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Lava Animated Short Film: GVD and language capacities in a study of a digital multimodal genre

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Abstract:

Taking into account the increasing presence of digital multimodal genres in our everyday life and the necessity of contributing to the formation of students as more critical readers, this paper aims at presenting a proposal of approach with the animated short film genre by developing language capacities, especially the multisemiotic ones (LENHARO, 2016). In order to achieve this aim, the Grammar of Visual Design – GVD (KRESS; VAN LEEUWEN, 2006) is used as an analysis methodology, as well as some principles related to language capacities (SCHNEUWLY; DOLZ, 2004; BEATO-CANATO; STUTZ; CRISTOVÃO, 2019), according to Socio-discursive Interactionism theory – SDI (BRONCKART, 2012). After that, *Lava* short film (2015) is presented, and an analytic description grounded in the GVD is proposed as a way of showing possible readings based on the verbal and visual language used. This research concluded that the GVD provides the analysis of a short film and, when articulated with SDI, enhances the development of language capacities that make it possible to have a critical understanding of this genre.

Keywords:

Animated short film genre. Language capacities. Grammar of Visual Design (GVD).

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Lava Animated Short Film: GVD and language capacities in a study of a digital multimodal genre

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Introduction

In the 1990s, literacy studies in Brazil represented a major epistemological turn in reading and writing studies. Since then, the concept of literacy has been widely debated in the Brazilian scenario, triggering a vast volume of works and generating outcomes beyond the alphabetization-literacy relation, as is the case of multiliteracies, new multiliteracies, or hypermedia literacies (ROJO, 2009; ROJO; MOURA, 2012). Similarly, the text genre concept has been circulating in the Brazilian academic context since the 1990s, mainly with the publication of the National Curriculum Parameters – PCN (*Pârametros Curriculares Nacionais*, in Portuguese), in 1998, for Portuguese and foreign languages teaching (BRASIL, 1998).

However, it does not mean that the school performed a significant appropriation of these concepts. If there theoretically seems to be a consensus that genre is essential for developing literacy practices, if official documents and curricular guidelines also point to the genre approach, the didactic transposition process of these notions does not seem to have effectively taken place in the school context. There is a persistent hiatus, which is the focus of this work, between the academic production and the Portuguese language classroom, whether regarding the curricular organization, the didactic material selection, or the teachers' practices. Moreover, the contemporaneity brings the emergency of multisemiotic and multimodal texts¹ that require new constructs to understand the digital culture, consequently implying new pedagogic paths.

The Common National Curriculum Base – BNCC (Base Nacional Comum Curricular, in Portuguese) BRAZIL, 2018), a normative document that regulates, in a way, the actions that school will develop, undoubtedly opens space to numerous genres of the digital environment² even if it is criticized. Among the genres requested by the Portuguese language's BNCC for the Elementary School, there are those which the teachers are more familiarized with and that are more explored in the commercial teaching materials, such as chronicles, news, reports, interviews, editorial cartoons, and advertisements. The document, however, brings the challenge of connecting the new social practices to the genres approach, deeply connected to the Communication and Information Digital Technologies - TDIC (Tecnologias Digitais de Informação e Comunicação, in Portuguese), in different areas of operation: comments on cultural blog/vlogs, slams, YouTubers channels, thematic social media, news and cultural podcasts, gameplays, cartographic animations, to name just a few, in elementary

¹ We know that, according to some authors, as Dionísio (2007), every text can be considered multimodal since "when we say or write a text, we use, at least, two representation modes: words and gestures, words and intonations, words and images, words and typography, words and smiles, words and animations, etc." (p. 177). However, in this work we seek to detach the multiple languages (static and moving images, sounds, gestures, etc.) present in contemporary texts, more specifically the digital ones, which, according to Rojo's proposal (2014; ROJO; MOURA, 2019), are called multimodal or multisemiotic texts.

² Considering, for example, the fifth general competence expected for basic education: "Understanding, using and creating digital technologies of information and communication in a critic, significant, reflective and ethical form in many social practices (including the educational) in order to communicate, access and spread information, produce knowledge, solve problems and exercise protagonism and authorship in both personal and collective life" (BRASIL, 2018, p. 9). Beyond the specific skills that also highlight the work by the TDIC, both for elementary and high school.

school; gifs, e-zines, memes, remixes, advergames, animated infographics, scientific vlogs, among others, in High School.

They are different languages (static and moving images, sounds and music, performance and dance videos, written and oral text) that merge into the same device (ROJO; MOURA, 2019). If the BNCC has a large focus on multiliteracies, it is necessary to recognize that many of these genres do not circulate in school environment nor are known by the teachers. It becomes required to know the constructive characteristics and the social uses of these genres that congregate multiple languages and semiosis to think about an adequate approach. Guiding documents in the education area, in any case, do not have the premise of "teaching how to make." With the theoretical contribution arising from the Grammar of Visual Design – GVD (KRESS; VAN LEEUWEN, 2006) and assumptions from the Socio-discursive Interactionism - SDI (SCHNEUWLY; DOLZ, 2004; BRONCKART, 2012; LENHARO, 2016; BEATO-CANATO; STUTZ; CRISTOVÃO, 2019), this study is a part of a more extensive one, that will seek to offer resources to Portuguese language teachers so they can develop didactic-pedagogical proposals, aiming new orality, reading and writing practices in the contemporary society.

Considering this paper's scope, based on a bibliographic and webliography qualitative research, the study will focus on a specific genre, the animated film,³ aiming at analyzing the animated short film *Lava* (2015) and, from this genre sample, considering its insertion in the Portuguese language lessons as a teaching-learning instrument. This analysis will be carried out with the GVD theoretical and methodological instruments, and work suggestions about reading and writing will mainly be anchored in the SDI principles. It is expected that the obtained results can be extended for the analysis and didactic approach to other multisemiotics genres in the digital environment.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is based on bibliographic and webliography research built on the GVD assumptions (KRESS; VAN LEEUWEN, 2006) as animated film analysis methodology. For this purpose, we selected the short film *Lava* (2015), directed by James Ford Murphy and produced by Pixar and Walt Disney Animation Studio as a sample of this genre. Our choice arose from the interpretation possibilities resulting from the relation between the song *Lava*, used as a common thread (verbal language), and the images (non-verbal language) of the animated film. Therefore, this referential was articulated with the presuppositions on the language capacities (SCHNEUWLY; DOLZ, 2004; BEATO-CANATO; STUTZ; CRISTOVÃO, 2019), which are based on the SDI (BRONCKART, 2012).

Consequently, we aim to present a work proposal with the animated film genre, through the development of the language capacities, especially the multisemiotic capacities (LENHARO, 2016), in order to contribute to the educational formation, offering the teachers the possibilities to work with multimodal genres in the Portuguese language lessons. For this purpose, we conducted some articulation based on a qualitative approach, which is so characterized, according to Marli André (2011), not just because it is opposed to the quantitative model of research, but because it defends a holistic view of the phenomena, which means that it considers the interrelation of the diverse components of a situation. In this research, the qualitative focus derives from the necessity to understand the meaning relations arising from animated film multimodal

³ Although the several names by which this genre is known (animation, graphical animation, animation movie, animated movie, animated cartoon, among others), the choice for the word *animated film* aims to indicate the relation between the technique that gives movement to the drawings and paintings using multiple languages (verbal, non-verbal, sound, gestural, etc.) and the diffusion of the video in different media (cinema, television, computer, etc.), according to Ferreira, Dias and Villarta-Neder (2019).

composition and how this sort of analysis can be used in the Portuguese language processes of education and learning.

THE VISUAL SEMIOTICS AND THE USES OF THE LANGUAGE

Considering that images assume not only aesthetic and expressive, but also social, political, and communicative dimensions, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) developed an analysis methodology denominated the Grammar of Visual Design (GVD), with the objective of understanding non-verbal representation as part of human communication. For these authors, the knowledge of different semiotic forms, beyond the verbal one, can extend the language's use perspectives as well as the knowledge of other languages allows new approaches in the language scope.

Despite the term "grammar," the GVD is not based on a system of rules for language utilization as the normative grammars, but in the regularities observation. Thus, the GVD differential concerning other grammatical theoretical perspectives is the focus on the objective behind the imagistic composition through semiotic recurrences. Moreover, according to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), grammar teaching does not prevent creative language use, but it allows a new understanding through reading and writing that extends the possibility of its use. The same applies to a visual grammar: the mastery of the meaning relations that result from the compositional structure and organization of the non-verbal elements in a text allows a more critical and conscious use, either in the reading and in the multimodal text production.

The GVD is based on the notion that what can be expressed in words also can be expressed through images. However, there are some differences in the signification process. In the complex communication process, the comprehension of a text depends not only on a language verbal code decryption but also on social interactions, which are determinant for the language organization. This interpretative dimension significantly increases when images are employed. It happens because the language, either the verbal and the semiotic, is based on signs and the relations resulting from culturally established signifiers and signified.

For the GVD, which establishes itself on the Social Semiotics, the signs creators use the signified they intend to express through images as a starting point. Thus, each sign signified remains independent until the image elements (signs) are related, making the signified arise from the context of image use, from culturally stipulated elements. However, the basic social conventions do not prevent the creation of new semiotic forms.

Even making the flexibility of uses and interpretations possible, a grammar remains circumscribed to a specific culture since the understanding of the images depends on the typical conventions of a social grouping. In the GVD's case, it was designed based on western culture: the reading standard from left to right and from top to bottom. Therefore, it starts from the assumption that there are regularities in the images' meanings, which are socially established. However, this does not prevent the perception that the linguistic understanding (of words and images) is subjective, individual, and influenced by the context.

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) consider that the socially stipulated forms and uses are determinant for understanding visual meanings, and, consequently, the basis for the development of the GVD, which make semiotic studies challenging. However, they cannot be left behind, especially in a society where the images become increasingly prominent. As the authors explain, children's drawings produced in the early years are gradually being replaced by the increasing use of written texts during the school process. The images still appear, but with specific functions, complementing the written text. However, outside the school, the process is contrary, and the multimodal texts gain more space, to the detriment of exclusively verbal texts.

In this sense, the authors argue that schools need to rethink what should be included in school curriculum, considering the growing number and the increasingly widespread use of multimodal texts, including

the fact that this process interferes in the uses of writing, as well as in the new arrangements between verbal and non-verbal languages. Thus, educators need to be able to equip students for a new semiotic order to contribute to the formation of individuals capable of using the new representation resources actively and effectively.

The GVD is proposed as a methodology to assist in this new configuration. Due to the Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG), elaborated by Halliday (1994), the GVD seeks to establish general categories for all types of human semiosis. The SFG assumes linguistics as a type of semiotics because it studies not only signs but a sign system, pointing to the existence of other forms of meaning production besides verbal language (BRITO; PIMENTA, 2009).

Therefore, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) start from the metafunctions proposed by the GFS: *ideational*, which considers the sentence as a representation for the message interpretation; *interpersonal*, which analyzes the interaction between speakers and the use of modalizations; and *textual*, which understands the sentence as a message. Considering the multimodal perspective, the GVD respectively renames these metafunctions as: *representational*, which deals with the world's experience through language; *interactive*, which analyzes strategies to approximate and distance the reader; and *compositional*, which focus on the internal organization of the elements in the text.

Each of the metafunctions can be organized in different aspects, which we will describe below, highlighting the elements directly related to the proposed analysis.⁴ Firstly, the understanding of metafunction requires that the elements involved in the communicative scene or semiotic action be presented (LEAL, 2011). They can be the *Interactive Participant* (IP from this point onwards), the real people (the image producers and consumers), or the *Represented Participant* (RP from this point onwards), which corresponds to everything that is in the image (people, places, objects, etc.). The image meaning effects, organized through the three metafunctions mentioned above, stem from the possible relationship established between the IP, between them and the RP, and between the RP, as will be demonstrated below.

The representational metafunction involves what is represented in the scene, the relations established by these elements, and the circumstances. Representation in the image can be narrative or conceptual, and, as Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) explain, an image can simultaneously present more than one process. The narrative representation expresses a movement inside the image, involving events and actions. For this, it is necessary to know three elements: the actor, as the RP that performs the action is called; the vector, the direction of the action, which is represented by an arrow; and the goal, which is where the vector indicates. This type of representation can involve processes or circumstances. The processes can be of action, reaction, verbal, mental, conversion, or geometric symbolism. The two first are being used for this research's analysis.

The action process occurs when an act is performed by one of the RP, which may be non-transactional or transactional and, in this case, unidirectional or bidirectional. The transactional action process brings together at least two RP, both of which can be seen in the image. In a verbal text, this process would correspond to the transitive verbs. An RP may perform the action in the other's direction, one being the actor and the other being goal and, therefore, unidirectional. It may also be reciprocal and, in this case, bidirectional, with both alternating the condition of actor and goal. The non-transactional action process is the one in which appears only one RP in the scene, which will be the actor, with the goal not being presented in the image. It might also happen that the RP is represented only partially, by a hand or foot, for example. In a verbal text, this kind of process would correspond to the sentences with intransitive verbs.

The *reaction process* occurs when the "action" is manifested through the gaze of an RP towards the other (LEAL, 2011), with the vector formed by the RP's focus direction, which reacts to an action named

⁴ Due to the space limitation, for expanding the discussion on the matter, see Kress and van Leeuwen (2006); Brito and Pimenta (2009); and Leal (2011).

phenomenon (while the action process involves a goal). As well as the action process, the reaction process can be transactional or non-transactional. In the first, the RP's focus is directed to the phenomenon, which appears in the image. In the second, the RP's focus is directed to something outside the image, a phenomenon that is not exhibited in the image, which the participant is looking at. These narrative processes will be fundamental to comprehending the animated film's narrative effects that compose this research's corpus, as we will demonstrate in the next section.

There is also the *narrative representation of circumstance* since it can appear elements that Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) call secondary participants, which are not enclosed in the principal structure of the semiotic action but contribute to it by adding information. They do not establish a direct relation with the main participants through vectors but indicate spatial references, separated into three types: scenario, meaning, and accompaniment.

The Locative Circumstance represents the image setting, usually through a contrast between the foreground and the background, and may appear in four ways: I – the RP are in the foreground overlapping the Setting, which is obscured; II - the setting can be seen, but without many details, as it is not the main focus; III - the setting is erased through the use of color in the same hue; IV - the setting is in evidence. These aspects are also addressed in the study of modalities, which compose interactive metafunction. The Circumstance of Mean relates to the tools that compose the semiotic action but does not relate with the participants, resulting in the implicit signification, as the gestures that complement a person's speech, for example. The Circumstance of Accompaniment represents a participant who is in the semiotic action but is not an actor or has a vector relation with the other RP and can be interpreted as a symbolic attribute.

The *interactive metafunction* observes the approximation between RP and IP,⁵ indicating the relations established between the elements of the image and its producers' worldview or, in other words, the values that are intended to be transmitted through a semiotic action. This metafunction deals specifically with the interaction between RPs, between the IP and RP, and between IPs, divided into four approaches: the look, the framework, the perspective, and the modality. One of the interaction forms can be established through the *gaze*, which establishes a relation between RP and IP, which can be of two types: demand and offer. The demand gaze happens when the RP looks directly at the IP, demonstrating that the producer IP wants to create an emotional bond between the RP and IP. In the offer gaze, the RP addresses the IP indirectly, not looking at it but being the object of its gaze.

The *framing* indicates greater or lesser proximity between RP and IP, as the shots used in cinema: the *close-up*, which frames the face or a detail of the RP and indicates greater proximity; the medium shot, which frames the RP in an intermediate distance; and the long shot, which frames one or more RP in greater distance, demonstrating less proximity to the IP. The *perspective* is a notion used in works of art since the Renaissance (BRITO; PIMENTA, 2006) and involves the angle in which the IP sees the RP, demonstrating an objective or a subjective perspective. The objective perspective shows everything that needs to be revealed or everything that the producing IP judges necessary to show in the semiotic action. It can be divided into two forms: orientation for an action, as in images used in instruction manuals, for example; and guidance for knowledge, such as images used in maps or encyclopedias.

On the contrary, in the subjective perspective, the RP is revealed from a specific point of view, also contributing to the different degrees of involvement between RP and IP. This relation is established through

⁵ As explained previously, the IP can be the one who sees the image or who produces it. Since most of the semiotic relations analyzed by the GVD refer to those who see the image, from this moment on, we start to identify the IP that sees the image only as IP, differentiating it from the producer IP when necessary.

angles, which can be of the frontal, oblique, or vertical types. Through the frontal angle, the IP sees the RP from the front, which denotes proximity and equality. In contrast, the oblique angle shows the RP as if the PI was not in front of it, indicating distancing. In this case, there may be other references, such as the RP with its back to the IP, which can also contribute to the notion of removal. The vertical angle is used to demonstrate power relations between IP and RP, which can be seen at a high, medium, or low angle. The high-angle (or *plongée*, in cinema terminology) shows the RP seen from above, demonstrating greater power of the IP over the RP. The medium angle shows the RP's gaze at the same level, indicating equality between the participants. Finally, the low angle (or *antiplongée*) shows the RP seen from below, demonstrating greater power of the RP over the IP.

An image *modality* can be elaborated through markers, which are classified into six types: color, contextualization, representation, depth, lighting, and brightness. The color can vary by the degree of saturation (from full color to absence of color – black and white), differentiation (from varied colors to monochrome tones), and modulation (from shadows to full colors). The contextualization varies from the absence of a setting or background to an articulated and detailed setting. The representation varies from maximum abstraction to realistic representation. The depth can be seen from perspective absence to its complete use. The illumination can vary from great lighting to the total absence of clarity. Lastly, the brightness can go through the maximum number of tones in different shades up to two tones (black and white, light gray and dark gray, etc.). These aspects also apply to the typography used in the multimodal text.

The compositional metafunction, integrating the meanings of the representational and interactive metafunctions, seeks to analyze how both verbal and non-verbal elements are organized and related in the semiotic action and what meaning effects result from this combination. For this, three interrelated systems are analyzed: the informational value, the salience, and the frame. The informational value is related to the layout of the image concerning the RP distribution, considering the left-to-right reading style. Thus, degrees of importance are established so that that information can be centered and, therefore, have more prominence than the elements arranged in the margins, which are also called polarized, denoting two types of relations. The first, of horizontal order, indicates what is known and new, in such a way that what is represented on the left is information the IP already knows, while what is on the right is new. The second, of vertical order, indicates ideal and real, that is, at the top is what seeks to establish greater emotional affinity with IP, that is, what is in the dream or imaginary fields, of the imaginary; and, at the bottom, what belongs to the field of concrete, of the real world.

The *salience* is a category of analysis related to the form as the RPs are highlighted in semiotic action related to each other, varying from maximum to minimum, what can be checked: by the size (the larger, the more prominent); by focus (the accuracy of represented details); by the contrast of tones (color and brightness); by perspective (in the foreground the one that has the most prominence); by the field of vision positioning (according to the angles mentioned above); and by cultural factors that reveal symbolic values that are socially accepted. Through the composition of *frames*, the RP can go from a complete disconnection to a maximum connection, according to how the elements in the semiotic action are delimitated by division lines, colorful spaces, among others.

In this research, we also aim to articulate the images with the verbal text (a song) that follows the chosen animated film. Such relation is plausible, considering that images and words are signs, "since they organize themselves, discursively, for the production process of meaning" (FERREIRA; ALMEIDA; DIAS, 2017, p. 195), which stem from the social context in which they are produced and read. In this direction, considering the text as a communicative unit and, therefore, a product of the language activity in a social situation, the multiple languages can be articulated for the constitution of different text genres, such as the animated film.

Although verbal and non-verbal texts organize their enunciative resources in different ways, which varies considering the text genre, "the combination of languages leads the reader to articulate points of view and to convoke speeches, establishing interpretative passages" (FERREIRA; ALMEIDA; DIAS, 2017, p. 204). For this reason and due to the growing use of multimodal text nowadays, including the DICT diffusion, the reading process of a text needs to consider all its compositional elements, verbal or non-verbal, and mainly how they influence the reader, or the spectator if it is an animated film case, with their interrelations.

A SEMIOTIC APPROACH TO THE ANIMATED FILM LAVA

The animated short film *Lava* (2015), directed by James Ford Murphy and Andrea Warren, has a duration of 7 minutes and 10 seconds and was inspired by the beauty of isolated tropical islands and oceanic volcanoes to tell the love story between the volcanoes Uku and Lele, which happens over millions of years. Produced by Pixar and Walt Disney Animation Studio and released in 2015 as an opening short film for *Inside Out*, *Lava* was originated from Murphy's desire to tell a complete story in one song only (LAVA, 2015), which was performed with the musical instrument ukulele (a Hawaiian instrument), after which the characters were named. Originally sang by the Hawaiians Kuana Torres Kahele and Napua Greig, it was Bruno Bonatto and Joelma Bonfim who dubbed the characters in the Brazilian version of the film. We opted for this animated film because of the possibilities of interpretation arising from the relation between the song (verbal language) and the animated images (non-verbal language).

The short film synopsis tells the story of a lonely volcano named Uku, who lives in a tropical island and observes the wild creatures playing with their partners, hoping to find one for himself one day. For thousands of years, every day, he sings a song to the ocean, expelling his lava and sinking in the water, not knowing that a submarine volcano can hear him. When Lele emerges, Uku is extinguished as he completely sinks in the ocean, with a broken heart. However, when Lele sings her song, Uku's flames light up and, erupting, he comes back to the surface, where he finds her, forming together a single island. Then, they can be together forever.

The use of the GVD to analyze the images, as well as their relationship with the song, allows us to perceive this sequence of events and the meaning effects resulting from it, as we are going to describe below. We emphasize that, in an animated film, the images themselves have no meaning, which is created through a sequence by the link between the frames. That is one of the differentials in the semiotic analysis of moving images. Hence, we stress that the scenes presented in this paper may limit the comprehension of the meaning effects resulting from the moving images. Therefore, it is essential to watch the video. We will try to mitigate such limitation by describing the scene sequences when necessary.

First, it is important to identify the animated film participants. As IP, there are: the creators of the short film, James Ford Murphy and his team, as well as Pixar and Walt Disney Animation Studio; and the consumers, which is the general public, that is, anyone who has access to the animated film via DVD or even the streaming platforms where the video is available. The PR are the volcanoes Uku and Lele, the tropical islands where they are located, the sky, the clouds, the birds, the ocean, and the sea creatures (whales, turtles, and dolphins) that appears in the animated film. We highlight the volcanoes characterization, considering Uku, which may be identified as a male, without adornments, shorter and wider, opposed to Lele, which is taller and narrower, with darker rocks around her face, as if she had long hair, and some ornaments in different shades of pink over it.

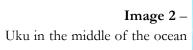
The animated film events are conducted by a song, also named *Lava* (see Attachment), which narrates the story of the two volcanoes, while the scenes that illustrate the lyrics of the song are displayed sequentially. For example, at the beginning of the story, when the lyrics are: "A long, long time ago / There was a volcano

/ Living all alone, in the middle of the sea / He sat high above his bay / Watching all the couples play / and wishing that, he had someone too" (LAVA, 2015), the scenes in succession show Uku's face in the center of the image (Image 1),⁶ him alone in the middle of the ocean (Image 2) and a high-angle shot of the sea (Image 3), in which a couple of seagulls appear, representing what the volcano is looking at.



Image 1 – Uku's face in the center of the image

Source: Scene at 1:01, from the animated film *Lava* (2015).



Source: Scene at 1:07, from the animated film *Lava* (2015).





Image 3 – High-angle shot of the sea

Source: Scene at 1:10, from the animated film *Lava* (2015).

The analysis and comprehension of the representational metafunction is key to the animated film. Since the characters are volcanoes and, therefore, unable to move, the narrative intentions were transmitted through the eyes and mouth. In this manner, throughout the succession of the PR's gazes, the narrative is built. Thus, the narrative representations are used through reaction processes and their subtypes. Thereby, at the beginning of the animated film, Uku is alone in the scene and demonstrates the desire to have company

⁶ This paper is not for profit, and the images are used for educational purposes only, in accordance with acceptable uses of media for citizens' education (BRASIL, 2009; YOUTUBE, 2020).

("He sat high above his bay / Watching all the couples play / And wishing that, he had someone too"), gazing (vector represented by an arrow) at a couple of whales that jump out of the sea. The intention is represented through a transactional reaction process since there are three RPs in the image, Uku being the reacter, while the couple is the phenomenon (Image 4).

In the course of the film's narrative, Uku realizes that his wish will not be fulfilled ("Years of singing all alone, turned his lava into stone / Until, he was on the brink of extinction"), which is expressed through a nontransactional reaction process, as there is just one RP in the image (Uku), who gazes at a goal that is outside the scene. The complication occurs when Uku believes he will disappear ("As he sang his song of hope for the last time / I have a dream, I hope will come true / That you're here with me, and I'm here with you / I wish that the earth, sea, the sky up above / Will send me someone to lava"), but Lele appears in the scene, from the bottom of the ocean, ready to emerge, which is demonstrated by her gazing at something out of the scene, the surface of the sea ("But little did he know, that living in the sea below / Another volcano was listening to his song"). Lele's gaze is an example of a nontransactional reaction, as she looks at a phenomenon that is out of the frame (Image 6).

Then the narrative reaches its climax with Lele's emersion, a phenomenon observed by Uku, which exemplifies the use of a transactional reaction, as the RP and the phenomenon are in the same scene (Image 7). The conclusion is represented by the union of the two volcanoes ("I have a dream, I hope will come true / That you're here with me, and I'm here with you / I wish that the earth, sea, the sky up above will send me someone to lava"), who show their love through a gaze, which represents a transactional reaction process, as both PRs are in the frame, as reacters and phenomena, at the same time (Image 8). In this sequence of scenes, we highlight the use of the word "lava", which represents the volcanoes' vital force ("And from his lava came, this song of hope" and "But with no lava his song was so gone"). It is also represented through some of the verses, such as "Will send me someone to *lava*" and "I *lava* you," which are wordplays with "love."

Still referring to the song's last stanza, we underline how it works as a way of conducting the narrative presented through scenes that compose the animated film. As it usually happens in song lyrics, we are able to identify a chorus, which is repeated three times: "I have a dream, I hope will come true / That you're here with me, and I'm here with you / I wish that the earth, sea, the sky up above will send me someone to lava." Not coincidentally, the turning point of the narrative and the happy conclusion (from a lonely Uku to Uku with Lele) is signed by the change of shots (from Image 2 to Image 8) and accompanied by a significant modification in the chorus: from "I have a dream, I hope will come true / That you're here with me, and I'm here with you" to "I have a dream, I hope will come true / That you'll grow old with me, and I'll grow old with you," which demonstrates the change of the state of the characters.



Image 4 – Uku's gaze exemplifies a transactional reaction process

Source: Scene at 1:14, from the animated film *Lava* (2015).

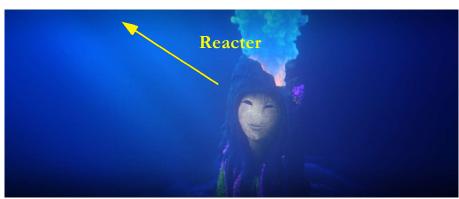


Image 5 – Uku's gaze exemplifies a nontransactional reaction process

Source: Scene at 2:20, from the animated film *Lava* (2015).

Image 6 – Lele's gaze exemplifies a nontransactional reaction process

Source: Scene at 3:12, from the animated film *Lava* (2015).



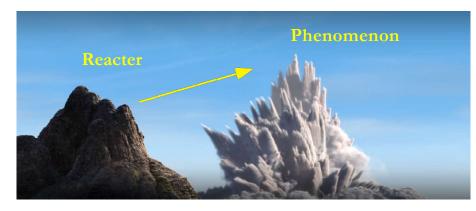
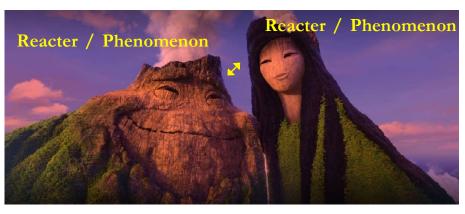


Image 7 – Uku's gaze exemplifies a transactional reaction process

Source: Scene at 3:36, from the animated film *Lava* (2015).

Image 8 – Uku and Lele's gazes exemplify a transactional reaction process

Source: Scene at 5:44, from the animated film *Lava* (2015).



Regarding the narrative representation of circumstance, we present an example which is in movement between the concepts of setting and significance, since it composes the image ambiance and is also implied in the semiotic act, contributing to the general meaning effects of the animated film. We refer to the representations of hearts throughout the narrative, a choice arising from the short film theme, as the heart is a culturally

instituted symbol to represent love. As we can see in images 9, 10, and 11, the heart appears, respectively, in the seafoam formed by the couple of whales' dive, in the lava that causes Uku to resurface, and in the final position of Uku and Lele.



Image 9 –
The sea foam creates a heart shape

Source: Scene at 1:17, from the animated film *Lava* (2015).

Image 10 – The lava that pushes Uku to the surface has a heart shape

Source: Scene at 5:07, from the animated film *Lava* (2015).





Image 11 – Uku and Lele together forming a shape that resembles a heart

Source: Scene at 5:32, from the animated film *Lava* (2015).

Concerning the interactive metafunction, the gaze aspect played a pivotal role in establishing the reaction processes, as demonstrated above. Furthermore, there are only offer gazes in the animated film, as the RP does not look at the IP, and is just the object of the latter's gaze. The shots were varied. The close-up shot (Image 1), the medium shot (Images 5, 6, and 8), and the long shot (images 2 and 11) were use according to the need of emphasizing the volcanoes' feelings or expressing the setting as a whole. In regard to the subjective perspective, it was predominant due to the shots and focal points chosen by the animated film. Moreover, the medium frontal shot was more recurrent, using a vertical angle in specific scenes. Great examples are the scene in Image 4 — in which a low-angle shot was used to demonstrate the grandeur of the volcano — and the ones in Image 6 and 10 — in which high-angle shots were used to illustrate the desire of emerging of Lele and Uku, respectively.

The modality is widely used in animated films, being part of the scene composition and, interrelating the metafunctions, contributes to the meaning effects intended for the scenes. Thus, numerous examples can be found, such as the color and brightness variation to characterize the difference between the surface (more brightness and in lighter shades of blue), as in Image 9, and the bottom of the ocean (less brightness and in darker shades of blue), as in image 6. The latter is even black at some points, in order to highlight the lava's luminousness. Furthermore, the alteration of colors, luminousness, and brightness, linked to the modification of the volcano and the clouds, is used to illustrate the time elapsed in the narrative, which leads to Uku's extinction, as seen in Images 12, 13, 14 and 15. This sequence is further evidenced by the absence of lyrics in the background song, which, at this point, is composed only by the ukulele.



Image 12 –
The passage of time indication and volcano extinction

Source: Scene at 2:00, from the animated film *Lava* (2015).

Image 13 – The passage of time indication and volcano extinction

Source: Scene at 2:03, from the animated film *Lava* (2015).





Image 14 –
The passage of time indication and volcano extinction

Source: Scene at 2:06, from the animated film *Lava* (2015).

Image 15 – The passage of time indication and volcano extinction

Source: Scene at 2:13, from the animated film *Lava* (2015).



Still on the subject of the modality of images, we list the choices made regarding the composition of the animated film title (Image 16): first, the hot color tones such as yellow, orange, and red, related to lava colors; and the disposition of letters, resembling the shape of a volcano.



Image 16 – The animated film's title

Source: Scene at 0:15, from the animated film *Lava* (2015).

Finally, concerning the compositional metafunctions, which integrates the meaning of the interactive and representational metafunctions, we analyzed the layout of the scenes in order to identify the informational value given to the RPs. The relation between a known and a new information may be exemplified by Uku and Lele's final disposition (Images 8 and 11), as he is the information already known by the IP, on the left, while she is the new information and, therefore, is on the right. Correspondingly, the title appears on the right at the beginning of the animated film (Image 16). In conformity with such aspects, the relation between ideal and real is evidenced by the gazes of the RPs, when, for instance, Uku gazes down and sees the already existent couples, that is, something that is real (Image 4), but gazes up when he wishes he had a partner (Image 5), or when Lele desires to emerge (Image 6), which are representations of the fields of dreams, desire, and imagination. The salience, as well as the modality, works in line with the elements explained above. On the other hand, the frames are used to compose or highlight other elements, such as the island for the heart of foam (Image 9); or Uku, highlighted by the rocks (Image 5) or the lava in a heart shape (Image 10); or even the title, which has the sea as its bottom margin (Image 16).

A DIDACTIC APPROACH TO THE ANIMATED FILM

As mentioned before, from a theoretical perspective, this project aims at articulating the GVD studies, especially in the context of an analytical description of the animated film, and the theories of genres, particularly in the standpoint of the Socio-discursive Interactionism (SDI), which favors the language in a discursive conception, assuming that it is an essential factor for human development (BRONCKART, 2012). Considering that the questions discussed herein are related to the context of language teaching, that the SDI perspective has contributed significantly to the reflection on the teaching-learning processes and based on Bronckart (2012) as well as the Geneva School studies (SCHNEUWLY, DOLZ, 2004; DOLZ, 2013), we believe that such articulation is possible.

Of the many aspects that arise from the SDI perspective in the treatment of genres, this study will focus on the reflection of language capabilities, which can be mobilized and developed from the digital multimodal genres suggested by the National Core Curriculum - BNCC (Base Nacional Comum Curricular, in Portuguese) for the Portuguese language teaching. So, what do we mean, exactly, by the notion of language capabilities inserted in this theoretical framework? Schneuwly and Dolz (2004) explain that they are "aptitudes required of the student for the production of a genre in a specific interaction situation" (p. 52). According to the authors, such capabilities can be briefly defined as: action capabilities (adapting to the characteristics of

the context and referent), discursive capabilities (mobilizing discursive models), and linguistic-discursive capabilities (dominating the psycholinguistic operations and linguistic units).

Cristovão and Stutz (2011) and Cristovão (2013) suggest expanding such categories, proposing the signification capabilities, which unite the ideological, historical, and social fields in a macro sense. In 2016, Vera Lúcia Cristovão's research group (BEATO-CANATO; STUTZ; CRISTOVÃO, 2019) also suggested the semiotic capabilities, referring to "other semiosis, which are not transmitted through the materiality of verbal elements" (LENHARO, 2016). Simultaneously, in another institution, in Lídia Stutz's research group (BEATO-CANATO; STUTZ; CRISTOVÃO, 2019), the concept of digital language capabilities arouse (CACILHO, 2016), covering the virtual environment and the necessary operations to act in such domain, characterized usually, but not exclusively, by multisemiosis.

Naturally, there is a complementary relation among such language capabilities, which are embedded in the way we act socially, and, therefore, should be addressed in the teaching-learning context. That being said, we will emphasize the multisemiotic capabilities to suggest a didactic way of working with the animated film Lava. When creating any proposals/didactic materials, the guiding question should be: "how can the proposed activities potentialize or mediate the development of language skills?" (STUTZ, 2020, n.p.). Ultimately, no matter which genre it is, digital multimodal or not, the goal should not be taking the genre as an object of study in itself, but as a tool that enables the development of knowledge as a whole. The following suggestions would be designed for the analysis of the animated film, considering the metafunctions of the GVD as layers used to expand the text analysis, and, at the same time, taking into consideration the didactic sequence notion⁷ created by the Geneva Group (SCHNEUWLY; DOLZ, 2004; DOLZ, 2013).

Due to the limits of an academic paper, we will objectively present the instructions and their relation with the descriptors of Multisemiotic Language Capabilities - MLC (CMS, or Capacidades de Linguagem Multissemióticas, in Portuguese), as organized by Lenharo (2016, p. 32):

- (1MLC) Understanding the meaning relations between the verbal and non-verbal elements of the genre;
- (2MLC) Collecting the different pieces of knowledge and meanings arising from the sounds, videos, and images;
- (3MLC) Recognizing the importance of non-verbal elements for the construction of meanings;
- (4MLC) Linking non-verbal elements to the macro social context in which they are inserted;
- (5MLC) Understanding the semiotic elements in the genre composition.

We are aware that this theoretical framework can be used to analyze didactic sequences previously elaborated and already in use in classes. However, we are proposing the opposite: thinking about the kinds of questions and activities that can be designed to cover each of the MLCs. We also intend to demonstrate the relation to the metafunctions of the GVD, exemplified above.

The capability 1MLC could be developed through questions such as the following: How do the images represent the actions sequence in the narrative sung through the animated film? Or: Observe the image of the turtles on the beach. What does this image suggest in the story context? To which sentence(s) in the song can the image be related? This approach, for example, can be associated with the analysis proposed by the GVD for the narrative processes of reaction, as demonstrated above by the sequence of scenes in mages 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8.

According to Schneuwly and Dolz (2004, p. 97), a didactic sequence "is a group of school activities arranged, in a systematic way, based on an oral or written textual genre," which aims at helping the students to comprehend the characteristics of a genre. This notion of "sequence" is being revisited by the Geneva Group researchers themselves, who also proposed the term "itinerary", with some adjustments. Other researchers have been giving other denominations to "sequence" lately, but all of them maintain the basic idea of a plan with different stages, according to the learners' needs, aimed towards a gradual approximation to the genre's global context.

The capability 2MLC could be exercised with questions such as the following: In the song that accompanies the animated film, the musical instrument called ukulele is used. Search about the instrument and answer: Do you think its use contributes in any way to situate the story?; or: Which scenes (or sequence of scenes) suggest the narrative's climax?; and even: What image is represented by the foam created by the whales diving and in the lava that raises Uku? This question could work as a reference to the narrative representation of circumstance, as demonstrated by the analysis of Images 9 and 10 and by the GVD.

Following the question above, the student could be requested to explain the relation between the heart shapes formed by the foam created by the whales and in the lava that raises Uku as well as the animated film theme, developing the capability 3MLC. The students could also be asked to describe how the time passing in the volcanoes story is represented in the video and why it was important to emphasize that. For that purpose, we expect that the students relate the cloud movement scenes to the time passing. It is also expected that they understand the passage of time's importance to the narrative due to the period necessary for the volcanoes' formation. Such an answer can be associated with the modality analysis for Images 12, 13, 14, and 15, made possible by the GVD.

In turn, the capability 4MLC could be developed through questions such as the following: Why did the volcano want a partner? What are the social values reflected in the narrative? Or, Why was typography used in that way in the animated film title? These questions are related to the modality theorized by the GVD, as demonstrated by the analysis of Image 16, and to the general meaning comprehended through the interrelation between the three metafunctions (representational, interactive, and compositional). Finally, the capability 5MLC, that could be addressed through reflections connected with the meanings resulting from the sequence of scenes, from the link between them, as the animated film genre is only constituted because there is a narrative illustrated by a sequence of moving images. Based on the GVD, all of the previous analyses can be associated with this multisemiotic capabilities exercise.

It is essential that we keep in mind that exploring more than one multisemiotic capability in each proposed question, as well as establishing a relation to other language capabilities, is always possible. For instance, Lele's identification as a female implies the 3MLC capability, as it is necessary to recognize non-verbal elements, such as the long hair and hair ornaments. It is also required the 4MLC, as those items can be identified due to the macro social context that associates them to the female universe. In summary, this paper proposed paths and possibilities of didactic approaches; however, we reiterate that the boundaries between one capacity and the others are narrow lines, insofar as they are mixed and combined in the meaning construction process.

FINAL REMARKS

On one side of the Portuguese language teaching-learning process, there are the education guiding documents, such as the BNCC (BRAZIL, 2018), which recommend the approach of multisemiotic genres in the classroom, a guideline that has an unquestionable relevance in contemporary times. On the other side, we have the subject teacher, who needs to appropriate the characteristics of such genres in all their dimensions (linguistic-textual and socio-discursive), considering their specificities as multimodal texts, and needs to remodel such knowledge in order to use it as a didactic-pedagogical tool.

Based on an animated film analysis, we expect to have emphasized enough how many benefits the GVD theoretical framework can bring to exploring all the genre's potential, surpassing the image aesthetic and expressive aspects. That, however, does not mean that the teacher must be a "specialist" in the GVD. In this paper, we propose that all the possibilities of expanding language use must be pondered, considering the different semiotic modes that constitute the varied ways of verbal and non-verbal interaction. Throughout

this study, we realized that its results go beyond the idea of merely describing the images; they not only illustrate or contextualize the film, which would be merely at the service of the verbal text but also have their own values, based on which multiple social and cultural meanings may be explored, guiding interpretative paths or text productions more consciously and critically.

The theoretical-methodological principles of SDI also represent an important support so that a multisemiotic genre, in this case, the animated films, may work effectively as a megainstrument for the comprehension and the production of texts, for the development of language capabilities, and especially for the social act through language. This way, we expect to have demonstrated the possible contributions of the GVD and SDI for the use of multimodal genres in the Portuguese language class, especially if we intend to work with both perspectives. Thus, this was a challenging study, as this kind of theoretical dialogue is still new in the literature of the area. Nevertheless, whatever the theoretical basis used, we believe that the teacher who is informed about these specific multimodal genres, already circulating on the Internet, will have the ability to be a good educator, appropriately translating this knowledge for the teaching-learning situations.

Attachment

Lava - I Lava You (James Ford Murphy, 2015)

A long, long time ago There was a volcano Living all alone, in the middle of the sea

He sat high above his bay Watching all the couples play And wishing that, he had someone too

And from his lava came, this song of hope That he sang out loud Everyday, for years and years

I have a dream, I hope will come true
That you're here with me, and I'm here with you
I wish that the earth
S, sea, the sky up above
Will send me someone to lava

Years of singing all alone, turned his lava into stone Until, he was on the brink of extinction But little did he know, that living in the sea below

Another volcano was listening to his song Everyday she heard his tune, her lava grew and grew Because, she believed, his song was meant for her

Now she was so ready to meet him above the sea As he sang his song of hope for the last time

I have a dream, I hope will come true That you're here with me, and I'm here with you I wish that the earth, sea, the sky up above Rising from the sea below, stood a lovely volcano Looking all around but she could not see him He tried to sing to let her know

That she was not, there alone But with no lava his song was so gone He filled the sea, with his tears

And watched his dreams, disappear As she, remembered what his song meant to her

I have a dream, I hope will come true
That you're here with me, and I'm here with you
I wish that the earth, sea, the sky up above
Will send me someone to lava

Oh they were so happy To finally meet above the sea All together now, their lava grew and grew

No longer are they all alone, with aloha as their new home And when you visit them, this is what they sing

I have a dream, I hope will come true
That you'll grow old with me, and I'll grow old with you
We thank the earth, sea, the sky we thank too
I lava you
I lava you
I lava you
I lava you

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