

Editorial Genetic Rites and Authorship in Journals

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Abstract

The research we will present aims to further develop a discussion started in the master's degree research entitled *Publishing mediation in scientific communication: a study of two human sciences journals*, focusing on a fundamental issue of the current times: the constitution of authorship in scientific communication. In order to investigate that issue, we aim to examine the defining conditions of authorship in the production of scientific papers in different areas of knowledge. Therefore, the corpus is composed by four important journals nationwide, *Geosp: espaço e tempo*, from the Postgraduate Program in Geography of the FFLCH-USP, *Cerâmica Industrial*, from the Brazilian Ceramic Association, *Cadernos Brasileiros de Terapia Ocupacional*, from the Occupational Therapy Department of UFSCar, and *Revista do Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros (Rieb)*, from the Brazilian Studies Institute of USP. Having the French discourse analysis as theoretical framework, we take into account the relationship between the author and other co-enunciators in the editorial genetic rites (Salgado, 2011), also considering the place of the author as a creative paratopy (Maingueneau, 2014). At the event, we will discuss more precisely the current stage of the research, focusing on the methodology of data collection, in which we used interviews with different professionals involved in the publishing of the mentioned journals.

Keywords: authorship; discourse analysis; publishing mediation; scientific communication; scientific writing

Introduction

Research overview

In my PhD research project, I propose a study that advances on an issue discussed in my master's degree project, entitled *Editorial mediation in scientific communication: a study of two Human Sciences journals* (Clares, 2017). The focus is a fundamental issue of our current times: the constitution of authorship in scientific communication.

I became aware of this issue right after I started the field research, when I had to deal with a basic obstacle when it comes to investigating the editorial treatment of texts:

the difficulty to get access to the texts before they are released for publication. I will come back to discuss this later in this paper.

For the time being, my hypothesis is that, in relation to scientific journals, there is an imagery of authorship that leads to a fading of the editorial processes in scientific publications, once these processes are not commonly made explicit. More than that: in my master's research, I could identify a certain avoidance of the scientific community to study those processes.

In other words, the materials with which I deal have a *strict circulation*, and it is more likely that we see the final product, in the form of scientific papers in journals, and not the processes that would show traces of a certain “collective”, “collaborative” authorship, a constitutive part of what I understand as authorship management.

Thinking about this problem, I have selected a *corpus* of four scientific journals of national importance in Brazil: *Geosp: espaço e tempo*, from the Graduation Program of Geography of the University of São Paulo (USP); *Cerâmica Industrial*, from the Brazilian Association of Ceramics, *Cadernos Brasileiros de Terapia Ocupacional*, from the Occupational Therapy Department at the Federal University of São Carlos (UFSCar), and *Revista do Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros* (Rieb), from USP.

Having as theoretical framework the French discourse analysis, my objective is to examine the determinant factors of authorship in the production of scientific papers in different areas of knowledge. In order to do that, I contemplate the relation between the author and their editorial co-enunciator amidst the editorial genetic rites, according to a method proposed by Salgado (2011), and supported by the methodological understanding of the “place” of the author as a creative paratopy, as proposed by Maingueneau (2014).

Salgado (2011) considered that the editorial genetic rites are everything that is done in order to make a text reach the public space. In other words, every editorial process that happens before the text turns into a “final” product. That proposition is actually a deployment of Maingueneau's notion of *genetic rites*.

According to Maingueneau (2014), “the original writer is, in fact, forced into inventing genetic rites to attend their needs”, once it is “necessary to find the genetic rites that are pertinent to elaborate their works, but it is the success of the accomplished pieces that establishes the pertinence of those rites”.

In this direction, the notion of editorial genetic rites both specifies and directs Maingueneau's proposition, focusing on the editorial processes adopted in different publications, “without ever losing sight that the work of the editorial co-enunciator, as well as the author's and that of all who deal with the text, all those works are executed in a given discursive place”, as Salgado (2011) points out.

In my research Project, I have extended the notion of creative paratopy – formulated to analyze the literary discourse and, in a broad way, the constitutive discourses – to

understand authorship management in scientific discourse as well. This means that, when applied to the editorial cases, this notion allows us to understand certain types of authorship that are set in scientific papers, and may help on the understanding of what Salgado (2016) calls an *authorship transitivity*.

Now, I will present, more specifically, the current stage of my research regarding the data collection methodology, in other words, the field research.

Field research in Discourse Analysis: methodological strategies and difficulties in studying the editorial treatment of texts

Research in Discourse Analysis (henceforth D.A.) has a series of peculiarities when the object involves the editorial treatment of texts. In the case of scientific journals, these peculiarities impose significant methodological difficulties, one of which is the access to texts that are still under publishing process.

That happens because there are many protocols that these kinds of materials of restrict circulation have to undergo to be given as objects of study, and even to be seen as such by the involved professionals.

In my master's degree research, I could get partial access to the two journals I studied – Geoup, from the area of Geography, and Rieb, with interdisciplinary subjects, both from the University of São Paulo. What allowed me to get that access was the previous contact that my advisor had with the editors, due to her long career as a proofreader of scientific journals.

This information may seem trivial, but my current experience in the PhD research reaffirms that this is not only relevant data, but also imposes a methodological question to the organization of the *corpus*: now, I could easily get authorization to access, with no restriction, the files of Geoup (including the peer review documents), which has had the same editor for years. On the other hand, I could not talk yet to the new editorial team of the other journal, Rieb, to whom I wrote and had no return. I have contacted, then, a former Publisher of the journal, asking him to introduce me to the new editors, and I got an answer just now, so I'm still collecting the materials from this journal.

As for the journals *Cerâmica Industrial* and *Cadernos Brasileiros de Terapia Ocupacional*, both related to the Federal University of São Carlos (my university), it was crucial to show the editors that I belonged to a network of familiar contacts, or what we call, in D.A., a shared *discursive community*. Both the editors of *Cerâmica* and *Cadernos* are clients of *Editora Cubo*, a company specialized in scientific publishing in which I have worked with the tagging of papers using XML language.

Thus, the fact that I am a proofreader in scientific publishing is also relevant and stands along with my condition of researcher, because it endorses this condition. In this context, I am able talk about scientific publishing, once I am a professional from the area. Even so, the publisher of *Cadernos* requested the insertion of the following

terms in the document that authorizes the use of the journal in my research: "the researcher is committed to submit to the editorial team of the journal the results found and the analysis that she will do."

I will not dwell on analyzes of the creative paratopy, but it is worth mentioning that the request itself is also a data that exemplifies my hypothesis – we are talking about editorial processes that are not made explicit and are, frequently, misunderstood, even though among qualified professionals. That occurs because there is a conceived imagery of authorship that leads to a fading of the editorial processes in scientific publications.

During the interviews with the many professionals that work on the journals and accessing the different types of editorial processes with which I deal in the research, I am also evoked to occupy the discursive place of proofreader. That means that having a general notion of the editorial proceedings helps me in the task of identifying, selecting, describing and interpreting the many editorial genetic rites employed in each journal of the *corpus*, just as the descriptive-interpretative methods of D.A. suggest (Salgado & Clares, 2017).

In the case of *Cerâmica Industrial*, for example, a technical journal that has professionals of the ceramics industry as main demography, the major concern of the editor was that the journal would not be a good source for my research because it was not well classified according to certain parameters of evaluation of the journals.

These parameters of evaluation are managed, in Brazil, by agencies such as Capes (Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel), responsible for the classification of intellectual production at the universities, and SciELO (Scientific Electronic Library Online), an important database for journals.

The ranking of journals and graduation programs has been such a concern in the later years that, to the eyes of the editor, having a poor rank means that the magazine is not considered part of a specific, consecrated system of scientific communication. It also indicates that the editorial genetic rites are not meeting the expectations for being a specialized publication.

It is exactly due to the specificities of those rites, mentioned by the editor, that *Cerâmica* is a pertinent case for studying authorship management. In addition, they publish papers specially under demand of the editor, based on the needs of the national ceramics companies that fund the publication.

Because of that, they also select papers from important events in the area and from foreign journals. The foreign papers are translated into Brazilian Portuguese and the process of translation is particularly intriguing. According to the translator in charge, who is a scholar from the Materials Engineering area, the texts are translated from English or Spanish and have their style adapted to a more technical version, accessible to the professionals of the industry, who usually don't have a higher education degree.

That translator, who happens to not have a formation in the editorial area, calls that process *translation*, but states that also proofreads the translated texts to adapt the style, besides checking and fixing the references patterns to adapt them to the rules of the journal, which would be, at first, a service that is already provided by Editora Cubo.

This complexity in the process of edition will reflect on the study of authorship management in the papers, since we can understand the actions of the “translator” as an editorial co-enunciator in the adapted, technical versions of the texts. This process evokes the issue of looking at the constitution of authorship when dealing with many versions of a text – is it the same text? Who is the author of the new version?

Regarding the parameters of evaluation and ranking of the journals, it is worth mentioning that meeting the requirements imposed by ruler agencies in Brazil puts up a series of issues for the journals to deal with, issues that condition the editorial genetic rites adopted by each team.

On *Geosp*, which has an editor and editorial services provided by a specialized company called *Confraria de Textos*, the demand for professionalization of the journal implied a change on the platform of edition, which came to be the SEER (an Electronic System for Publication of Journals). In addition, the hiring of services happened in a very particular way, since the budget of the team was very limited, despite the excellent position in the ranking of the journals. Furthermore, the magazine started to publish only in the electronic version, which also has considerable publishing costs.

On the other hand, the journal *Cadernos Brasileiros de Terapia Ocupacional*, has undergone a change in its title, strictly because of recommendations of the ruler agencies. In the issue number 2 of 2017, it went from *Cadernos de Terapia Ocupacional da UFSCar* to *Cadernos Brasileiros de Terapia Ocupacional*.

That is an interesting case because it is a consecrated journal, in circulation since 1990. In the same issue, the journal also became being published exclusively in electronic version, with aims to lower the costs of production.

The temporal selection I made for the *corpus* is also justified by technical issues. In order to have access to the editorial materials, which are not only under custody of the editor, but distributed among different professionals, it was necessary to consider:

The very limited deadline imposed by agencies such as Capes and SciELO that the professionals have to face to maintain the periodicity of publication.

The demand that is generated by research that these professionals have to do.

The selection of cases that is pertinent for my research, given that it is not viable to ask for access to all the archives of the journals.

In *Cadernos Brasileiros de Terapia Ocupacional*, the selection was proven necessary right on the first interview. The journal has an editor who receives the files and send them forward for peer-evaluation. There is also an intern from the area of Linguistics, who works with the normalization of the accepted papers and send them to the *Editora Cubo*. The company offers services that go from the normalization of the texts to the online publishing, also taking care of the translation into English.

The question raised by the editor was quite objective: “how much of the material do you need?”. In order to collect a representative amount of texts that were undergoing the processes of edition, and trying not to generate too much work for the professionals of the team, my strategy was to propose a temporal cut, which allowed me to get, at once, all the files I needed.

The last two years of publication, 2016 and 2017, seemed enough material to me, since each of the journals publish issues every two, three, or four months. That means that, between 2016 and 2017, I have six to eight issues collected, with around twenty papers each, all of them readily available to my investigation.

Conclusion

To end this reflection, it is noteworthy to notice the number of factors that interfere directly in this kind of field research. It is also evident the richness of data and materials that these scientific journals provide for the discursive studies of authorship.

Since this is a brief exposition, there are many methodological issues that I will not be able to detail. However, it is valid to mention other two:

The storage of the *corpus* of the research, since UFSCar does not provide a platform that ensures that this kind of material will not be lost;

The strategical use of collected data, once I am not allowed to expose the complete texts, the titles of the papers or the complete review of the peers.

I finish this text giving emphasis to one of the most interesting issues it raises: the possibility of identifying and analyzing the *subjects at work*, in the words of Brazilian linguist Possenti (2009), which resumes the notion of *tactical subject* of De Certeau (2004). To study authorship management in scientific communication means to behold the subjects, on the one hand, as possibilities of maneuver, given the language practices with which they have to deal, and, on the other hand, as subjects maneuvered by those practices, as the practices themselves are also conditioned by norms that rule the scientific publications.

It is about, therefore, to recognize them as editorial co-enunciators amidst discursive practices, techniques and rules that are constitutive of the editorial genetic rites and, thus, of the way journals are produced. Anyone who wants to better understand the editorial approach discussed here can consult the work of the Research Group

Comunica¹, which has been dedicated to this kind of study in Brazil. The researches of Chieriegatti (2018), Primo (2019) and Boschi (*in press*), for example, talk directly with the research discussed here, especially regarding the editorial perspective of the study of technical objects.

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¹ Available on page <<https://grupopesquisacomunica.wordpress.com/o-comunica/>>.