talk in your department/college.

PART 2 - Job application letter
Read one of the following job ads and write a letter applying for that job.

a) Part-Time Kiosk Sales Rep

$8.00/hour + Commission
25 Hours Per Week

The Centre Daily Times is looking for outgoing sales representatives to sell newspaper subscriptions at various kiosk locations to mall and grocery centers and at special events. Interested candidates must be able to work weekends and evening hours. A valid PA driver’s license and insurance may be able to sell independently. Transportation Vehicle provided.

Call 814-231-6066.
For argumentative texts:

Directions: Please read the topics carefully and choose ONE. Write a well-developed essay responding to the question you chose. If you have any questions, ask your instructor. Remember to organize your ideas before you begin to write and remember to give examples and/or support for what you write.

Take at least 5 minutes to proofread your paper before turning it in. You may use this paper to make notes. Good luck!!

You have 75 minutes. BE SURE TO PUT YOUR NAME AND EMAIL ADDRESS ON YOUR ESSAY!!

TOPICS:

1. We have all taken standardized tests to assess our abilities and to get into various schools. Write an essay with a clear thesis about the value or weaknesses of standardized testing. Be sure to support your ideas about testing with sufficient details and evidence.

OR—

2. Students enrolled in this class are either bilingual or multilingual speakers. Write an essay with a clear thesis about the strategies or techniques that you have used to develop your English language abilities. Be sure to support the value of these strategies or techniques with sufficient details and evidence.

OR—

3. Students in American universities are required to take courses outside their majors to develop a broader approach to learning. Write an essay with a clear thesis about the value or weaknesses of a broad-based education. Be sure to support the value or weaknesses with sufficient details or evidence.
APPENDIX H

STUDENTS’ MODELS OF GENRE
Genre

Field

Tone

Mode

Oral

Write

Type

Goal

Content

Writer

Audience

Rules

Generic movie
9/24/04 M
Ways of communication

↑

Genre

Formal

Reading

Informal

TV news
radio

cover letter
essay
book
recipes
letter
news, (newspaper)

Announcement
recipes
advertisement

M 11/16/04
Genre

Concept of Genre

Tone

Goal

Mail

Field

Culture
Games

Language

Oral

Situations

Written

News

Local news

International news

To inform

Purpose

Web page

Newspaper

Kind of news

9/23/04
Genre

Field

Tenor

different type

the context or the purpose of genre

the writer or reader of the genre

Xn 11/16/04
Genre Model

Goal

Advertisement

Field

Mode

Texts

Date

Time

Location

Keywords

Sentence structure

Creativity

Rules

Discourse
Community

Follow them

Way to approach audience

Tenor

Cover letters
Genres

Oral

News
While watching t.v. in my room

Different Genres

Inform

Written

Ads
While reading the "New York Times" newspaper

Letter
When checking my mailbox

E-mails
When checking my e-mail account on my computer
GENRE MODEL

GENRE

TEXT

GOAL

FIELD

- Layout

TENOR

- Formally
- Informally
- Friendly

MODE

- Arguments

LANGUAGE
Different kinds of Genres

- Textbooks
- Announcements
- Written letters
- Email
- Cheeky and playful in writing
- Newspaper

- Oral
- Telling stories
- News listening to from TV
N 11/16/04

Every text has a different 'Authoring' mode, related to genre, field, and tenor. Genre is a title, Field is title, Tenor is a subtitle. Base on genre, field, mode, the majority of sentences are written in complete sentences. No grammar error.
They all connected.
One can't be without the other.
Field: content of the context, contains the goal, thesis statement or other purposes.

Tenor: how writer approaches the audience, depending on the formality, events and timing issue.

Mode: language use in the context, influenced by the social situation to achieve different goals.
APPENDIX I

TEXTS USED FOR THE BHATIA’S EXERCISE AND THE ANSWER GIVEN TO THE STUDENTS

3.3.2 Job application letters

Bhatia (1989) reports on the nativization of job applications from South Asia. His corpus included some 200 applications for jobs and scholarships from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. He reports that in South Asia the function of a job application letter appears to be different from what it is in the West. As the example quoted earlier [21] indicates the main function of the job application letter is to highlight and make relevant the qualifications and experience of the applicant to the specifications of the job. And that is one of the reasons why an overwhelmingly large number of promotional documents, whether sales promotion or job application letters, use product-detailing as the main strategy to persuade the reader to buy the product or service. In job application letters from South Asia, most applicants were found to be using the cover letter just to enclose the CV, without taking advantage of the opportunity to offer self-appraisal to convince the reader of the strength of their candidate. The following is a typical example of this kind of use from this study:

[34] With reference to your advertisement for the post of Personnel PR Executive published in The Times of India dated 12th March 1988, I hereby submit my personal resume for your kind consideration and disposal. Hope to be favoured.

Bhatia (1989) also cites instances from job applications where the applicant assigns glorified status to the organization of the prospective employer, indicating his or her eagerness to work with them.

[38] I am enclosing my brief 'Bio-data' for your kind consideration and confirmation. I request you kindly give me a chance to serve your esteemed organization. I assure you, Sir, I can prove worthy of your selection by hard work and devotion to duties.

Although this strategy of Self-degradation is very common in applications for scholarships, it is not entirely absent in job applications.

[41] There are many openings for lecturers in colleges here, but the standard of the students has gone down very much and they insist on being lectured in the local language. I am not prepared to teach English Literature in (name of the language), our regional language, and so have not applied for any posts here. Though my own college invited me to send in an application I did not do so.

Self-degradation in such application letters serves to highlight the disparity between the candidate’s present situation and the one he is interested in. And since the addressee in all of them is the one who can bring about an adjustment, a move such as this can only invoke compassion and pity. There are some very explicit expressions of this kind in a number of applications.

obs: the underlining and the asterisk were already present in the original copy.
The answer for question c) provided by the instructor

How are field, tenor and mode interrelated in the genre cover letters?
Answer this question by comparing South Asian and American cover letters.

*If Field changes, tenor and mode will change too. For example, South Asian letters have a modified field, they insert the moves self-degradation and adversary glorification. By inserting these moves, the tenor is affected. The audience is approached in a more emotional, touching way. The mode is also affected since the sentences will start not only with I but with other subjects (for example family members) and the use of imperative.*
If tenor changes, as South Asians opt not to be persuasive at all about their candidature, then the mode is affected. The use of sentences is reduced; and as a consequence, it is a very short cover letter and the circumstances of the application (ad and enclosed resume) become more relevant. The field is also affected because the content mentioned is different: reference to the resume.

In American cover letters, as the tenor is persuasion through rationality (your abilities, skills, qualifications) the field refer to this kind of information. Because the applicant should also show knowledge about the company (field of the first paragraph), the mode is affected. The sentences should start with you/company in the first paragraph and I (but not too I centered) in the second.
APPENDIX J

OBITUARIES USED IN THE OBITUARY EXERCISE AND ANSWERS GIVEN TO STUDENTS

Answers to some parts of the exercise given to the students.

2) Use the model # 2 of the Basic Relationships to answer the following:
- If both texts refer to the same topic, how do you explain the fact that text 1 has more information than text 2?

The explanation goes beyond saying that text 1 is about a successful person and text 2 is about a common person. We really don’t know who Mrs Avedon is. She possibly could be a very accomplished person but the goals of the two texts are quite different. What explains the differences are the context surrounding both texts. The field is slightly different. While text 1 focuses on the accomplishments and success of the deceased so that the present generation honor/acknowledge his importance to the society, text 2 has the goal to mourn the death of the person, to register her death, to memorialize her. The tenor in text 1 is informative and even persuasive, whereas in text 2 is totally emotional and addressed to the family.
Mr. Seybold’s family might also have paid the newspaper to have a text like 2 published, despite his success and contributions to society. It just depends on the goals one has. Thus, just thinking at the superficial level (text 1 is about an accomplished person and text 2 is not) can be misleading. What actually explains the difference is more basic relationships (language – context/field, tenor and mode).

- How does the context affect the way language is used in these two texts? In other words, compare Field, Tenor and Mode in both texts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Text 1</th>
<th>Text 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Field</strong></td>
<td>The person’s achievements and success; to portray the deceased as an entrepreneur. Biography</td>
<td>to mourn the death of the person. To memorialize her.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tenor</strong></td>
<td>Written by a journalist Ethos driven (his accomplishments, his success) Mostly written in declarative sentences to inform the reader about Mr. Seybold’s entrepreneurship; to make the reader recognize its importance to the society (large use of active verbs that show his entrepreneurship: transformed, founded, invent, developed, produced, pioneered, created, started, play a key role, play a significant role) and to a lesser extent use of adjectives (authoritative, widely recognized)</td>
<td>Written by the family(?) Pathos driven (grace, loving heart, family members, missed) Personal text, written by and to the family (mentioning of the first names only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mode</strong></td>
<td>Sentences start either with adverbial phrases (in 1963, in 1964, in the next seven years) or with everything related to the deceased (the company, the projects, the family business, his partners)</td>
<td>Shortened sentences; elimination of unnecessary words (subject, prepositions). Sentences start with words designating family ties: mother, mother-in-law, grandmother</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX K

PRE-TESTS COVER LETTERS

Pre-test

K

Dear Arlene Streisand,

My name is K. I’m now a student of Penn State. I’m looking for a job in the summer. This is my first summer I looking for job and I think maybe I could look for a job that interest me. After I had read your ads, I am very interest in becoming a lifeguards. I’m a very good swimer. I had got two metal for hundress free style while I we in high school. I think becoming a lifeguards is a best job I can ever think of. My home address is 454 C Terrace Commons State College PA, 13000. I would like you to send me an application. If you have any question call me and my phone # “000-000-0000”. Thank yoo.

K

____________________________________________________________________

Pre-test

Cho

Centre Daily
Time
000-000-0000

To whom It my concern

This is Cho, one of penn state students who study at major business and sale. I have great interests and abilities to be a part time sales representatives for Centre Daily Time. Also, I got sale experiences at working for Donkin Donuts, Restaurant, and Movie Center. More over, I have my own PA license and insurance to drive a car. And I can work weekends and some evenings. In addition, I am very independent worker.

If you feel any interest at hiring me please contact me at 000-000-0000. I am waiting for your decision.

Sincerely Yours,

Cho
M.

Holle:

How are you doing? I saw this new from a newspaper, than know you are hiring people representatives go out to sell newspaper. I think my condition is matching What you need. I am a students at Penn State University. I have my all my classes at daytime from Monday to Friday. I can use my evening and weekend to get this job. Although I am a international student in United States, but I got my insurance three years ago. Also, driver license center give a honor from my driving. I also a safe driver. When I was in High School or at College now. I always work hard and get anything in order by myself. I don’t have accustomed to dependent on people. I always beat down problems by myself to get succeed. Also sometimes need friends support. Please hire me. I belive I will do well during the job. Thank

M.

H

I H. instructor of Soccer for the last 2 years, would like to work for one of these camps where a instructor of soccer is needed. I really think I have the ideas and skills required to do this job. Since I have worked as a soccer instructor for the last 2 years I think I have earned the rudimentary to do this kind of job.

While in high school, I played for my High School Soccer team and thanks to that; my love for soccer increased so much, that I always wished to be a instructor of soccer; and now that I have been a soccer instructor for 2 years my goal to reach is to be recognized nation-wide, and what a best way to make this happen than working for a big campus such as this one.

I know for sure that if I get hired I’ll do my best in this job.

Hopping get hired H.
Dear ladies/gentlement,
My name is Chl. I am writing this letter to apply for the position as Part-time Kiosk Sales representative.

Currently I am a freshmen in Penn State University and major in Science. I am an social able and nice person as responsible as well. I have read the Centre Daily Times newspaper subscriptions and they are very interesting and attractive to me, which makes me feel like to share them with others. Hopefully they will enjoy these subscriptions as I do. This is one of the reasons I apply this job. I read and understood the description and requirement for this position, which I accept and I think I am capable for them all. I will try my best to demonstrate my capability.

Hopefully I can hear from you soon. Thank you for your consideration!

Sincerely,
Chl 09/2004
Centre Daily Time,

Seeing your job advertisement in newspaper, I want to apply for the part-time Kiosk Sale Rep. position.

I am a college. It is available to me to work after class, evening, and weekend. I have my valid PA driver’s license and insurance and have been driving independently for several years. I can read maps well to find any location.

I am also good at time management. I will never be late. I always work hard in both study and jobs. I would try my best on everything I work on.

I hope your company will give me a chance to prove my ability.

Sincerely,

X
Sep.2004
APPENDIX L

POST-TEST COVER LETTERS

Dear: Centre Daily Times

I am writing this reference to your ad on monday that looking for outgoing sales representative to sell newspaper subscription. I am currently looking for a part-time job at night and weeken. Also, I like to work independently, so this job fix me the best.

Though out my life, I travel alot, so I know many street and city. I have the PA driver’s license more than five years and I never have problem with my car insurance. Now I am working in a Printing company. Since I am a very responsible person, my boss like me alot and trust me in doing anything. I also received award in my company for coming on time everyday and never any day for you. I belive all my work skill will best fix your qualification.

I will looking forward to call you on the coming week to schedual a best time for us to meet and discuss about my qualification. Thank you for your consideration.

Enclose

K
Dec. 9, 2004

Centre Daily Time
154 East Beaver Av.
State College, PA 18600
000-000-0000

Dear Mr. Smith:

By reading the employing message on the newspaper, I am very interesting at being a part time Kiosk Sales Representatives for the Centre Daily Times. The Centre Daily Times is an equal opportunity Employer with growing business. I am looking for outgoing sales representative to contribute its business.

As I am a part time student at Penn State, I have a very flexible schedule that can be compatible to work as part time Kiosk Sales Representatives. Also, I have been a newspaper sale for many years. So I earned a great experiences at this type of job. And I owned a PA driver’s license and insurance, in which can help me dealing with any transportation problems. Throughout my life I am a very independent worker. I can work at various locations at nights and weekends, even at special events.

I am interested at this job, I will meet you on Dec. 28, 04,

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Cho
December 8, 2004
Centre Daily Times
000-000-0000

Dear:

I have learned about Centre Daily Times from a new paper. Your Company is big and have a good estimation from people. It has a program for people who go out to sell stuff to people. That is very good for some people who don’t have time to shop. Thus, I want to join you to learn more experiences from this program.

I am a student in Penn State and major in Business. I have a very good grades from my courses. I have learned how to sell for stuff to people at my business class and work for a business company as a part time for one year. But I still think my skill. I want to get more or share the experience from you or others. The United States gave my driver license and insurance four years ago. My weekend is free. I really want this job and will work on it with responsibility.

I really ready to join you and work with you to get more experiences for my life. I will call you on next Monday to make sure my information.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely:

M.
H

454 C Terrace Commons
State College, PA
Penn State 13000

December 09, 2004

Summer Camp Employment
133 S. Archer Ave.
Mundelein IL 60060

Dear Sir,

I am writing this letter in response to your announcement published in the newspaper. I am very familiar with some of the job that you are offering. Specially with soccer, therefore I would like to apply for it.

Since I was 9 years old I enjoyed playing soccer, even now 10 years later. My passion for this sport is very strong. When I was 13 years old I was part of my high school soccer team. I was the captain of the team. Then, I played soccer for my college during the first year, and now in my second year I still doing it. As you can see, I have experience with this sport; and I think I have all the skills needed to do this job.

Thanks for your appreciation. I will be calling you on Wednesday December 20, 2004, to set up the interview and discuss my qualifications and concerns.

Sincerely,
H.
December 09, 2004

Dear Recruiter:

I am writing in response to your ad on your newspaper. It is very impressive that The Centre Daily Times has become the best selling newspaper in Pennsylvania today. The high-quality printing, good teamwork, comfortable environment for workers, well-developed organization and the unique style of the newspaper have become well known among families in Pennsylvania. These make me become more anxious to be part of your team.

Currently I am a senior whose major Business Management in Pennsylvania State University and will graduate on May 2004. I have earned straight A through these years in all classes that I have taken in college, especially I have won the honor in Business and Speech Communication classes, in which I gain business, saling, management and communication skills. My academic achievement is not limited in the classroom. During summer of 2003, Intelligencer Journal had offered me a internship as sales manager, in where I improve sales and carrer skills. During my college years, I became active in school’s organizations, include Asian Club, Business Club and Saler’s Club, etc. overall, I belive my experiences and skills will contribute the best for your company.

I am seeking for a position as a part time sales representative at any kiosk locations. In next five days I will call you to confirm your recieval of my resume and discuss my qualification. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Chl.
December 7, 2004

Arlene Streisand
Summer Camp Employment Inc.
1-800-443-6428

Dear Ms. Streisand:

I used to join various camps when I was a student. Most of the staff I met there were employed by the Summer Camp Employment Inc. They strongly recommend the Summer Camp Employment Inc, which provides hundreds of job opportunities for summer activities in various north-east states. It is well known as the best summer job agency. I hope I will get position as tennis instructor in PA by joining the Summer Camp Employment Inc.

Tennis is my favorite sport and career. I have been playing tennis since I was seven years old. 10 years formal training has built up my professional skill on tennis. I have won 5 championships in the high school and college contests. Coach assistant is my part-time job in college. I like to play and teach tennis with students who love this sport as much as I do.

Expecting to meet with you to discuss my qualifications for this position. I will call later to confirm my information arrived. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,                               X
After student got accepted to a college or any university, they will have to take a standardized test to value their skill in different subjects. Every student requit to take, soothe school can evalual them. There are same good and bad part of having this test.

First of all, the standardized test can help the school to value and place students in the right class they want to be. If the student have the right class they will be able to do good in their freshment year in college. Also, that can avoid more student drop their class because the class are too hard. On the other hand, If students cheat on that test and they got a very high score, They will be place on a higher class that will not be good for them. They will have very hard time though out the semester and a falling grade are usuauly happen to them.

All in all, to have a standardized test is a very good idea not only for the school also help the student to have the righ class they want to be. However, It could be a bad idea if student cheat on it and end up to be felt for they have too high class.
Pre-test

Cho

English and My native Language

English and My Native Language, Chinese are related to different views, or world. English is represented west culture and Chinese is represented East culture. So, they are totally different. For a student likes me to study English, in which is a strong obstacle. In order to overcome this obstacle, I have used some ways to develop my English abilities.

First of all, English is a course which requires a lot of words. To increase my vocabulary I use to read many newspapers. Then, I copy some words are important to understand the readings. Later, I check on dictionary. Also, I try to read the frictions which are considered from easy to hard. Day by day, I can learn many words to improve my reading skill.

In addition, English is a language that people use it to talk everyday in the United States. Then, speaking is very important to communicate each others it is a window of communication. So, I need to open this window to contact the world, where I live now. Moreover, my native language, Chinese doesn’t have any relationship to English, not likes the Spanish, Italian, etc. Therefore, I use many ways to improve my speaking. One
of ways is to watch TV. You may think that is funny, but it’s very good and easy way to learn the speaking. On the TV, actors talk and express their feelings which are closed to our life. I can learn the way of American speaking. Another way is paying attentions to listen when people talking. So, I can correct my pronounciation to speak the “English” which people can understand.

Finally, writing is very necessary skill in the school and out side. In our common life, we also need to communicate in a written form, not only talking. Furthermore, the writing depends on words and gramma that you have. So, I read some essays and stories to learn the ways that people use to do. Also, I worked hard and asked the teachers to help me. They teached me how to use new words in the different kind of sentences What a helpful way!

In conclusion, people learn a new language that is kind of difficult. However, If we spend our times and being patient and responsible to our study, we will smile at the end to be a winner. Also, It is not only on English, It can be everything in our life!
Many people need to get more education to get their dream comes true. That is including myself. When people want that, they have to go to college to get more education. I am a Asian American. When I go to college I will drop into many problems because my English Skill. So I need to take the ESL class. This class just for the people who is the English as a second languladge. In this class are either bilingual or multilingual speakers. because this class can help us learn more about the English, it will take it easy to learn, and we can easier to understand the skill.

The class can help us to learn more about the English. When the English is our second Languladge, we can do it well at anytime. Like speaking, Reading, writing. But this class can help us to learn it from the basic. Don’t be hard in the beginning. Let us catch the skill step by step.

It will take it easy to learn. When the teacher teaches up from easy to hard. We can take it easy in class or relax. Not like other English class, teaching so fast or so hard,
we can understand what is going on or just sit there and do nothing. It cause learn nothing.

    We can catch the skill easier from the ESL class, because it will go slowly and in our level. That your can really catch the skill from your class, from your teacher. Then to use you English knowledge to learn from other couses.

    That is why the students enrolled in this class are either bilingual or multilingual speakers. this ESL class can learn more English, take easy to learn it and easier to catch the skill from ESL class and help students to get more education from college. So, ESL class is Very important to improve the people who is English as a second languuladge. I like to learn at the ESL couse at college.
As a bilingual student I have tried some strategies and techniques to help me develop my English language abilities. Since my first language is Spanish, I use to use a Spanish-English dictionary to look up the English words I don’t know; and it helps me to have a better understanding of the words because I see the meaning of the English word written in my native language, Spanish. This strategy has helped me so much in my daily life and thanks to this my vocabulary increases every day.

Another strategy that I use to use has to do with music. I like to listen to Spanish and English music, and sometimes when I hear a weird word or a word that I have never used I try to figure it out by listening to the song again. This same technique is the one I use with movies, or sometimes I just program the TV to have English subtitle and I just have to look the words up in a dictionary to know their meanings. This technique has helped me to develop my thoughts and put them into English words more easily.

The strategies bilingual students use are many. Every bilingual or multilingual student has many strategies to develop their English language abilities, but there are a couple of them that are better and easier to use than others.

As a bilingual student I can say it is very important to have a strategy to develop your English language skills, so that, Your English will improve so much.
My name is Chl. I came to United States three and half years ago with very poor English. My native language is Chinese. Unlike Spanish, Chinese characters have not any similaties at all to English. It’s hard to learn English. In order to develop English skill, every single person has his or her way to learn English, so do I. There are couple ways that I would like to share with you.

First, I like to write jounals. It’s not necessary to think about any kind of limit to the topic of the jounals. You can write any topic you want. I started it from a very basic level – daily life. I like to observe everything happened around me every day and write it down in English. The most important of your journal is you have to understand what you write about, even you might use some are not standard English. I read over my journal after finish writing and try to find out any sentence with either grammar or vocal problem. For those words that I don’t know how to translate to English, I would look them up in Chinese-English dictionary, to see if the words are in there. Writing journal does help me because it is easy that I can write anything I want and it could help me to understand the using of the words in reading as well as writing.
Second, Reading magazines and newspapers. My favorite magazine is “Reader’s Digest”. I find many interesting articles in there. For those words that are new to me. I would look them up in dictionary. In addition, I would choose to write them down as the new vocabulary I learn and try to memorize them. Also, I would write a response type essay based on any article that catches my attention. I try to express my feeling towards the stories I read in English, so doing these can also help me in reading and writing skills. I would do the same thing when I read newspaper.

Third, make friends with native English speakers. I know it’s hard when I first make friends with them. It’s not because they would laugh at me. The problem is either them nor me understand each other’s “English”. The beginning of everything is hard, but don’t be afraid and feel shamed of yourself so you give up. Plus don’t only make friends with the people who are from your own country or speak the same native language as you do. It won’t help you to learn English. It only makes you become more afraid to communicate with others and present yourself. Don’t be afraid to try, even you express in wrong English and grammar. Ask them to help you out and correct you. You will learn it little by little.

Learning English is hard, but never give up learning and face the challenge is even harder. I understand that I am only one is responsible to improve English skills, so first I have to be confident of myself and try, and try anyway that can help me. Above is three ways that I have used to develop my English, hopefully they can help someone else too.
Ways to Develop language skill

I am a bilingual student. English is my second language, while Chinese is my native tongue. Before I came to the U.S in 2002, I had been studying English for several years. However, my English abilities were so limit. How could it be? Because I seldom used English in my country. So I live in the U.S now, I know that learning English well is my first and most important task. I have found some ways to improve my English.

First, I have to “accumulate” my vocabulary. Reading is the best way to learn more vocabulary. Everyday I read newspaper or magasins. Whe I read, I find that there are hundreds of words I don’t know. I look up this words in dictionary and try to memorize them. But this way make reading boring later. I try to figuer out the meaning of a new word by the contant of the setaniant, Besides understanding the words. I also can learn how people use the words. Vocabulary is the base for building up language abilities.

Then, I began to use what I have learned. I try to communicate with English speaking people to practise my Speaking and listening. I make friends with these people at the same time. I can learn new thing from them. At night I watch the American televion to get used to people’s talking. This is an interesting and easy way for study.

Third, I star writing. Early, I just write letters and emails in English, not formaorly writing. In school I learn to write essay, how to organize it, and proofread it. But I am still really bad in writing.
After 2 years, my English is better than before but still have to learn more to work hard on it. Above are just some of the good ways, I hope I will follow these and find more better ways. English is different but I have to work it out.
When student go to college or university, the first two year students must study general education, which is study many different course. These course are sometime not related to their major. Many students think that why should they take physical or humanity course while they are majoring in Engineering. How can these course are helpful for their major? However, there are some reasons that every student must take physical or humanity education.

The first reason student must take physical or humanity education is to be fair for all student. When students major in Kenisiology, they must take math and science too. What Kenisiology have to do with math or science. So if a university take away the physical or humanity course, they have to cancel out the math and science course for Kenisiology too. That will be unfair for the student who major is Kenisiology Math and Science. Therefore, physical and humanity must be in general education and every student have to take it.

The second reason student must take physical or humanity education is to help student participate in sport. For many students, who is not good at sport, this is a good opportunity for them to learn and participate. According to Wilson, who is majoring in Keniology, “Before I went to Penn State, I don’t known how to play volleyball at all. After I had study volleyball course for one semester, I become very interesting, and I
think I will study for Kensiology.” This situation also happen to many other students. Inbreif, physical and humanity course give student more choice to find their major and have oppotunity.

In summary, physical and humanity course should be stay in general education. Every student must take it, and it is not only a good oppotunity for them to join the sport, also It help them to find thei major.
In American Universities, students are required to take courses outside their major to develop a broader approach to learning. Although taking some courses not related to the major is time consuming, students gain much more benefits rather than spend.

In College students need to spend so much time on their majors. Those major courses are very difficult and challenging. Students require great amount of knowledge to overcome the obstacles. And these knowledge are not only in major. Now, there is a view to say: It is not necessary to take minor courses, these courses too much times, and not relate to major. We know that taking the minor courses are the consuming but they are necessary. The minor courses provide very fundamental knowledge and skills to prepare the major courses. For example, a business major student always takes a foreign language course. A Foreign language is very helpful to communicate with non English speaking members. A Foreign language can make more easy to understand global business and economical situation.

Also, colleges require more students to take physical education. PE is not related to many major. However, a healthy body is very important to maintain stress for studying. A PE course can strength your body. It can make a essential changing to you. So taking a minor course, can improve your abilities in physical and phychological ways.
Furthermore, taking minor courses provide a diversity of college studying for students. A major course is usually very serious courses. Students are bored and the same topics day by night. A minor course such as art, music or gym can make your college life much fun.

After graduating from college, students are facing a major issue to find jobs. Students compete each other to attain a job, even an interview. The recruiter not only consider your major, also about your minor. Applicants usually should write a cover letter, no matter what major you are. Writing a cover letter is a skill in English. It may be a good reason for students are required to take English course, ignene with your major. All the minor courses can help us to increase our opportunity to gain a job. So we can take a advantage from minor courses we take.

In short, students take the minor courses to enlarge their abilities to solve the problem, which they may face. Taking minor courses is very valuable to make them to be succeeded. Therefore, we should take the minor courses to build up our qualification to achieve our goals in future.
Students study at universities have to take their courses. The courses have to relate to their majors. Also, we should take some courses outside the major. That is good for you because you can improve and learn more skill for yourself, get more experiences, and can see what happen outside your major.

You can improve and learn more from those classes. When you take the courses about you major, the courses of course talk about that major only. Nothing else. Your skill would be very narrow. You should improve your knowledge to wide. That skill can help you to update the information from your minds. That is very good for you to think.

You will get more experiences from the courses outside your major. When the courses are different, your experiences from the course are different too. So, that different will give more ideas to think all about your major. Experiences also can push you move ahead, and help for your job when you have it.

You also can see what happen, and what they are going to do. You also can compare the different or same from your major to out off your major. They would give you some ideas that you don’t have or you never think about them. When you have no idea to do your work, you can think about or try to ask yourself why they think about this,
and go back to your opinion. This is easier to get the goal for your assignments or the others.

The courses outside the major should helpful for you or your skill and experiences. It is developing a broader approach to learning. It also can improve yourself and learn more for your skill, get more experiences, and see what would happen for you outside your major. Getting more skill and experience is good and important for you when you are still in college or out off the college to get a job. They also help you to achieve for your life.
In this class most of my classmates are bilingual and some multilingual speakers. I, as a bilingual student, have learned that learning or adopting a new language is not easy. And it could become something very frustrating, specially when nobody understands what you say.

After 3 years living in a totally different world, the U.S.A., I have become more familiarized with the culture off the country. But language still being a problem for me, although not as big as it was before, because I have improved my writing and speaking skills by doing simple thinks like reading in my free time, singing, and writing in my diary.

When I read in my free time I try to do it in a quiet place, so that I can get concentrated on what I am reading. It really helps me to get the meaning of the readings. Singing is another thing that has helped me develop my speaking skills. It has helped me pronounce words more clearly, and so that people understand me better.

By writing in my diary everyday, I have noticed that writing have become easier. Writing in diaries is a really good practice. In the long way it could be very valious because it can help develop our writing in many ways. For example, adding new words to our vocabulary, writing down thoughts, velocity to write, among others.

These are the strategies that I use to develop and improve my abilities of this important but complicated language which is English.
As an immigrant student, English is not my first speaking language. Of course it is very hard to learn English. However, throughout the entire process of learning English, I have already found some of the strategies that actually could help me to develop English skills. In my opinion, attending ESL classes and communicating more with native English speakers are very helpful for learning English.

ESL stands for English as a second Language. To some of students, English might be more than just the second language. ESL classes are set up for those students whose English is not their first language and are needed to improve the language skills. ESL classes not just only teach the basic vocabularies but everything relate to English language, which include composition, grammar, and all kinds of knowledge we need for our lives. People might think that ESL classes offer easy assignments and all basic stuff. That’s not true. ESL instructors have their own teaching strategies to lead students from the easiest to the hardiest, step by step. They are just like the ladders that help us to achieve a higher level. Most likely, students should feel a lot more comfortable to study and learn more English than go straight forward to normal classes. The ESL instructors have better understanding of helping students to go through many difficulties and solve the problems during learning process. Therefore, attending ESL classes and being taught by ESL instructors become one of my advices for students.
Most of the ESL students are shy and may not be that confident to discuss too much with native English speakers since somehow they are afraid others won’t understand them. This is also one of the reasons why most students most likely stay within a group of people who speak their native language. A student who always speak his/her native tongue without practice language skills are not going to help him/her to improve. There are always benefits while communicating with native speakers disregard unfriendly jokes and troubles. Most of the native speakers are nice and willing to help others. They understand non-English speaker’s situation so they are probably more patient to listen your explanation. Students might learn new subjects and knowledges from them and some of those knowledge might not be taught in the class. Sometimes, they will help students to practice and correct the use of the language. Under these kinds of situation, no matter how hard it is, students have to try the best to communicate in English. So when use English language more frequently, the more you learn.

Based on the information about these two strategies that I introduce to develop English language skills, we can conclude that they are really helpful. Learning English is not just limited to the classroom but involve the community. We cannot be too anxious to learn everything in English in a short time, we have to do it step by step. So these two strategies should be considered useful to non-English speaking students.
Broad-based Education

In our college study, besides the courses required by our majors, we still have to take many other courses for general education and some course for election. General education courses includ general science, humanity, arts, and social study. For elected credits, we can choose some course out of the major field and general study, but which we are interested in. The U.S college education are combited with these three conpaitis; it is called broad-based education. Broad-based education is sufficient to help students to developed broad-based knowledge and abilities which are very important elements for success.

It is important to master a dominant skill to enter an certain field. This is the reason we have “major”. We have to try and learn to be professional in the major field, so we have to take half of the credits one the courses relatied to our major. After we graduate and get into work, we have to use what we learned from school and carry out the knowledge from books to work, so we have we have to concern more about this specified major knowledge and skill that will be very useful in our future work. However, unity ability is not enough to be successful in the morden globlelized economic and social system. Empolyers hope their employees have multi-abilities, not just can do one kind of task. College study is for work preparson, so students have to learn more than just the major to be potencial employees. This is what broad-based education for.
Broad-based education provide more choices and opportunity for students. Students can try other fields besides their major to get more experience. Maybe, we can find out other field is more appropriate than the current major. If we never try other things, we will not know which is the best for us.

Broad-based education should emphasize on the major, at the same time, extend to other compacts. Multi-abilities are the requirement by the modern world. Broad-based can help student to build up multi-ability to succeed in the future.
APPENDIX O

STUDENTS’ MODELS OF COVER LETTERS

Chl 11/11/04
Cover-Letter

Generic Moves

Goal and Content

Field

Format: indented or blocked

Tenor: the relationship between reader, and writer

Persuasive, No emotion, or touching feeling, No demands, Omit negative information, No errors

Mode
Full developing sentences, Cohesion, no errors, formal structures
One page, brief and concise letter form

Heading: writers’ name, Address, phone number

Date

Inside address: audiences’ Name, address, and Title Company

Greeting

Paragraph 1: why you contact to this company

Paragraph 2: experiences, skills, qualification, abilities Academic

Paragraph 3: Initiative information

Closing: sincerely yours
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Context and Language

Cho 11/11/04
COVER-LETTERS MODEL

COVER-LETTER

Sender's address/name
Date
Audience name/address
Salutation

Body

TENOR
Subject
Experience
Skills
Self-description
Work history

Field

Closing

Sincerely

Truly yours
Cover-Letter

Generic Moves
- Indented formal
- Block formal

Field
- Goal
- Content

Heading: writers’ name, Address, phone & fax #
Date
Inside address: audiences’ Name, address, and Title Company
Greeting
Paragraph 1: interest, reasons to apply, knowledge of company...
Paragraph 2: experience, skill, qualification, education...
Paragraph 3: make contact
Closing: sincerely yours

Mode
Fully developed sentence, Cohesion, how sentences start, no errors, no mispunctuation, one page only, medium letter...

Writer
- Tenor
  - Audience
  - How to approach

Rules
- Quantify accomplishments,
  - No emotional or touching feeling,
  - No demands,
  - Omit negative information,
  - Be brief and concise.

Creative and persuasive.
M 11/11/04

Inside address
company inf
Business address

Heading
(Cover letter)
Date

Greeting
Greeting

Cover letter

First: known about the company
Second: talk about yourself, experiences, skills
Third: stating the position

Closing
Sincerely
X 11/11/04

Heading
(Applicant's contact info)

Inside Address
(Employee's contact info)

Job
text

Heading

Dear [Name],

[Body of letter: Discuss skills, experience, initiative, etc.]

Sincerely,

[Name]

Cover Letter Model.
APPENDIX P

STUDENTS’ MODELS OF ARGUMENTATIVE TEXTS

Introduction: Establish credibility and state your thesis.

Body: Evidence of supporting the thesis statement.

Conclusion: Restate the thesis statement.

Features: Introduction, a thesis statement, arguments and evidence to support the thesis, restatement of the thesis, opponent's views, establishing common ground and a conclusion.

Field: The goal is to persuade the audience about their.

Tenor: Establishing common ground, straightforward, value, audience's time.

Mode: Direct approach.

12/07/04 Chl
**Argumentative text**

**Goal and Content/ to persuade people to accept your opinion**

**Field**

**Generic Moves**

**Introduction:** writers’ Thesis,

**Body:** support your claims with specific evidence.
1. using facts and statistics
2. using examples and illustrations
3. citing expert opinion (Restate your thesis)

**Conclusion:** echo your main ideas, without repeating it.

**Context and Language**

**Mode**
Full developing sentences, Cohesion, Use of certain words related to the content of the message, directive approach, use of fully developing sentences and formal structures, adjectives expressing, and using of transition word.

**Tenor:** the relationship between reader, and writer

**Rebuttal:** build a common ground, view audience as a panel of jurors, etc.
MODEL - ARGUMENTATIVE TEXTS

ARGUMENTATIVE TEXTS

thesis

Body

* topic

* issue

* opponents view

Conclusion
Argumentative text

Introduction: opponent view and writers' Thesis.

Body: more flexible depend on how long your researches paper is. Many paragraph.

Paragraphs: - support your claims with specific evidence.
   1. using facts and statistics
   2. using examples and illustrations
   3. citing expert opinion
(Restate your thesis)

Conclusion: echo your main ideas, without repeating it.

Mode
Full developing sentences, Cohesion, how sentence state. Use of certain words related to the content of the message, directive approach;

Tenor: writer and reader. The ways to approach the audiences,
- convince audiences.
- Rebuttal, builds a common ground, view audience as a panel of jurors, etc.

Field: Goal and content to convince people or opposite viewer to accept your opinion.
argumentation text (candle)

thesis statement

introduction

argument

conclusion

tone | field | mode

social context | language

X 12/07/04
VITA

Marilia Mendes Ferreira

EDUCATION

- 2005 – PhD in Applied Linguistics at Penn State University, The United States of America
- 2000 – Master’s degree in Applied Linguistics at State University of Campinas, Brazil.

PUBLICATIONS


PRESENTATIONS IN CONFERENCES

- October/2002 –Some constraints on mutual scaffolding at The 9th Annual Meeting of the Sociocultural and Second Language Learning Research Working Group in Florida/ USA.
- May/2003 – A vitória de Lula e Sua Representação nos Jornais Nacionais e Internacionais at the 51st GEL (Grupo de Estudos Linguísticos do Estado de São Paulo) Taubaté/ SP.
- May/2004 – Lula’s Victory and its Representation in Brazilian and International Press at AAAL 2004 in Oregon/ USA.