



Genre research in basic education: what is being done in graduate programs in Linguistic Studies across Northeastern Brazil?

Pesquisas sobre gêneros na escola: o que fazemos nos programas de pós-graduação em estudos linguísticos do Nordeste brasileiro?

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ABSTRACT: The official Brazilian discourse on Portuguese language teaching, for more than twenty years, has assumed that the text, linked to a genre, should be seen as an object of work in the country's classrooms (Brasil, 1998; 2018). However, something is not working, given the fragile reading and writing results that the country has been obtaining in national exams, such as ENEM and SAEB, and international exams, such as Pisa, in addition to being stagnant for many years at more elementary levels of the Functional Literacy Indicator (INAF). Based on this, we are interested in understanding how the issue of genre in teaching has been addressed in Language Sciences, focusing on the Northeast region (NE) of the country. We aimed to map the academic work carried out in linguistic studies graduate programs (GP) in NE on first language genre-based teaching based, taking into account research that consider both specific genres and different types of generic groupings. We started from academic works with exploratory approach on a broad spectrum of textual production and reading, such as Araújo (2010), Ataíde *et al.* (2019), Pimentel (2019) and Carvalho e Sousa (2023). As methodological procedures, we carried out a survey of dissertations and theses submitted within twenty graduate programs in the area of Language Sciences, from 2011 to 2021, looking for those that discuss the relationship between genres and basic education. The results indicate that, although we have made significant advances in the field of genre studies, including graduate programs nationally recognized as excellent in this field, the number of research on *stricto sensu* programs that point to Brazilian basic education classrooms is still very low, suggesting a certain distance between what happens in academia and outside the university walls.

KEYWORDS: Genres. Teaching. Basic education. Brazilian Northeast. Graduate program.

RESUMO: O discurso oficial brasileiro sobre ensino de língua portuguesa, há mais de vinte anos, parte do pressuposto de que o texto, vinculado a um gênero, deve ser visto como objeto de trabalho nas salas de aula do país (Brasil, 1998; 2018). Entretanto se percebe que algo ainda está fora da linha, tendo em vista os resultados frágeis de leitura e escrita que o país vem obtendo em exames nacionais, como Enem e Saeb, e internacionais, como o Pisa, além de estar

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estancado, há muitos anos, em níveis mais elementares do Indicador de Alfabetismo Funcional (Inaf). Com base nisso, perguntamo-nos como a questão do gênero no ensino vem sendo tratada na área das Ciências da Linguagem, ajustando a lupa para a região Nordeste (NE) do país. Tivemos como objetivo mapear os trabalhos acadêmicos defendidos em programas de pós-graduação (PPG) de estudos linguísticos no NE sobre ensino de língua materna a partir de gêneros, considerando o enfoque em análises que considerem tanto gêneros específicos quanto diferentes tipos de agrupamentos genéricos. Partimos dos trabalhos acadêmicos que fazem estudos exploratórios sobre amplo espectro da produção textual e da leitura, como Araújo (2010), Ataíde *et al.* (2019), Pimentel (2019) e Carvalho e Sousa (2023). Como procedimentos metodológicos, fizemos um levantamento de dissertações e teses defendidas em vinte programas de pós-graduação na área de Ciências da Linguagem, no período de 2011 a 2021, buscando aqueles que versassem sobre a relação gêneros e ensino básico. Os resultados apontam que, embora tenhamos avanços significativos no campo dos estudos de gêneros, tendo inclusive PPG reconhecidos nacionalmente como sendo de excelência nesses estudos, o número de pesquisas em programas *stricto sensu* que apontam para as salas de aula da educação básica brasileira ainda é muito baixo, sugerindo certo distanciamento entre o que acontece na academia e fora dos muros da universidade.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Gêneros. Ensino. Educação básica. Nordeste. Pós-graduação.

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1 Introduction

The teaching of Portuguese language in light of genres has been a state policy for about two and a half decades (Brazil, 1998), and has been further reinforced with the implementation of the National Common Core Curriculum (BNCC)¹ (Brazil, 2018). This document includes, in the area of Portuguese language, echoes of interdisciplinary perspectives on school work, among them Multiliteracies Pedagogy (Cazden *et al.*, 1996) and New Literacies (Knobel; Lankshear, 2007), all grounded in an enunciative perspective of language (Bakhtin, 2016; Volóchinov, 2018), ultimately having genres immersed in diverse fields of activity as their object of study.

This work is foregrounded on this official discourse, seeking to investigate what has been practiced in Northeastern academia over the last ten years on what concerns the relationship between genres and teaching. Although the BNCC (Brazil, 2018) is

¹ The acronym was kept in Portuguese, and it stands for *Base Nacional Comum Curricular*.

still, in practice, in its implementational phase in the country, work with the Portuguese language based on text and genre has been predicted for about twenty-five years, which seems to conflict with the results of important assessments of basic education, such as the Basic Education Assessment System (SAEB) and the National High School Exam (ENEM). Both assessment systems reveal weaknesses in students' reading and writing skills, areas whose development can benefit from the notion of genre. Amongst other issues, we seek to understand what has actually been done in academia about research on genre and first language teaching.

The objective of this article, therefore, is to **map academic research carried out in linguistic studies graduate programs (GP) in the Brazilian Northeast (NE) on first language genre-based teaching, focusing on analyses that take into account both specific genres and different types of generic groupings**. It is, therefore, a panoramic study, to map a specific niche in academia in a specific region. The focus on the reality of the NE was due to the following reasons: first, it is historically a socially marginalized region, with alarming rates in basic education; second, it is an academically prolific region, which brings together important academic works under different genre approaches (Pimentel, 2019); third, it is a political movement to encourage NE academic culture, which seeks to contribute in different ways to the social, critical, and participatory advancement of its citizens in the light of education.

This study ultimately aims to shed light on the proposals effectively put forward in academic research regarding the teaching of Portuguese through the lens of genres, thereby opening possibilities for informing the academic community, in the near future, of the potential impacts such approaches may have on Portuguese language classrooms in the Northeastern region of the country.

This work is divided into four sections, in addition to these initial considerations: a theoretical section on the national panorama of genre studies, in which we review research that has surveyed or mapped the issue before us; a methodological section, which describes the research universe, the constitution of the

corpus, and the procedures adopted; a data analysis section, where we focus on graduate programs in linguistic studies in the NE as well as on dissertations and theses carried out on the relationship between genre and teaching, followed by a final considerations section.

2 On the landscape of genre studies in Brazil

The approach used in this study is not new, and previous research has already attempted to perform similar tasks with other objects. Vieira (2004) and Lima and Lima-Neto (2009), for example, developed mappings on digital literacy; Paiva (2005) sought to map research methods focused on language learning via ICT; Santos (2013) mapped existing research on ICT and English teacher education, to name just a few.

Amongst the most recent works, we cite the two-volume collection organized by Ataíde *et al.* (2019a; 2019b), whose purpose is “to socialize a reference work in which it would be possible to recover scientific production in Linguistics and Literature linked to graduate programs at universities in the Northeast.” (Ataíde; Almeida, 2019a, p. 10, our translation). The organizers argue that mapping work, such as the one presented here, also stimulates new research based on what has already been mapped. Let's proceed further: it is also an opportunity to reflect about the effective results that are setting up on a plan macro level and try to correct what is not satisfactory.

In this regard, we present results of the discussion by Gualberto and Santos (2019) on studies of multimodality in Brazil. The authors conclude that “[...] the multimodal approach in the Brazilian context has been mistakenly perceived as an independent theory that makes it possible to combine and describe the use of modes/resources in the production of meaning” (our translation). In other words, there is a widespread misconception in Brazilian academia about the very concept of multimodality, which, according to the proponents of the field (Kress, 2010), is not a theory, but “a model of communication that provides analytical tools that can aid in understanding how meanings are constructed” (Gualberto; Santos, 2019, p. 26, our

translation). Only through research of this nature can we identify certain misconceptions, prevent them from spreading, and enable them to be corrected.

In the scope of research that discusses genres, Gomes-Santos (2003) and Motta-Roth (2008) are amongst the first to develop a mapping on the topic, back in the last decade. The former set out to evaluate a *corpus* of articles published in journals and collections whose criterion was to address the concept of genre. The conclusion he reached was that the Brazilian research on genres already constituted, at that time, a quite significant theoretical and epistemological plurality, although references to Bakhtin were almost a theoretical consensus in different areas of knowledge. Moreover, the second survey aims to discuss the contributions of Critical Genre Analysis to language research and teaching. For that, the author examines trends in genre studies in Brazil, generally linked to the perspective of English for Specific Purposes, Critical Genre Analysis, the Sydney Systemic-Functional approach, or Sociodiscursive Interactionism, concluding that “research conducted in Brazil in the 1990s largely identifies with these four schools and gives rise to thinking focused on pedagogical language practices” (Motta-Roth, 2008, p. 345, our translation).

It is relevant to point out that the works of Motta-Roth (2008) and Marcuschi (2008) survey current approaches being used in use in Brazil, and not necessarily what has been researched in the area, as Gomes-Santos (2003) and Ataíde *et al.* (2019a; 2019b) have done. In any case, despite their differences, they are similar in that they are panoramic and discuss the subject of genre and its relationships.

It is possible that the survey best known to the academic community on this issue is that of Marcuschi (2008), in which the author listed at least four major lines of action regarding genre researchers in Brazil: a Bakhtinian line guided by the SDI (Sociodiscursive Interactionism) and the Geneva School, applied to teaching; a line of English for Specific Purposes, influenced by the studies of Swales (1990); a systemic-functional line, called the Australian School of Sydney; and a fourth approach, “more general, with influences from Bakhtin, Adam, Bronckart, and also Charles Bazerman,

Carolyn Miller [...], Gunther Kress, and Norman Fairclough [...]" (Marcuschi, 2008, p. 152, our translation). It is noted that, even at that time, Marcuschi had already come to the conclusion that genre studies in Brazil were highly varied, distributed across different centers, but also with a certain emphasis on Bakhtin, whose work "provides macro analytical theoretical support and broader categories" and, therefore, "can be assimilated by everyone in a very useful way" (Marcuschi, 2008, p. 152, our translation).

Published abroad, Araújo's chapter (2010) provides an exhaustive survey of research on genres carried out in Brazil between 1980 and 2007. The author concludes that studies on the subject have increased over the period, and it is clear that the analytical model to approach genres continues to be the description and interpretation of these language practices in their environments. She also points out that there are two theoretical-methodological predilections amongst Brazilian researchers: Sociodiscursive Interactionism (24% of the studies) and a "combination of perspectives" (27%), in line with what previous researchers have found.

Following Araújo's (2010) work, Bawarshi and Reiff (2010) and Swales (2012) defend the existence of a "Brazilian synthesis" (Bawarshi; Reiff, 2010) of genre studies. For the authors:

The Brazilian synthesis suggests that rhetorical and sociological genre traditions need not be incompatible with linguistic traditions, and that when interconnected, these traditions can provide rich insight into how genres function and can be taught at various levels (Bawarshi; Reiff, 2010, p. 77).

Bezerra (2016) discusses the status of the "Brazilian synthesis" of genre studies in Brazil and, in order to support the claim that the Brazilian synthesis is unjustified, he mobilizes a series of works that have also set out to show how genre studies are distributed in the country (cf. Bazerman; Bonini; Figueiredo, 2009; Bawarshi; Reiff, 2010). For the author, it is not possible to describe a specific approach that represents the way we study genres in Brazil, but it is possible to say that we have some

predominances: Bakhtin, for example, has a prominent place in genre studies throughout the country, and Sociodiscursive Interactionism (SDI) studies are "preferred" – influenced by the National Curriculum Parameters (PCN²) – when it comes to language teaching. The conclusion points to what the aforementioned authors also considered:

It appears unlikely that a 'Brazilian synthesis' will be achieved, but rather the most varied syntheses, approaches or perspectives, the result of dialog not only between theories of genre *stricto sensu*, but also between these and other theories, especially of text and discourse (Bezerra, 2016, p. 488, our translation).

Pimentel's research (2019)³, which focuses on the characterization of genre studies in Brazil between 2000 and 2016 and their dialogues and interlocutions as complex systems, is also based on the traces of discussions about synthesis. The author starts from the premise that the idea of synthesis is reductionist, so we should think about how different meanings of synthesis, in the plural, could be understood, given the complexity of the subject and the diversity of research conducted in the Brazilian context.

The author's selection pointed to 170 studies developed in five Brazilian graduate programs renowned for pioneering textual genre studies in Brazil, and the results showed that such body of research can be characterized as follows:

i) as having strong influences from Bakhtin/Volóchinov's studies for research; ii) with the formation of theoretical concepts based on the major international paradigms of textual genres discussed in chapters three and four; and iii) with a pragmatic orientation associated with the social concern for literacy and its developments, as well as to realize the contribution of textual genre studies to the teaching of First Language (Pimentel, 2019, p. 188, our translation).

² This acronym was kept in Portuguese, and it stands for *Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais*.

³ See also Pimentel and Bezerra (2020), which is an excerpt from Pimentel's dissertation (2019).

Therefore, the author came to the same conclusion as other researchers: Bakhtin's Circle is predominant in Brazil, as it is present in most of the work on genres. Also noteworthy is the second conclusion: the majority of the works conducted on a graduate level consider a review of the literature based on theories that have already been consolidated internationally and applied here. A smaller part of the research in the field follows the model the author calls 'macrotheory', in which different theoretical approaches are combined.

It is also worth emphasizing the trends found by the author: the first one being the "application of Brazilian research reflected in the design and study of genres as objects for teaching" (Pimentel, 2019, p. 191, our translation). Although, as shown in previous studies, SDI has been the most culturally productive approach in Brazil for addressing this topic. Pimentel (2019) acknowledges that there is room for reflection on how other genre theories can be productive for language teaching as well, whether in first or foreign languages. A second trend is the growing innovation on the debate of oral genres, as evidenced by studies such as that of Forte-Ferreira, Santos, and Noronha (2022), a topic that had been poorly discussed in genre studies thus far.

After this thorough account of investigations from the past twenty years, it becomes evident that no study has focused exclusively on the relationship between genre and teaching. As previously mentioned, although the methodology itself is not new, our proposal seeks a closer, more refined look at how the academic community in the Brazilian Northeast dedicated to language studies has approached the relationship between genre and the classroom. In the following section, we outline our methodological choices and how we organized the data to achieve the research objective.

3 Methodology

In this section, we present the descriptive and methodological aspects of the study. First, we provide a detailed account of the corpus, including the temporal scope

adopted, and the criteria employed in its delimitation. Second, we outline the step-by-step procedures undertaken in the data analysis, with a view to achieving the proposed objective.

3.1 The corpus

The first step in defining our corpus was selecting the *stricto sensu* graduate programs in the Northeast region of Brazil to be included in the study. The selection criteria were threefold:

- to belong to the field of Linguistic Studies, according to the categorization of the Sucupira Platform (CAPES)⁴;
- to have been evaluated at least once since its implementation⁵;
- to be an academic graduate program.

We therefore did not include several programs that are currently active but have not yet received an assigned score in the Sucupira Platform, nor did we include professional master's programs. Of the 37 graduate programs in the Northeast region listed on the platform, we selected the following twenty:

Table 1– Selected Graduate Programs.

FU	Program	HEI	Website	M	D
AL	Linguistics and Literature	UFAL	https://fale.ufal.br/ppgll/	3	3
BA	LANGUAGE STUDIES	UNEB	https://ppgel.uneb.br/	4	4
BA	Linguistic Studies	UEFS	http://www.ppgel.uefs.br/	4	4
BA	Language and Literature: Culture,	UESB	http://www2.uesb.br/ppg/ppgcel	4	-

⁴ Available at: <https://sucupira.capes.gov.br/sucupira/>.

⁵ We considered the results for the 2017-2020 quadrennium, released up to the year 2023, at the time of writing this paper.

	Education and Languages				
BA	LANGUAGE AND CULTURE	UFBA	http://www.ppglinc.letas.ufba.br/	4	4
BA	LANGUAGES AND REPRESENTATIONS	UESC	http://www.uesc.br/cursos/pos_graduacao/mestrado/ppgl/	4	4
BA	Linguistics	UESB	https://ppgl.in/	4	4
CE	LINGUISTICS	UFC	https://ppgl.ufc.br/pt/sobre-o-programa/	5	5
CE	APPLIED LINGUISTICS	UECE	http://www.uece.br/posla/	5	5
MA	Language and Literature	UFMA	https://sigaa.ufma.br/sigaa/public/programa/apresentacao_stricto.jsf?lc=es_ES&idPrograma=1339	3	-
PB	LANGUAGE AND EDUCATION	UFCG	http://posle.ufcg.edu.br/	4	4
PB	LINGUISTICS	UFPB	https://www.cchla.ufpb.br/proling/	6	6
PE	LANGUAGE SCIENCES	UNICAP	https://portal.unicap.br/ciencias-da-linguagem-ppgcl	5	5
PE	LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE	UFPE	https://www.pgletas.com.br/	4	4
PI	LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE	FUFPI	https://sigaa.ufpi.br/sigaa/public/programa/areas.jsf?lc=pt_BR&id=348	4	4
PI	LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE	FUESPI	https://www.uespi.br/mestradoemletras/?page_id=18	4	-
RN	LANGUAGE SCIENCES	UERN	https://propeg.uern.br/ppcl/	3	-
RN	LANGUAGE STUDIES	UFRN	https://posgraduacao.ufrn.br/ppge1	5	5
RN	LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE	UERN	https://propeg.uern.br/ppgl/default.asp?item=ppgl-apresentacao	4	4
SE	LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE	FUFSE	https://www.sigaa.ufs.br/sigaa/public/programa/portal.jsf?id=241	4	4

Source: authors' elaboration.

The second step involved selecting the corpus itself. We aimed to identify dissertations and theses that addressed the relationship between **genre(s) and first language teaching** during the period from 2011 to 2021. This time frame was chosen because the research was carried out between 2022 and 2023 and works concluded in the meantime were not considered. The period therefore covers the ten years prior to the time we conducted the research.

To that end, we accessed the websites of all the programs cited above and located the sections listing all submitted dissertations and theses. From then on, the search was done manually: the selection was based on an analysis of the titles of the theses and the abstracts that reflected on a specific genre and its relationship with language teaching. Sometimes the word **genre** appeared in the title, other times we had to refer to the abstracts of the theses and, in some cases, even to the methodology section, to verify whether they actually discussed the relationship we were looking for.

We also followed an objective criterion: selecting works that effectively discussed a specific genre and its relationship with teaching. As a result, we excluded a number of works that theoretically pointed to the relationship in question but did not actually address a genre: for example, research on literacy, which cannot be separated from writing but did not necessarily relate the phenomenon to any genre; research on reading and writing, whose bias did not necessarily point to a specific genre, but to more general aspects of these objects; and especially a range of works on genres, using different theoretical approaches, but without any concern for first language teaching.

After these procedures, we recorded a total of **196** dissertations and theses carried out in the twenty programs under consideration during the period. All works were collected from the GP websites and are therefore considered official data⁶.

⁶ Some of the GP's websites listed only the title of a paper without providing a link to access it. In some cases we contacted the GP's administrative offices but received no response. In other instances, papers from the Academic Master's Program were intermixed with those from the Professional Master's

3.2 Data processing

With the corpus selected, it was necessary to establish the procedures to achieve the study's objective. The objective was to **map academic works submitted within NE graduate programs in Linguistics that focus on first language genre-based teaching, with a focus on analyses that consider both specific genres and various types of generic groupings.**

The first step was to count the total number of theses submitted within a program during the aforementioned period and the theses that would constitute the corpus of this research, which generated two tables, as follows:

Table 2 – Selected papers from the Linguistic Studies GP - UEFS/BA.

Year of submission	Title
2014	<u>The educational file genre in schools: a space for dialogue and sociocultural transformation</u>
2014	<u>The approach to textual genres by Gestar II and its implications for teaching Portuguese</u>
2016	<u>Text Production at school: an approach based on the High School Assessment</u>
2020	<u>Retextualization and teaching: analysis of textual production activities based on the Whatsapp conversation genre</u>

Source: authors' elaboration.

Table 3 – Conclusions on the GP analyzed.

Total number of theses submitted within the program	Included in the corpus	%
127	4	3,14

Source: authors' elaboration.

We followed the same procedure for each selected program. Table 3 compares the number of theses submitted and, among them, those that discuss the required

program, as was the case for the Graduate Program in Linguistics and Literature at UFAL. In such cases, it was necessary to access the Professional Master's website and manually count the works submitted there, which were then subtracted from the total recorded for the Academic Master's. Finally, several GP had outdated webpages; for example, the Graduate Program in Language and Culture at UFBA began activities in 2010, yet the website lists papers only from 2015 onward.

relationship. This will generate a percentage, which is what interests us—in this case, 3.14% of the theses addressed approached genre and teaching.

The second procedure involved compiling the data collected from all twenty GP into a single table. This produced the actual percentage of interest with genres and teaching within academia in Brazil's NE, which will be discussed in the following section.

4 What place do studies relating genre and teaching occupy in GP in language studies in Northeast Brazil?

In this section, we present the data in the following manner: first, we highlight the characteristics of the GP investigated, which allows us to present the profile of the research conducted there; second, we turn to the dissertations and theses that comprise the corpus.

4.1 Linguistic studies GP in the Brazilian NE

There are GP in linguistic studies throughout the entire Brazilian NE. As presented in Table 1, a number of interpretations could be drawn in relation to the Programs in this region:

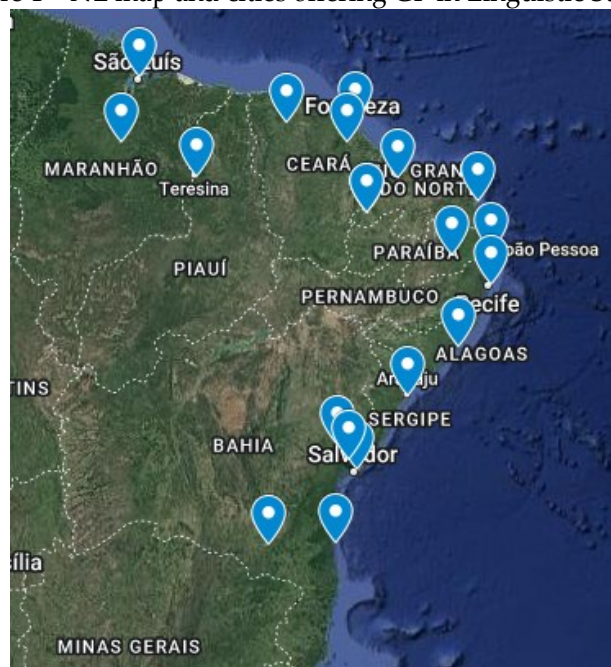
- a) Nineteen (or 95%) were offered in public higher education institutions and one in a community institution (Language Sciences GP/ Unicap)⁷;
- b) Seventeen (85%) of them have master's and doctoral programs;
- c) One (5%) is evaluated with grade 6, four (20%) have grade 5, twelve (60%) have grade 4, and three have grade 3. There are no top marks (7) in the NE region programs.

⁷ Non-profit.

The conclusion is that a good range of doctoral courses is available, enabling the continuation of verticalization training. In addition, the programs analyzed account for a total of 85% with an equal or greater grade than 4 in CAPES evaluations, showing that they have a **good** rating⁸.

A second characteristic of the Programs is the geographical distribution throughout the Northeast region, as presented below:

Figure 1 – NE map and cities offering GP in Linguistic Studies.



Source: authors' elaboration.

Some information deserves to be highlighted: Bahia is the state that offers the highest amount of GP in the field of Linguistics and Literature, with eleven in total⁹, while Sergipe and Alagoas offer only one program in the field. It is also noteworthy that four states have academic programs only in their capitals: Alagoas (with the Linguistics and Literature GP at UFAL), Piauí (with the Languages GP at UFPI and

⁸ Available at: https://www.gov.br/capes/pt-br/centrais-de-conteudo/Artigo_18_07_07.pdf. Accessed: 12 Oct. 2022.

⁹ Out of the eleven, we only considered six in this survey, as three of them are focused on Literary Studies and two started in 2019, therefore, they had not yet been evaluated.

UESPI), Sergipe (with the Languages GP at UFS), Pernambuco (Language and Literature GP/UFPE; Language Sciences GP/ UNICAP; and Language studies GP/UFRPE, the latter not yet evaluated), and Maranhão (Languages GP, two of them at UFMA and one at UEMA)¹⁰.

The figure above shows the geographical locations where the Programs are offered. It also reveals that some areas of knowledge in graduate studies have not kept pace with the policy of higher education expansion, which began about twenty years ago, although almost totally discontinued for part of the last decade, between 2016 and 2022. It also highlights the concentration of knowledge production in major urban centers, a pattern already evident during the country's industrialization, while, in the third decade of the twenty-first century, it further reflects remnants of a neoliberal rationale, whose discourse remains hegemonic in the Global South. Such a configuration privileges restricted elites in positions of power and, simultaneously, reinforces structural inequalities in access to higher education opportunities for populations in peripheral areas of the Brazilian Northeast, who face limited—or even no—possibilities of entering graduate programs unless they relocate to state capitals.

Except Vitória da Conquista (BA), Teresina (PI) and Pau dos Ferros (RN), most programs are offered near the coast, where the urban centers are concentrated and consequently the largest segment of the population. Even so, the size of the space uncovered by the verticalization of the area northeast hinterland and how much we still need to advance is visually striking.

Although we have not analyzed these programs, there are some operating in the hinterland of Ceará state (Language Studies GP at Unilab, in Redenção; and the Languages GP at URCA, in Crato), in Bahia (GP in Language Studies: Lusophone contexts - Brazil-Africa at Unilab, in São Francisco do Conde), and in Maranhão

¹⁰ In the state of Maranhão, there is also the GP in Language and Literature at UEMASUL, in Imperatriz, which started in 2019 and offers a Professional Master's Degree. The other GP in Language and Literature at UFMA is academic, offered in Bacabal, but it started its activities in 2019, and it was not included in our analysis, as it has no grade.

(Language and Literature GP, at UFMA, in Bacabal), but all of them started in 2019 and have not been evaluated, which reveals the fundamental initiatives to bring graduate education to these states.

One final piece of information concerns the duration of these Programs. The oldest GPs in the region are Language and Literature at UFPE (1976), Linguistics and Literature at UFAL (1989), and Linguistics at UFC (1989). Fifteen GP (75%) were founded between 2003 (Language Sciences GP/Unicap) and 2016 (this is the newest addition to our research universe, which is Language Sciences GP/ UERN, in Mossoró). Therefore, we are a graduate program in linguistic studies emerging from adolescence, with an average age of 18,3 years.

In summary, the profile of graduates in linguistics studies in the Northeast is as follows:

- a) Offers mostly Master's and Doctorate courses;
- b) It is located in large urban centers, mainly in state capitals;
- c) Has a good grade, according to the CAPES assessment;
- d) Is young, with an average age of eighteen;
- e) Has a slight tendency to expand into the hinterlands of the Northeast, requiring this population to move to capitals or other states and regions of the country, if they wish to pursue higher education.

With this profile in mind, let us move on to academic production in the Northeast that reflects on genres and teaching.

4.2 Theses and dissertations on genres and first language teaching in Brazilian NE

Although relatively young, graduate education in Brazil's Northeast is already well established and between 2011 and 2021 graduated more than five thousand master's and doctoral degree holders. In the field of genre studies, there are programs that have become national reference points, as demonstrated by Marcuschi (2008): for

example, the Linguistics GP/UFC and Language and Literature GP/UFPE, which have promoted and critically examined genre studies grounded in English for Specific Purposes (Swales, 2010) and rhetorical genre studies (Miller, 2012; Bazerman, 2005) since the early 2000s.

During the same period, the aforementioned Programs also distinguished themselves as reference centers for the study of genres in digital environments, as exemplified by Marcuschi's pioneering article (2002), which proposes an analytical framework of formal and functional criteria for emergent digital genres. Furthermore, there is a book by the same author, which is still the only one in the country, devoted specifically to digital genres (Marcuschi; Xavier, 2004), produced within discussions held in the Language and Literature GP/UFPE.

At that same time, the first Brazilian dissertation on a genre typically classified as digital, the chat, by Araújo (2003) also appeared, and, following it, a series of investigations in the Linguistics GP/UFC examined a wide range of digital phenomena, such as blogs (Lima, 2008), Orkut scraps (Lima-Neto, 2009), remixed videos on YouTube (Costa, 2010), tweets (Costa, 2012), amongst many others.

Over the past decade, studies produced at Applied Linguistics GP/UECE (Bernardino; Abreu, 2017; Silva, Bernardino; Valentim, 2020), at Letras GP/UFPI (Oliveira; Oliveira; Alves Filho, 2021), and at Language Sciences GP/Unicap (Pimentel; Bezerra, 2020; Bezerra, 2022; Oliveira, 2022) have focused on academic genres, becoming important centers in the country within a field of research that had previously been explored primarily in South Brazil.

Even in a highly productive region in genre studies, it was observed that research that conceptualized, problematized, and described various genres received greater emphasis than studies addressing their applicability in elementary and secondary education classrooms or reflections upon it. This impression could only be confirmed through a mapping exercise, which we undertook with a ten-year temporal scope, as described in the methodology section. The table we obtained was as follows:

Table 5 – Numerical results of the research.

FU	Program	HEI	Papers carried out	Selected	%
AL	Linguistics and Literature	UFAL	466	9	1,93
BA	Language Studies	UNEB	227	5	2,20
BA	Linguistic Studies	UEFS	127	4	3,14
BA	Language and Literature: Culture, Education and Languages	UESB	159	13	8,17
BA	Language and Culture	UFBA	197	4	2,03
BA	Languages and Representations	UESC	95	3	3,15
BA	Linguistics	UESB	175	5	2,85
CE	Linguistics	UFC	388	15	3,86
CE	Applied Linguistics	UECE	329	11	3,34
MA	Language and Literature	UFMA	61	0	0
PB	Language and Education	UFCG	233	36	15,45
PB	Linguistics	UFPB	321	11	3,42
PE	Language Sciences	UNIC AP	178	14	7,86
PE	Language and Literature	UFPE	488	13	2,66
PI	Language and Literature	FUFPI	283	7	2,47
PI	Language and Literature	FUESP I	92	2	2,17
RN	Language Sciences	UERN	58	2	3,44
RN	Language Studies	UFRN	652	15	2,30
RN	Language and Literature	UERN	310	16	5,16
SE	Language and Literature	FUFSE	298	11	3,69
TOTAL			5137	196	3,97

Source: authors' elaboration.

We will now devote some space to describing and reflecting on this table regarding four central points:

- quantification of submitted papers (i.e., theses and dissertations) *versus* papers that discuss genres and teaching;
- GP that have the highest and lowest percentages of papers submitted on genre and teaching;
- papers that treat the relation between genre and teaching as secondary issues;
- grouping of genres within Northeastern academia.

4.2.1 Proportion of research discussing genre and teaching and its relationship to the total submitted within graduate programs

When the first numbers began to be consolidated, it immediately caught our attention that Marcuschi's famous statement (2008, p. 141, our translation), "The study of genre is not new, but it is on the spotlight," only makes sense if one does not consider the relationship between genre and basic education. During the period in question, 5,137 research projects were conducted in the twenty programs, of which 196 discussed, in some way, the relationship between genre and teaching, accounting for 3.97% of the total. Here, we are including even works that did not necessarily focus on genre, but used it to devote attention to another object, such as literacy, reading, linguistic variation, teaching practice, etc. – a subject to which we will devote more attention in item 4.2.3. This last piece of information is also important, since further specifying the search would certainly make the percentage much lower.

The number is noteworthy because, since the PCN (Brazil, 1998), the issue of text and genres has been a central point in Portuguese language teaching. Let's take a look:

From this perspective, it is not possible to take as basic units of the teaching process those that result from an analysis of strata – letters/phonemes, syllables, words, phrases, sentences – which, taken out of context, are normally taken as examples of grammatical study and have little to do with discursive competence.

Within this framework, the basic unit of teaching can only be the text. Texts are always organized within certain thematic, compositional, and stylistic constraints that characterize them as belonging to this or

that genre. **Thus, the notion of genre, which is constitutive of the text, must be taken as an object of teaching** [emphasis added] (Brazil, 1998, p. 23, our translation).

The emphasis shows that for more than two decades, the relationship between texts and genres has been state policy with regard to first language teaching. At the time, that document was deeply influenced by the reflections of Bakhtin ([1953] 2016) and SDI (Bronckart, 1999; Schneuwly; Dolz, 2004), and changed the reality of language teaching in the country in subsequent years, requiring profound changes in textbooks and consequently causing many of the discussions on the issue to be developed within universities and teacher training courses. Marcuschi (2008) had already pointed out that PUC/SP was a pioneer in this work, which gradually spread throughout the country. Even abroad, research on genres and teaching in Brazil was recognized for the strong influence of the SDI and our ability to make fruitful theoretical connections with other areas to discuss the issue, as Bawarshi and Reiff (2010) have already argued.

Twenty years later, the BNCC (2018) consolidates this same perception of text and genre from the PCN:

In line with what was proposed in the National Curriculum Parameters, the text takes center stage in defining content, skills, and objectives, considering its belonging to a discursive genre that circulates in different social spheres/fields of activity/communication/language use [emphasis added]. Knowledge about genres, texts, language, standard norms, and different languages (semiosis) must be mobilized in favor of developing reading, production, and language processing skills, which, in turn, must serve to expand the possibilities for participation in practices in different spheres/fields of human activity (Brazil, 2018, p. 67, our translation).

It is clear, therefore, that the same official discourse continues, which understands that students have a right to learn basic concepts such as text and genre, which will be means for developing different skills focused on reading, writing, listening, and analyzing real-life texts. With the BNCC, new changes were implemented in the field of education, and the document was immediately introduced

into classrooms across the country, even without greater preparation for educational institutions to study and adapt to it.

Why, then, in practice, is it still perceived that Brazilian students (especially in the NE region) have deep difficulties in writing and reading¹¹? Some possible answers may be implicated in this number of 3.97%. As can be seen, the Northeastern academic intellectual elite itself, represented by Master's and Doctorate students and faculty, appears to show little concern with this issue. It is evident that the objectives of academic graduate programs in linguistics encompass a broad spectrum of research areas and subfields, many of which extend well beyond immediate pedagogical applicability. Nonetheless, it should be noted that a considerable number of scholars in the field come from language teacher education backgrounds and are primarily trained to prepare future educators for Brazil's basic education system. If those entrusted with educating the next generations of students receive limited or no engagement with this issue during their professional preparation, it becomes problematic to expect elementary and secondary learners to develop such forms of knowledge.

Our claim is that these issues are scarcely discussed in the academia itself, which may have direct implications for teacher education and, consequently, for Portuguese language instruction in basic education. This also points to the need of future investigation into the curricular structures of graduate programs and even of the undergraduate courses in Languages: is there space/encouragement for such discussions?

¹¹ According to the 2018 Functional Literacy Indicator (INAF), 64% of Brazilians have, at most, an elementary level of literacy, and for more than a decade, the level of proficient literacy has stagnated at around 12%. In the Elementary and High School Education Assessment System (SAEB), whose latest analysis is from 2021, we have seen a decline in the assessment of high school Portuguese language skills compared to 2019 and a modest improvement compared to the first measurements in 2011. Available at: <https://alfabetismofuncional.org.br/nivel-proficiente/> and https://download.inep.gov.br/saeb/resultados/apresentacao_saeb_2021.pdf.

4.2.2 The most and least productive GP on the relation of genres and teaching

Four GP deserve attention in this topic: the Language and Education GP at UFCG is the most productive in the works that discuss the relation between genres and teaching: 15.45% of the works have this focus. The second most productive is the Language and Literature: Culture, Education and Languages GP at UESB, with 8.18%, and the third is the Language Sciences GP at Unicap, with 7.86%. Those Programs had a percentage well above the average of the other eighteen ones analyzed, while the Graduate Program in Languages at UFMA did not have any work submitted on the theme in seven years of existence.

Some considerations are important: first, the UFCG GP is the only one of those analyzed that has links with teaching inherent to its proposal (Language and Teaching), although it is an Academic Program. Therefore, all the works submitted need to have some reflection aimed at the classroom. It is expected, then, that it is the GP with the highest number of submissions on this theme.

UESB GP is an important surprise, because, although it is relatively new, started in 2010, it already presents almost 10% of its works with legitimate focus on genres and teaching. Even so, following the line of the UFCG GP, it presents, in its constitution, the term “education,” which can be an important indication of the interest in basic education on the behalf of faculty and students. Finally, the Unicap Language Sciences GP is the first NE Program in Linguistic Studies that does not necessarily commit to teaching or education, but presents a research index relating genres and teaching of 7.86%, practically double the average in the region, surpassing nationally recognized Programs in the area of genres, such as Languages GP/UFC and Language and Literature GP/UFPE, for example.

Of these programs, it is striking that some works, although they do not necessarily have applicability to teaching, reflect on the issue, which may, in the future, promote improvements for the area, for example. Let us look at the work of Viana (2011), submitted within the Language and Literature GP at UESB, entitled *Discursive*

Approach of the Portuguese Language Textbook: a complex discourse genre. The author sustains the thesis that the Portuguese Language textbook is a complex discourse genre, constituted by intercalation of other genres and by a discursive finishing of the utterance. It is a work of theoretical nature, reflective on the constitution of the textbook and refers to the understanding of its functioning as a genre. Although not applied, it contributes to the studies on Portuguese language teaching material, being, therefore, an important reflection both for teachers and for students.

One aspect that drew significant attention was the GP in Language and Literature at UFMA, which began in 2015, with theses being conducted since 2017. By 2021, there had been 61 submissions, none of which addressed concerns about teaching. The program is organized into three lines of research: (i) description and linguistic analysis of Brazilian Portuguese and other natural languages; ii) language studies and discursive practices; iii) theoretical and critical studies in literature. Discussions about genres would apparently be more likely to appear in line ii, which is described as: "Study of language practices in different contexts, with emphasis on the social context of text and discourse production" (our translation).

The conclusion is that, in fact, the research carried out within the program fully achieves its stated objectives and has no obligation to address topics related to language teaching. What is evident, however, is the lack of academic discussion on this issue in the state of Maranhão, as there are only two academic graduate programs in linguistic studies, the other¹² being very recent, having started only in 2019. This gap is beginning to be filled by new researchers, such as Souza (2021) and Florêncio (2021), whose works, still timidly, indicate that teaching is once again gaining academic relevance in linguistic research in Maranhão.

¹² The Language and Literature GP/UFMA, in Bacabal, started in 2019. The first submission occurred on August 25, 2021, with Silva's (2021) study, but on August 30, Souza (2021) submitted his work entitled "An investigation into argumentative dissertational texts by 1st-year high school students in the public school system of Bacabal-MA: the teaching of argumentation," being the first in ten years of academic graduate studies in linguistics in the state of Maranhão to focus on teaching first tongue through genres.

It is evident that the teaching staff involved in these programs dedicate themselves to establishing such correlations in their research — thereby disseminating this theoretical niche among their advisees — would, of course, influence the numbers presented here. Examining these data was not within the scope of our study, but they could be explored in future investigations.

4.2.3 About works that discuss tangentially the relationship between genres and teaching

The numbers include research that does not necessarily focus on genres and teaching as their primary objective but rather on other topics that intersect with the theme under discussion, such as linguistic variation, argumentation, referencing, reading, teaching practices, literacies, writing, textual production, and literary styles. Genres, therefore, appear only as a marginal subject in part of this research.

An example is the dissertation by Oliveira (2013), conducted at UESB in 2013 and entitled *“Orality and Literacy: A Set of Interactive Teaching Strategies for Teaching Practice.”* Although this research is aimed at teaching practice, the title does not initially specify any particular genre. This is clarified only in the abstract, where the author states that “theoretical aspects related to work with different **discursive genres** [emphasis added] in the classroom are also emphasized from a literacy perspective, exploring orality, reading, and writing as a result of the interactive process to be undertaken by the student [...]” (Oliveira, 2013, p. 6, our translation). Even here, there are no explicit details about specific genres, which emerge only in the methodology and data analysis sections, where it is evident that the research covered a variety of genres, such as “television news; print news [sic]; film, documentary; electronic newspapers, interviews, music [...]” (Oliveira, 2013, p. 127, our translation). The study does not focus on teaching any particular genre; rather, genres appear secondarily within research whose primary object is teaching practice.

Another, more recent, example is the study by Jesus (2020), from the Graduate Program in Language and Culture at UFBA, which aimed to “analyze the

contributions that reading brings to the search for solutions to problems related to the attribution of meaning in oral and written texts of IFBA technical high school students enrolled in Geology and Buildings courses in the 1st and 3rd semesters” (Jesus, 2020, p. 7, our translation). The author started from the premise that students achieve self-knowledge through reading and writing, making these activities, therefore, fundamental to meaningful learning. Reading is the central object of the research, intersected by specific genres. Methodologically, the researcher asked the participants—students from the first-year Buildings course and the third-year Geology course—to produce two texts: a report on their personal experience with reading and an essay on racism, a typically school-based genre.

The students’ texts were analyzed by the researcher, who intended to capture the development of the informants literacy and the influence of reading “on the teaching-learning progress of Portuguese at IFBA” (Jesus, 2021, p.66, our translation), concluding that reading is fundamental in the construction of meaning in the text, especially because they had been encouraged from an early age within their family environment.

What can be observed on this kind of research is that many research objects focused on the language teaching can be analyzed, taking as a background the work with specific genres. In that case, there was no classroom applicability, but rather a reflection not only on reading, but on any situation in which language subjects are inserted and capable of recognizing themselves and the history in which they are situated, which will allow them to act like citizens in the word. It is for sure within a discussion about genres.

4.2.4 On genre groupings and their relation to teaching

Bhatia (2004) asserts that, in the real world, genres end up relating to one another in very diverse ways. And this is natural, after all, one way of studying how societies are organized is by analyzing which genres are used by the subjects who

make up certain communities and specific fields of human activities. Several authors (Devitt, 1991; Marcuschi, 2000; Bhatia, 2004; Swales, 2004; Bazerman, 2005; Bezerra, 2017; Araújo, 2021) have examined specific communities and concluded that, in life discourse, genres end up being connected in different ways. Araújo (2021) revisits Bakhtin (2008) studies, who, when studying a new type of novel, the polyphonic novel, in Dostoyevsky's work turned to the genres of Ancient Greece and arrived at a set he referred to as the field of the serious-comic, consisting of genres such as the Menippean satire, Socratic dialogues, symposiums memoirs, bucolic poetry, among others, all different from each other but sharing a common characteristic: carnivalization.

Although Bakhtin (2008) did not attribute a specific name to this set, we bring the example only to emphasize that these linguistic experiences are very ancient, practiced by humanity for more than two millennia. It is not surprising that, with the advancement of studies in the field, other denominations have emerged. Concepts such as sets (Devitt, 1991), systems (Bazerman, 2005), chains (Fairclough, 2001; Swales, 2004), networks (Swales, 2004), colonies (Bhatia, 2004), constellations (Marcuschi, 2000; Araújo, 2021), families (Ciapuscio, 2009), and genre composites (Lima-Neto; Carvalho, 2022) are some of the nomenclatures conceived over the past decades to account for these life phenomena. We also rely on this assumption to try to understand why these relations are still so little known in Brazilian classrooms.

Our impression was confirmed in practice. There are very few works on genre groupings in the Northeast—in the analyzed period, only Pimentel's (2014) dissertation addresses the subject, but **none** with concerns related to teaching. Although the topic, as we have already mentioned, is old both outside and inside the country¹³, few studies have been devoted to it in the Northeast (Bezerra, 2006; Araújo, 2006 are just a few). Is it a difficult subject, or one considered irrelevant to the academic world? If the answer is yes for academia, how can we expect this discussion to take place within the school environment?

¹³ Marcuschi (2000) had already discussed the subject.

More recently, studies have been found in this direction (Bezerra, 2017; Araújo, 2021; Oliveira, 2022; Lima-Neto; Carvalho, 2022), but in fact, still without concerns regarding basic education, although Oliveira (2022) already points towards the universe of academic literacies. Indeed, students in general encounter genres in sets, linked in different ways, fostering the organization of life and social practices in the most varied fields of human activity. Today we skillfully use all these genres in their harmonious relations, but in a rather unconscious way. Perhaps this is a discussion to be raised from now on also in basic education, since, by all indications, discussions on genres at school remain relatively distant from the real world.

5 (Semi-)final considerations

Work with genres in schools has been a state policy since 1998, initiated in the PCN (Brasil, 1998) and reinforced in the BNCC (Brasil, 2018). Nevertheless, indicators such as Functional Literacy Indicator¹⁴ (INAF), and various assessments, including the Basic Education Assessment System (SAEB) and ENEM, reveal that the population's reading proficiency and text production still demonstrate weak performance. In this context, we assume that many of these results are influenced by what occurs in teacher education programs and by the scientific research addressing this issue.

In this work, we had as objective to map the academic works submitted in graduate programs (GP) of linguistic studies in the NE concerning genre-based first language teaching. This research focus was centered on analyses that take into account both isolated genres and different types of generic groupings. For this, we made a selection of dissertations and theses submitted within twenty Graduate Programs in the area of Language Sciences, in the period from 2011 to 2021, and we reached a total of 196 works that dealt with the relation between genres and teaching.

¹⁴ Functional Literacy Indicator (INAF) is a study that aims to measure the levels of functional literacy among the Brazilian population aged 15 to 64. This acronym was kept in Portuguese.

Several points merit emphasis in the results. In general, it seems to us that researching genres, at least in studies focused on basic education, has not been in evidence. The first and most notable indication is the prevalence of numerous studies reflecting on diverse genres, **yet showing little concern for the school context**. From a universe of more than five thousand works, we mapped only 196 that discussed the relation between genres and teaching, in ten years. This gives a percentage of 3.97% that reflect the issue, in the Academic Programs.

The second issue is a consequence of these results: everything suggests that we speak to our academic bubbles, without the reflections going beyond the walls of the Northeastern universities. There is, therefore, a tendency of increasing distance between academy and school. We have alarming rates of writing and reading problems in Brazil, as shown by INAF (2021), but it seems that what has been done in the Language Sciences in the Northeast region – at least regarding the work with genres, writing, text production, composition, and teaching – has had little impact on the lives of basic education students. The scope is the Northeast region, but it is a warning about the little concern of the academy with writing in the classrooms of Brazilian basic education.

Lastly, let us not forget the importance of the research developed in the 23 units of the Language Professional Master's Degree in a National Network (PROFLETRAS) operating in the NE¹⁵. The mission of the Program is the education of Portuguese language teachers, with a consequent improvement in the quality of language teaching in the region. Since the studies developed there necessarily focus on the classroom, it is quite possible that the number of works on genres in PROFLETRAS is higher; however, the analysis of Professional Programs was not our objective in this article. Future studies, however, may shed light on the issue within the scope of PROFLETRAS and other professional and academic Master's Programs in related

¹⁵ Available at: https://profletras.ufrn.br/unidades/unid_nordeste#.Y36C63bMLIU. Accessed: 23 Nov. 2022.

areas, such as Education and Teaching, for example, which may also bring important contributions to this discussion.

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