

Speech in Curricular Reference Documents

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Abstract:

The main purpose of this article is to analyse the curricular reference documents used for teaching Portuguese in Portugal in order to determine the teaching perspective of speech that is conveyed by them. To this end, it will begin by proposing a conceptualisation of the spoken text as a multimodal reality formed by the verbal, paraverbal and non-verbal planes, which is materialised in each textual genre, and therefore involves a given communicative situation. Next, based on the reading of *Aprendizagens Essenciais* [Essential Learning] (PORTUGAL, 2018), the elements that the document associates with spoken competence will be identified, so as to better understand how official documents conceptualise speech, and which constituent planes/elements of the spoken text are explicitly aimed at the development of the knowledge, skills and attitudes considered. The analysis of these aspects will prove that, although speech is assumed to be a central competence of the curriculum, the documents in question do not consider all its elements. They do not foresee certain aspects in a systematic fashion and do not consider evolving the scope of its approach to the didactic context.

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INTRODUCTION

The central aim of this article is to identify the oral vision underlying the most prominent curricular reference documents in the Portuguese education system: *Aprendizagens Essenciais* [Essential Learning] (PORTUGAL, 2018) and *Perfil dos Alunos à Saída do Ensino Obrigatório* [Student Profile Upon Compulsory Education Completion] (MARTINS, 2017), with a focus on the 2nd and 3rd cycles of the education system¹.

This essay is based on the framework of socio-discursive interactionism (BRONCKART, 1996), not to mention the research developed around the speaking didactics of the education system (COLOGNESI; DOLZ, 2017; DOLZ; SCHNEUWLY, 2004; MARQUES, 2010, 2017, 2019, 2022a, 2022b; MARQUES; BARBEIRO, 2022). As such, it will begin by proposing a concept for speech that is associated with a possibility of didactic conceptualisation, which has in mind the definition of the teachable dimensions of speaking. Secondly, an analysis of the texts of *Aprendizagens Essenciais* (PORTUGAL, 2018) aimed at the various grades of the 2nd and 3rd cycles of the education system will follow, so as to identify the speaking elements that are foreseen. This will allow the study of the spoken conception that underlies curricular reference documents and the oral didactics model promoted by them.

The results of the analysis here described aim to pave the way for an evolution of the method conceived for speaking education, alongside the definition of the contents needed for oral didactics. This will be the first step towards promoting a reflection around the possibility of teaching speaking based on a concept of progression that involves different oral aspects.

1. FROM THE CONCEPT OF SPEECH TO ITS CONCEPTUALISATION IN SCHOOLS

Speech is a complex reality with a multimodal nature, which results from the conjunction of the non-verbal, paraverbal and verbal axes, and is characterised by its immediacy, immateriality and ephemerality. As such, the phenomenon of spoken production has an intricate complexion, which brings added difficulties to its description, because, in fact, the reality of a spoken production implies a communication that takes place in several dimensions: the non-verbal plane includes kinaesthetic aspects such as gesture, look, facial expression, posture or clothing, and other aspects related to proxemics; in the paraverbal plane, there are elements such as intonation, emphasis, diction, rhythm, intensity or pauses; the verbal plane, which contemplates the oral text with all its structuring elements.

We must also bear in mind that each text is a communicative unit (BRONCKART, 2003, p. 139) and that speaking is communicating (DOLZ; SHNEUWLY, 2004, p. 12). This implies that, beyond the planes already mentioned, a spoken production also involves aspects of a social, cultural and historical nature, which establish a close relationship with the concrete communicative situation, involving the participants, the communicative intention or the circumstances of communication (AMOR, 2006). For this reason, it may be pertinent to

¹ In Portugal, compulsory education includes four stages of education: the first cycle (which contains four years of schooling), the second cycle (which contains two years), the third cycle (which contains 3 years), and high school (which contains 3 years). Students enrol the first cycle when they are 6 years old.

consider spoken productions within the framework of socio-discursive interactionism, which views language as a phenomenon marked by the diversity and complexity of different practices, which generates various kinds of texts. As Bronckart states,

[...] la production de tout texte s'inscrit dans le cadre de l'activité d'une formation sociale, et plus précisément dans le cadre d'une forme d'interaction communicative impliquant les mondes social (normes, valeurs, règles, etc.) et subjectif (image que l'on donne de soi en agissant). [the production of all texts is inserted in the practice framework of social education and, more precisely, in the framework of a form of communicative interaction that joins the social (norms, values, rules, etc.) and subjective (the image that we have of ourselves) realms.] (BRONCKART, 2003, p. 96).

It is also fundamental to ascertain the conceptualisation behind spoken education when considering speech in a school context. On one hand, this might be perceived as supporting a classroom communication that allows teachers to pass on knowledge, deliver tasks, clarify any doubts and ask more questions, thus regulating verbal interaction. When speech is seen from such a point, it is not a teaching-learning dimension: there is no teaching, and therefore no evaluation. This modality of speaking uses it as a way to present contents from the literary or grammatical dimensions and to verify if the learning goals have been met. On the other hand, there is a distinct concept that might correspond to another way of describing speech in schools, because it identifies it as an object of study aimed at developing the spoken communication competence of all students (COLOGNESI; DOLZ, 2017).

The school can, therefore, see speech from two perspectives: given that each student learns to speak autonomously, without the need for formalised teaching, the school should only assess; or, given that each student will need formal teaching on all the different spoken aspects, they should be assumed as an object of study as well.

The perspectives above mentioned also require an established distinction between the concept of informal speech and formal speech (MARQUES, 2010, 2022a; MARQUES; BARBEIRO, 2022).

The former is used in a wide variety of contexts, from family and friendship circles to more informal professional and business relationships. Informal speech is characterised by its spontaneity, ephemerality and transience, by successive exchanges within a timeline, as well as the interlocutors' presence in a given shared space and time (VILÀ I SANTASUSANA, 2005). Textual products of an informal nature show lack of planning and result from a spontaneous formulation, often in a situation of discursive interaction *in praesentia*. Formal spoken text is different by definition, because it is based on a planned effort to approach a specific topic, content, organisation, lexical selection, grammatical issue, among other parameters of textuality. The degree of formality, in this context, is associated with the textual genre involved and its production context.

Because of the above-mentioned characteristics, formal speech constitutes the domain that can effectively be taught (COLOGNESI; DOLZ, 2017) and, therefore, fully assessed (MARQUES, 2022a).

2. SPEECH IN CURRICULAR REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Currently, in Portugal, *Aprendizagens Essenciais* (PORTUGAL, 2018) is the curricular reference document used for the teaching of Portuguese in a non-university context. It is a document organized by year of education, from 1st to 12th grade, thus including the four teaching cycles that structure the route of compulsory education in the country. Furthermore, the analysis of *Aprendizagens Essenciais* is intertwined with *Perfil dos alunos à saída da escolaridade obrigatória* (MARTINS, 2017), which is a document that has the purpose of “contributing to the curricular structure and management, as well as defining the strategies, methodologies and pedagogical-didactic procedures to be used during the teaching practice” (MARTINS, 2017, p. 8).

In this article, we will look at the sections of *Aprendizagens Essenciais* which are aimed at the 2nd and 3rd cycles of education, so as to identify the concept of speech presented and analyse the teaching-learning process guideline proposed by them.

First and foremost, it is important to mention that *Aprendizagens Essenciais* consider the development of competences in the area of both oral and written expression and production to be a central concept of the Portuguese subject. In the introductory text of the document, this perspective is portrayed as fundamental for personal and social development (MARTINS, 2017, p. 1-2). We stand before a notion that implies some change in the current teaching practice, since it places writing and speaking on the same level of importance. As such, it is a position that breaks the established education system that is fundamentally based on writing, which is a guideline that has governed the school for an exceptionally long time.

The path towards the recognition of the importance of teaching speaking skills was slowly paved by the different curricular documents that have been governing the teaching of Portuguese: from the *Programa de Língua Portuguesa* [Portuguese Language Program] (PORTUGAL, 1991) to the *Programa de Português de Ensino Básico* [Portuguese Program for Basic Education] (REIS, 2009), not to mention the *Programa e Metas Curriculares de Português do Ensino Básico* [Curricular Program and Objectives of Portuguese for Basic Education] (BUESCU *et al.*, 2015). The different curricular guideline documents include the domain of listening and speaking skills, and, over time, they have shown the option of giving it an increasingly central place in the students' education program. Moreover, although oral expression was already present in previous curricular documents mentioned, the most recent texts are, in a more effective and visible way, answering to a growing call for the teaching of formal speech by didactics, besides recognizing the importance of speaking skills in the social plan.

The affirmation in favour of speech's nuclear importance throughout education is also included in *Perfil dos alunos à saída da escolaridade obrigatória* (MARTINS, 2017), within the area of skills related to *Linguagens e Textos* [Languages and Texts], where it is assumed to be fundamental for students to be able to "master core skills of comprehension and expression in oral, written, visual and multimodal modalities" (MARTINS, 2017, p. 21). This enshrines the importance of these various areas for personal and social development and for the exercise of an active, critical and conscious citizenship - principles which are also proposed in the introductory texts of *Aprendizagens Essenciais* (PORTUGAL, 2018). These documents also govern the didactic action that develops specific communication skills, something which allows students 'a safe participation in «language games»' (*Aprendizagens Essenciais*, 2.º ciclo, 2018; *Aprendizagens Essenciais*, 3.º ciclo, 2018).

Besides this, *Aprendizagens Essenciais* (PORTUGAL, 2018, p. 2) states that formal speech is the domain that the scope of teaching-learning action should follow. This idea becomes very clear when, in the introductory texts, they refer to the 'formal contexts of communication'. It is of fundamental importance to clearly state the guideline that the didactics of spoken education should follow, as it allows to move away from teaching informal speech in a formal teaching context, thus pointing, rather, to the teaching of a reflected, planned and intentional speech (MARQUES, 2022a, 2022b).

As the introductory text narrows down the concepts and skills to be worked on, it becomes clear that the textual dimension of the spoken language is the main focus, to the detriment of the paralinguistic and non-verbal dimensions. The centrality attributed to text may be due to the hegemony that writing continues to hold, not only in the practices built by tradition, but also in the curricular documents themselves, despite the evolution observed in the growing importance of speech in the reference documents (MARQUES, 2022b). Because of this, it is important to be aware that an excessive attention to the textual domain of speech may lead to the belief that formal speech is the result of an expressive reading of a written text.

Formal speech will have to be understood as a formality *continuum* ranging from the maximum degree of informality, which, for example, is present in a conversational interaction in a family setting, to the maximum degree of formality, which frequently occurs, for instance, in the academic context, in which the author chooses to read the text to ensure maximum accuracy and quality of their oral presentation (VILÀ I SANTASUSANA, 2005).

Expressive reading, as we understand it, is important in a school context, but it should be associated with reading competence development processes and should not be confused with the general strategies used for the presentation of a spoken text. There are many possibilities tied with formal speaking which do not involve the reading of a written text, but only the mobilisation of an organising plan of ideas. All these spoken

variables must be developed in the teaching-learning context. The weight given to the spoken text must be adjusted to the communicative situation in question and it has to be developed alongside other oral dimensions. Because of the line of reasoning presented above regarding speaking didactics, we believe that it would be useful for a curricular reference text to make these concepts explicit, and consider these differences, given the potential impact that a document such as this has on the teaching practice. The perspective proposed by this article becomes even more important if take into account that speaking education does not have a didactic memory that teachers can adopt and adjust to the syllabus in Portugal (MARQUES, 2010, 2022b). As such, the practice is often oriented towards the recovery of established didactic knowledge. This may justify the fact that, in Portugal, the promotion of oral expression is often associated with the reading of literary texts, which is clear in activities such as the presentation of classic works read after signing a reading contract with the students.

The conception of the type of speech that should be developed in the school context is completed by adding the concept of genre. *Aprendizagens Essenciais* (PORTUGAL, 2018) highlights the importance of knowing different textual genres, given that it is as a tool that allows students to participate in different communicative situations, which is evident, for example, in the document aimed at the 7th grade, which states: “spoken competence (interpretation and expression) is based on texts/discourses of appropriate genres for communicative purposes, such as state, inform, narrate, describe, express feelings and persuade” (PORTUGAL, 2018, p. 3). Note that the description given in the document under analysis does not correspond to a specific concrete genre of social reality, but rather to communicative purposes. In Table 1, the communicative purposes mentioned in the curricular reference documents concerning the different grades of the 2nd and 3rd cycles of education are shown:

Table 1 - Communicative purposes noted in *Aprendizagens Essenciais* [Essential Learning] of the 2nd and 3rd cycles (Ministério da Educação, 2018, p. 3).

	5th grade	6th grade	7th grade	8th grade	9th grade
State	•	•	•	•	•
Inform		•	•		
Explain				•	•
Narrate	•	•	•		
Describe		•	•		
Justify an opinion	•				
Argue		•			•
Persuade			•		
Give opinions				•	
Critical appreciation		•			
Express feelings			•		

Source: written by the author (2023).

The designations used in the introductory texts of *Aprendizagens Essenciais* (PORTUGAL, 2018) for the different learning grades do not correspond exactly to a given textual typology. However, it is possible to establish a link between these communicative purposes and, for example, the types of textual sequences advocated by Adam’s proposition (ADAM, 2001), which states that ‘l’unité “texte” est beaucoup trop complexe et bien hétérogène pour présenter des régularités linguistiquement observables et codifiables, du moins à ce niveau trop élevé des textes’ [‘the unit «text» is far too complex and heterogeneous to present linguistically

observable and codifiable regularities, at least in these high level texts'] (ADAM, 2001, p. 27). This quote justifies the choice of defining a typology based on the notion of textual sequence, which integrates five types of sequences: narrative, descriptive, argumentative, explanatory (or expository) and dialogical.

Table 2 highlights the link that can be established between the communicative purposes expressed in *Aprendizagens Essenciais* (PORTUGAL, 2018) and the typology proposed by Adam (2001):

Table 2 - Communicative purposes of *Aprendizagens Essenciais* (Ministério da Educação, 2018) vs Adam's typology for textual sequences.

Adam typology	<i>Aprendizagens Essenciais</i> [Essential Learning]	5th grade	6th grade	7th grade	8th grade	9th grade
Explanatory sequence	Exposition	●	●	●	●	●
	Inform		●	●		
	Explain				●	●
Narrative sequence	Narrate	●	●	●		
Explanatory sequence	Describe		●	●		
Argumentative sequence	Defend an opinion	●				
	Argue		●			●
	Persuade			●		
	Give opinions				●	
	Critical appreciation		●			
?	Express feelings			●		

Source: written by the author (2023).

As it is possible to conclude from Table 2, the introductory text of *Aprendizagens Essenciais* (PORTUGAL, 2018) foresees the development of spoken texts that fall within most of the textual sequences envisaged by Adam (2001). The dialogical sequence is the only one that does not appear to be explicitly linked to one of the communicative purposes, although it can be used to support the development of items such as 'defend an opinion' or 'persuade'. The lack of clarification over dialogue may also show that the contents of *Aprendizagens Essenciais* (PORTUGAL, 2018) mainly focus on the development of monologue texts, which, in fact, corresponds to the nature of many formal spoken texts. There is still one doubt left by the categorisation of the purpose which is stated as 'expressing feelings', which can be realised through different textual sequences.

The need to concretise communicative purposes is, in our opinion, fundamental in the teaching-learning process of speaking because it is fundamental that teachers are able to identify the teachable dimensions of speaking, which may be explored in class and should contribute to a clear path of development of the public speaking competence. For this reason, the process of associating communicative purposes to textual sequences is useful, as it will allow, in the didactic framework, the identification of models of compositional structure to be followed when the teaching-learning process verses the study, for example, of the text plan (ADAM, 2001, p. 43).

In its speaking section, *Aprendizagens Essenciais* (PORTUGAL, 2018, p. 5) declares the 'Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes' that should be a part of of the teaching-learning process development. Table 3 shows the data for each school grade of the 2nd and 3rd cycles.

Table 3 - ‘Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes’ proposed by *Aprendizagens Essenciais* (Ministério da Educação, 2018).

	5th grade	6th grade	7th grade	8th grade	9th grade
Exposition	•				
Essential information (paraphrase, summarise)		•			
Oral presentation			•	•	•
Explain				•	
Retelling	•				
Report		•			
Describe		•			
Take a stance	•				
Opinions		•		•	•
Argue		•			
Viewpoints			•		
Critical appreciation		•			•
Debate					•

Source: written by the author (2023).

Table 3 shows that the terminological choice of this curricular document does not follow a single criterion. Indeed, if, at certain times, textual genres such as the report or the retelling, among others, are shown; at other times, the expressions used seem to point to classroom activities, as evidenced by the segment ‘Make oral presentations to present themes, ideas and opinions’ (PORTUGAL, 2018, p. 5). In this document, expressions such as ‘taking a stance’, ‘opinions’, ‘argue’, and ‘points of view’ are also present, which may not clearly express a given textual genre.

The option of explicitly and generally identifying the spoken genres in a curricular reference document would be preferable for several reasons. Firstly, because genre invokes a given communicative situation (BRONCKART, 1996, p. 137-138), which, in schools, can be replicated naturally or recreated in an artificial way². Secondly, because certain conditions have to be met for the production of real texts in schools, so that they may possess a given internal organization, respect certain formal aspects and fulfil a given perlocutionary effect, according to the assumption of a given social role by the speaker and the audience to whom the spoken text is intended (SILVA, 2012, p. 81). It is in this scope that the notion of genre is operative because it is directly associated with a real text (MIRANDA, 2010, p. 85).

Given what was mentioned above, it is important that teachers, at the moment of didactic transposition of curricular texts, proceed to the identification of spoken genres that may answer to the purposes enounced by these documents. As Schneuwly (2004, p. 28) argues, genres are ‘mega-instruments, with a stabilized configuration of several semiotic subsystems (mainly linguistic and paralinguistic)’.

We consider the explicitness of the genres in curricular reference texts to be fundamental because teachers are not always in possession of the instruments that allow them to clearly identify the teachable dimensions of speaking. As Dolz and Schneuwly (2004, p. 50) assert,

² The notion of school game is a recreational proposal of the genre. In a teaching-learning context, by associating it to certain communicative situations, with a given objective, and involving specific discursive roles (MARQUES, 2010, p. 110-121).

If, for grammatical activities, teachers have a precise description of the knowledge that students must acquire at each grade, for written and oral expression activities, in which the knowledge to be acquired is infinitely more complex, they have had to make do with very summary indications. It is as if the ability to produce texts is considered to be a skill that schools must encourage in order to facilitate learning, but which is fundamentally born and developed spontaneously, without being able to be taught systematically.

Because of the above mentioned, it would be important for curricular reference documents to describe the guidelines of the speaking teaching-learning process, at least in the speaking domain (excluding here other domains).

One of those guidelines is, in short, the definition of the textual genres that should be used by the teaching practice. These genres earned their importance, because they may be adopted as didactic instruments that facilitate the study of the content aspect (concerning what is intended to be communicated) of textual structure (associated to the typical text plan of a given genre), as well as the specific configuration of linguistic units (that is tied with the enunciative position of the speaker, conveyed by the way they speak, or the construction or lexicon selection, among other aspects) (DOLZ; SCHNEUWLY, 2009, p. 65).

In Table 4, we present a possible interpretation of the documents, with the aim of associating the mentions made to certain textual genres, susceptible of explicitly being developed in a school context.

Table 4 - Articulation of the ‘Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes’ proposed by *Aprendizagens Essenciais* (Ministério da Educação, 2018) with genres.

	Spoken Genres	5th grade	6th grade	7th grade	8th grade	9th grade
Exposition	Oral presentation	●				
Oral presentation	Lecture			●	●	●
Explain	Communication				●	
Essential information (paraphrase, summarise)	Paraphrase Summary		●			
Describe	Exposition Retelling Report		●			
Retelling	Retell a written work	●				
Report	Report experiences		●			
			●			
Take a stance	Critical text	●				
Opinions	Discussion of ideas		●		●	●
Argue	Argumentative dialogue		●			
Viewpoints	Critical appreciation			●		
Critical appreciation	Debate		●			●
Debate						●

Source: written by the author (2023).

Aprendizagens Essenciais (PORTUGAL, 2018) consider genre to be a guiding instrument of didactic action. However, as we have seen, the notion of textual genre involves several dimensions beyond the textual plane, such as the communicative situation, the interlocutors or the communicative goal (BRONCKART, 1996). In light of this conceptualisation, it is important to assess which aspects associated with genre are considered by the curricular reference documents. Table 5 describes the aspects considered in *Aprendizagens Essenciais* (PORTUGAL, 2018) throughout the five school years taken, which are here used as a sample.

Table 5 - Constituents of the genre foreseen by *Aprendizagens Essenciais* (2018).

		5th grade	6th grade	7th grade	8th grade	9th grade
Elements of the communicative situation	Purpose Communicative goal	•	•	•		
	Communicative intention				•	
	Addressees			•		

Source: written by the author (2023).

Given the earlier table, we can conclude that genre is developed in an oscillating way throughout the students' learning path, because, although *Aprendizagens Essenciais* (PORTUGAL, 2018) considers that all skills should be systematically resumed, the reality is that teachers will always pay more attention to the skills mentioned in each grade. If the purpose/objective of communication is present in three of the five grades (or in four of the five years, if we consider that communicative intention is equivalent to a communicative objective), the same is not true for the mention made to the interlocutors of spoken discourse (only mentioned in the 7th grade). Furthermore, the text makes no reference to the communicative situation.

However, we know that when there is no definition of a communication situation, students tend to assume by default the classroom situation, associating it to an assessment context that leads them to direct the text to only one interlocutor: the teacher. This reality justifies, in part, the monotony that characterizes the communicative situation expressed by the texts that students end up presenting in a school context, as well as the difficulty in mobilizing strategies to adapt spoken text to the audience and the diversified objectives (MARQUES, 2010, p. 107-121).

In addition to the aspects mentioned above, the crucial importance given to the text in the preparation of speaking activities may lead to neglecting the domains that are structural in the preparation of the spoken text and which directly interfere in the different planes of the spoken text, thus relegating them to a lower level.

Finally, we still must try to understand how *Aprendizagens Essenciais* (2018) sees the paraverbal and non-verbal planes. Table 6 shows the distribution of mentions to these planes over the two education cycles in Portugal mentioned:

Table 6 - Paraverbal and non-verbal planes in *Aprendizagens Essenciais* (2018).

		5th grade	6th grade	7th grade	8th grade	9th grade
Non-verbal	Body posture	•				
	Facial expression	•				
	Look	•				•
	Gesture					
Paraverbal	Clarity	•				•
	Volume	•				
	Voice tone	•				
Non-verbal resources					•	•

Source: written by the author (2023).

As this table demonstrates, the reference made to the different non-verbal/paraverbal components is concentrated mainly in the 5th grade and is omitted throughout the remaining years of the 2nd and 3rd cycles. In the 9th grade, only the look, which belongs to the non-verbal plan, and clarity, in the voice's scope (paraverbal plan) are mentioned. It should also be noted that gestures are not explicitly considered in these teaching cycles.

Although it is known that the abilities, knowledge and attitudes foreseen in *Aprendizagens Essenciais* (PORTUGAL, 2018) should be used throughout and between the teaching cycles, the non-reference to these elements in various grades (or in some of them) seems to contribute to their loss of relevance the curriculum. In contrast, there is great importance attributed to the planning of spoken text in *Aprendizagens Essenciais* (PORTUGAL, 2018), which is shown by the fact that it mentions it throughout all grades of the two cycles considered here, compared to the importance given to other plans, which are mentioned intermittently. This situation seems to confirm a conception of speech that continues to give more importance to the text, which ultimately conveys an incomplete notion of the oral, which, as already stated, is a multimodal reality that results from the significant interaction between its different constituent planes.

The omission of the non-verbal and paraverbal planes evidenced by the text *Aprendizagens Essenciais* (PORTUGAL, 2018) does not guide towards a process of identification of teachable contents that considers all its spoken dimensions (MARQUES, 2022b), and risks contributing to guide the didactic action towards conferring an almost exclusive importance to the text plan, thus neglecting the other spoken dimensions that should be equally worked on.

CONCLUSION

In Portugal, the current curricular reference documents present speech as a domain and a competence that should be developed in the same framework as writing or reading. The importance of speech is also confirmed by the guidelines of *Perfil dos Alunos à Saída do Ensino Obrigatório* (MARTINS, 2017). These documents show a positive evolution in the way the curriculum has been conceiving the teaching of speech in the school context.

Nevertheless, the analysis proposed in the present article made clear that there are some aspects that still need to be worked on in order to promote a more effective and balanced didactic work, which is conducive to a full development of the students' ability to speak in public and a broader promotion of the spoken competences. First of all, it seems clear that it is important to consider speaking as a reality dependent on the concrete situation of communication (BRONCKART, 1996). In this context, the explicit use of the notion of genre allows teachers the possibility of creating communicative situations, real or simulated, which involve the definition of the participants, their communicative purpose and the reality in which the spoken text is presented.

It was also clear that the constitutive elements of the non-verbal and paraverbal planes should be mentioned throughout the various grades of schooling, and it may be pertinent to promote a study of progression in this scope, which will lead to the explicitness of concrete and different elements throughout the various grades of schooling, in order to allow a specific and more effective work around these different aspects.

The didactic reference documents in Portugal show that half of the way towards the didactics of spoken language is already paved, but there are still a lot of stones to lay and a long way to go, both in terms of curricular design and didactic practice.

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