

Didactics of Orality: an Interview with Professor Joaquim Dolz

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INITIAL REMARKS

The main purpose of this interview is to present topics concerning orality and its teaching through a dialogue with the pioneer and scholar in the field of Language Didactics, Professor Joaquim Dolz.

Joaquim Dolz¹ has worked for many years as a Full Professor at the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences at the University of Geneva, Switzerland, in the field of Language Didactics and teacher training. He continues to research language development, and the process of teaching and learning languages, and to direct the GRAFE-FORENDIF group (Recherche pour l'Analyse du Français Enseigné et Formation des Enseignants en Didactique du Français). Since the 1980s, he has been researching language development and language teaching and learning from the perspective of Sociodiscursive Interactionism (SDI). In his research, he



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has analyzed the development of didactic work with orality and oral textual genres in the classroom. He ended up becoming a reference (also) in Brazil and Portugal in studies in this area, collaborating on many occasions with researchers on orality teaching.

During an interaction mediated by the Google Meet platform, the Professor's responses were recorded and, below, we present the respective transcription of each intervention.

A DIALOGUE WITH MASTER JOAQUIM DOLZ: TOWARDS A DIDACTICS OF ORALITY

Interviewers: As one of the central figures in the construction of Oral Didactics, mother tongue, and foreign language, could you summarize the history of this area, highlighting some of its main phases/stages, especially those related to oral genres?

Joaquim Dolz: The Didactics of Languages has a relatively recent history, if compared to Linguistics. In the case of French, the work on Didactics of French as a Foreign Language is older than that on Didactics of French as a First (or Mother) Language. It is in the late 1960s that they begin. But, in our case, it began in 1980.

We were – and still are – committed to building an academic discipline linked to the teaching and learning of languages (like the teaching and learning, for example, of the Portuguese language). Now, the Didactics of the Portuguese Language is a discipline in which not only linguists participate, but also psycholinguists and sociolinguists, because there are interdisciplinary aspects. Even so, there is a very clear goal: to analyze the phenomena of teaching and learning a particular language, such as the Portuguese language. However, the teaching and learning phenomena of several languages can also be analyzed when there is a plurilingual project at school or when one moves from one language to another. It is true that, in the case of foreign languages, authors have always realized the importance of developing oral expression, with specific methodologies to help students develop it. Nevertheless, in the case of first languages, the devices for teaching and working on oral expression and comprehension came very late, since, for a long time, the priority of the school had been centered on literacy and, more specifically, on a vision of literacy centered on writing.

The change becomes radical from the last century until today. First, because curricula now have much clearer goals about the teaching and learning of orality. Second, because the work on literacy itself went a long way fine tuning how the *transition* from orality to writing is being carried out, also exploring the need to have a certain mastery in oral expression to be able to start working on writing, identifying which skills were to be mastered. Furthermore, Psycholinguistics and works on written language acquisition provided many elements of the continuity of oral expression from the youngest to the oldest. Research carried out has also showed the influence, on the one hand, of the mastery of oral skills for the development of writing, and, on the other hand, of how the mastery of writing could take on an algebraic role and prepare for orality. The impact can thus occur in both directions.

Since you are particularly interested in argumentative genres, I will give you an example in this field to see what kind of interactions can be produced. We might be working with a group of students in preparation for an oral debate; and we might ask students to make lists of arguments, take notes, read articles on the topic, etc. Here we have a transition from writing to speaking. In addition, even before students participate in a public oral debate, they can prepare themselves with written interventions or note-taking. In this case, we already have writing at the service of orality. And, probably, perhaps the act of writing helps to prepare for orality. However, the opposite can also be true. Participating in a debate on a societal issue can also help in the preparation of an oral dissertation. This was, then, and in fact, a very new aspect: the study of these interrelationships from a multilingual perspective of speaking, in the sense of exploring oral production activities as preparation for writing activities of similar genres or vice versa. In my case, I have also done some work that showed that writing could help improve listening comprehension, that is, if you participate in writing an argumentation, afterward, when you listen to an oral debate, you have a different level of comprehension, thanks to the fact that you have gone through writing. Therefore, by knowing the specificities of orality and writing, we also have a clearer view of what they are, of the circulation and abilities between one and the other, and that they are

different because when we work on an oral text genre, we are working on different dimensions. Let's remember that "oral", etymologically, derives from the Latin "os, oris", with the meaning of "mouth"; and, indeed, it implies not only the mouth but also the body, in general, involving many dimensions. From this derives all the work on phonetics, phonology, and the organization of oral speech, among others, that help to better understand all the genre-specific characteristics.

Generally speaking, I would say that from the 1980s onwards, and in every country, there has been a change in the perspective of language teaching. The dominant perspective from the late 1970s or early 1980s was the communicative perspective, in which, to teach a language, the most important thing was to develop communicative functioning. In writing, it would be reading and writing; and, in speaking, understanding and producing oral texts. In the case of comprehension, our finding was that many of those who have comprehension problems when reading a text, when moving to a formal, and complex oral text – such as a report about volcanoes, dinosaurs, about a scientific topic, etc. – could also have comprehension problems. And, *therefore*, perhaps the school could work *more rigorously and finely* on the reception, listening, understanding, and interpreting of oral discourses (speeches). In the case of production, it would be the kind of work suitable to all levels. Considering school kids, the work with informal genres would be relevant. But, in the case of the School of Geneva, our proposals are much more focused on working with formal text genres.

When we wrote the book *Pour un enseignement de l'oral: Initiation aux genres formels à l'école* (DOLZ; SCHNEUWLY, 2016) in 1998 – a work that resulted from collective work with teachers in Switzerland –, we called for more systematic work on orality. One *that clarified what objects* could be taught. And I think that, at that time, this was an absolute novelty. At the same time – even without knowing us – Luiz Antônio Marcuschi began to be particularly concerned with clarifying the characteristics of the oral and the orality and the relationship between writing and orality. It was this kind of work that we were doing in Switzerland.

Interviewers: What place does orality have in the school and the society of the 21st century?

Joaquim Dolz: As we know, school has always developed mainly to teach reading and writing, even though school work has also always involved orality. However, the goals and contents were not always very clear. That is why, in this context, some people refer to the work on orality as a UVO (Unidentified Verbal Object). And I corroborate this idea since I consider that school has always corrected the uses of oral expression of the students according to a norm that has historically been the norm of writing, without recognizing that the norms of use of orality do not coincide with the norms of use of writing. Moreover, in the past, teachers' work consisted more in letting students develop their orality through the linguistic bath provided to them by school's practices – as a specific discourse community – and certain contents of orality with very precise goals were not worked on, at least in a finer way.

In this sense, there has been a huge change in the last thirty years regarding the teaching of orality in the classroom. A distinction should be made between the teaching of foreign languages or second languages, in which aspects of the teaching of orality were more developed, and the teaching of a language as a mother tongue. And in the case of the Portuguese language, the verbal activity of the class was in Portuguese and even the Amerindian children learned the Portuguese language with this linguistic bath that they received at school. We also have the case of the immigrants who came from Europe, at the beginning of the last century, and who, also by immersion, at school and in the streets, also learned the Portuguese language. However, the concrete goals and the specific objects of work were intuitive, not the object of more systematic work. Fortunately, this reality is now a thing of the past.

In short, the native language teacher used to make an intuitive evaluation based on the norms of writing, revealing some prejudice against a student's voice. In general, this teacher would not seek to acknowledge language skills already demonstrated by students, starting from them in language teaching, taking into consideration the students' voices and their possible contributions.

I think that this teacher's work consisted more in calling for – and using – the so-called standard norm, but with often prejudiced comments about the students' regional speech – which was visible through

observation and analysis of the classroom practices themselves. This issue of popular registers was, in fact, quite problematic, because there was already a part of the students who considered that their speech was not appropriate for school and that it was marginalized in contrast to other social classes that already had a speech recognized by the school institution or considered as closer to the standards required by it.

However, regardless of these factors, when a teacher was asked what work he or she did on orality, the answers always included the following aspects: it was working with orality based on writing, including the recitation of poems and the staging of plays, but always with writing being used to contextualize the orality.

In Switzerland, the only traditional school genre that used to be worked on systematically was the speech. It was an oral presentation that tended to be prepared by the students in their respective homes. So, when we started to work in this field, we were concerned, first of all, with identifying the needs revealed by the school, to be able to give more impetus to the oral language.

Interviewers: Why is the teaching of orality so relevant?

Joaquim Dolz: I could summarize as follows some of the main arguments to defend the teaching of orality in the classroom.

Firstly, when students arrive at school, it is true that they already speak, but many of these students – especially the younger ones – only speak a familiar variety (an idiolect). Now, in the classroom, working with orality allows one not only to move from the oral variety of the families – which is more regional – to the variety of the school's discourse community but also to learn to communicate both with one's learners and with other schoolmates.

Secondly, in Switzerland, we are in a context where 40% or 50% of the students in the canton of Geneva are not from French-speaking families. They are from families from different countries around the world. The concern about the development of orality thus became more relevant, because the transition from a family language to the language of schooling required work on orality.

The third – and perhaps most important – argument would be based on the development process of speaking itself. At the age of five or six, when you enter school, you have a certain mastery of orality. However, we can continue to develop our oral expression and comprehension throughout our lives. In addition, we can also work on developing oral communication either for students or, specifically, for teachers. In this regard, we can highlight, in our research, work in which we have participated in adult training. For example, legal training with genres used in court by magistrates to make a defense or a text of argumentative criticism. We have also worked on developing teacher oral communication. There are many more possibilities. After all, there are text genres linked to the most diverse professions or the most diverse spheres of a particular activity in which we can continue to promote the development of orality in adults.

A fourth important argument concerns the need for work on formal oral text genres. After all, there is confusion – and Marcuschi also analyzed the problem in the same way – between spontaneous orality with informal oral text genres (such as talking to an adult in the cafeteria or talking to one's father and mother) and more formal genres that a citizen also has to master, such as giving an oral presentation, participating in a debate, conducting an interview, among many other genres, *in which* public speaking has a more formal addressee. Now, mastering formal oral genres is also important for students to achieve a good level of education.

In general, for this set of reasons, we believe that an analysis of the teachers' practices is important, since, after all, precise work on orality used to be always limited and difficult to understand. In this way, through new research, knowledge will be built, and this will favor the emergence of new devices – such as new didactic sequences and new didactic itineraries – to develop orality.

Interviewers: Knowing that the so-called School of Geneva, which Professor Joaquim represents here today, has developed very pioneering work in this field, what are the great schools that you would highlight, along with their main actions, in the field of the Didactics of Orality?

Joaquim Dolz: I would say that there are three major schools, in the French-speaking tradition.

In the first school, it is argued that, to learn orality, the important thing is to have activities and pedagogical projects that develop it. We all agree with this idea. We believe that as many oral communication situations as possible should be created to allow students to practice and develop orality. The slogan of such a school would be “Oral expression is developed by practicing orality”. The recitation of poems, precisely, by reciting poems. It was a novelty at its time because previously little had been done regarding communicative situations. Now there are many projects about multiple oral situations.

The second school is the School of Geneva, which I represent today, not only with Bernard Schneuwly but also with the whole team that worked for the book *Pour un enseignement de l'oral: Initiation aux genres formels à l'école* (DOLZ; SCHNEUWLY, 2016). Our thesis: although practicing orality is essential, it is not enough to do it. In other words, one cannot learn without orality practice activities. However, we are more ambitious: we want to know which dimensions of orality can be taught; and how to work on these particular dimensions in workshops, ateliers, and so on. Let me give you an example: since you are conducting an interview, you also had to prepare yourselves, because an interview has certain particularities. Now, the School of Geneva wants to clarify what the concrete objects of teaching are. We are going to practice the interview, but we are going to focus the work on certain linguistic and communicative dimensions, typical of this very genre of interview. To do this, it is essential to start by analyzing the students' initial abilities. Secondly, we will identify not only what the students already know how to do, but also what obstacles they have encountered and what gaps they need to close, to eliminate. In parallel, we will work on the constitution of a corpus of the text of the taught genre and we will analyze what are the teachable dimensions of this same genre. Thirdly, we will create, with the teachers themselves, didactic devices to facilitate monitoring the development of orality – this is the case, for example, of didactic sequences and didactic itineraries. The novelty of this second school, the School of Geneva, is thus based, in summary, on the clarification of the objects of teaching and the dimensions to be taught, and on the creation of teaching devices that are appropriate to the abilities of the students, always keeping in mind the progression of learning itself.

The third school is very characteristic of the work of French authors such as Pascal Dupont, Michel Grandaty, Sylvie Plane, Claudine Garcia-Debanç, Elisabeth Nonnon, etc. In the case of these researchers, they intend to go a step further by proposing work on orality at the service of other learning. In other words, they advocate working on students' oral practices in class to learn science, mathematics, etc. This perspective is not, of course, incompatible with the previous one, but it is more interdisciplinary, conceiving oral genres as a tool for learning different school subjects.

Interviewers: Could you summarize the transformations that you consider to be the most significant and that will have the greatest impact on the Didactics of Orality?

Joaquim Dolz: Absolutely. In our case, that of the School of Geneva, I could highlight two great moments.

On the one hand, we are witnessing a great evolution from having almost no devices or little work in this field, to beginning to create specific situations and projects to develop orality, also thinking more about goals and particular objects of work. In 1998, this was an absolute novelty, as a result of research done in previous years and which gave rise to the book *S'exprimer en français: séquences didactiques pour l'oral et pour l'écrit* (DOLZ; NOVERRAZ; SCHNEUWLY, 2001), which not only represented a major change but also generated many others. In the year 1998, we were then doing collaborative didactic engineering research, because we were working closely with teachers so that they could experiment with didactic sequences for teaching speaking and writing. In other words, we tried to link the creation of didactic devices to the specific needs of teachers by observing, at the very beginning, how they worked in class. This is the so-called second-generation didactic engineering research, where the references are not strictly linguistic, but already take into account other research in Language Didactics. In this context, the Didactics of Orality began to work quite systematically on teaching practices in the classroom, analyzing the teacher's speech, the student's speech, and the exchanges both for teaching oral language and for teaching other subjects. This research was fundamental in helping to understand even the work on Didactic Engineering research itself.

On the other hand, there is an upward or dialectical trend, where we start from the observation of teaching practices and the identification of teachers' precise needs to carry out collaborative didactic work, that is, collaborative elaborations with teachers. We practice, as much as possible, double experimentation. A first experimentation, carried out with the teachers who elaborate the didactic sequence and the itineraries with us; and a second one, already for a more important diffusion, exploring the possibilities of generalization of the work, with experimentation of these same sequences and itineraries with teachers who have not been coauthors. Thus, we adapt the devices much more to the specific working conditions of the teaching staff. Still, on this subject, I always say that in Portugal we experiment more with the materials than in Brazil. The team of Luísa Álvares Pereira – a researcher who, in my opinion, was the pioneer of Portuguese Didactics in Portugal – always did a lot of experimentation with the materials before proposing them. However, in Brazil, I have the impression that the publishing market has published – and continues to publish – textbooks with materials without prior experimentation. Now, I am against the development of textbooks without research work in collaboration with the teachers. And this is an important feature of the new research.

Interviewers: Still about the second generation of didactic engineering research, to which you have just referred, what would be, in your opinion, the main results of its implementation?

Joaquim Dolz: Firstly, there is a greater adaptation of the materials to the teachers' didactic gestures, because they are based on an analysis of the teachers' practice. Secondly, the materials are also adapted to the initial abilities of the students, thanks to the analysis of observed lessons, also taking into account the different age groups of the students. Thirdly, there is a multiplication and diversification of the types of devices made available to teachers.

Interviewers: And, precisely about such devices for the teaching of orality, what does research tell us about the best practices for the teaching of orality?

Joaquim Dolz: There are not only simple communication projects, with mini-sequences or simple-based didactic sequences, especially for the younger students, but also classic didactic sequences that can be carried out in two or three weeks of class work; and we also have what we call itineraries.

The main novelty of the itineraries lies in the fact that, by working in stages, the language activities are multiplied. In other words, if we are preparing students for a debate, there is a first stage, after which a first debate is held, and the student's abilities and difficulties are identified; then there is a second stage, in which other dimensions are worked on, a new debate is held, and progress is identified; and other stages like these follow. An itinerary lasts longer, but the number of – in this case – oral implementations (since itineraries also allow work with written genres) is, in fact, more important.

However, the most important part of the itineraries is still based on the so-called metacognitive activities, according to Stéphane Colognesi's designation – we tend to use the term “metalinguistic activities”. In the case of the debate, after an exposition or a discussion about certain positive aspects of a position, the aim is to help students become aware of the capacities already present and of the aspects that can still be worked on, to better control their behavior, their verbal activity, in the next stage, since, after each performance of the genre, there is a self-evaluation and a discussion, with metacognitive or meta verbal activities about the work done. This is a job that the teacher can do if there is more time to conduct a project.

Interviewers: Still recovering an element that Professor Joaquim mentioned in one of your previous answers: recitation. We note that there is also still a need to clarify the theoretical stance about orality and oralization – namely, which is the oral type or which are the oral types that should be taught? And how should we teach them? What would be your perspective on that? For example, in the case of reciting poems, from my perspective in particular, is reciting poems oralization or orality?

Joaquim Dolz: Your question is very important. The scriptural order does have specificities and is therefore not the same as the oral order. If we tell tales by heart to our young children, they know that it is not the same thing to tell a tale spontaneously – creating an appropriate feeling for listening to a tale – and to read a tale or even to read a tale to interpret and comment on it at the same time; they are three different things. The traditional folklore practice, even by illiterate people, consisted of telling a tale by the fireplace; and there are great storytellers, even excellent storytellers in countries with low levels of literacy. There is even the function of a griot in the Mandinka culture, who could not write, but who memorized the epic of the Mandinka and knew how to tell it. In my case, when I train teachers for kindergarten or elementary school, I always stress that they should have a repertoire of ten or fifteen tales and create certain appropriate rituals; for example, one day a week, create an environment conducive to telling a tale. And I'm not talking about the reading. Another different thing is the oralization of a written tale, and the student knows that the very style of the act of telling is different; so, when something is modified, the student may demand fidelity to the original.

However, one way to enter the scriptural order is, of course, to read aloud texts, particularly short stories; and, even in those cases, students are, of course, learning. Interestingly, a good read-aloud of a short story practices elements of orality, and sometimes starting from a written text also allows us to work on some aspects of orality with visual support. For example, if we do theater, it can be an improvisation from orality or there can be a written text. In one way or another, some written texts are already close to orality. We can write playing with forms of orality and here is where the difficulty lies. But, if I want to correct the expressive intonation, I can, in the expressive reading of a story to others, work on the expressive intonation, marking the rhythmic groups quite clearly. Then, in oral activities of a written text, one can also work on dimensions of orality.

What happens is that I am in favor of, at a certain moment, working strictly on oral genres without the support of writing – although, at times, this support can, of course, exist. In the same way that, when you teach reading, you can use something with images, but, at a certain moment, you decide that you are going to enter the text without the support of images because the goals are different. For example, you can not just work with comics either; at a certain moment, students, to be literate, also have to learn genres in which writing dominates. Therefore, managing multimodal dimensions is difficult, and it is important to be aware of what is fundamentally being worked on in one or the other, with the possibility that sometimes there are also speaking activities. After all, in these exercises, students may also discover orality dimensions.

The answer is therefore complex, but this is my position. If I had to talk to Elementary School teachers, I would say, for example, in the case of the short story: learn to tell short stories without reading, because reading short stories is different, and learn to read short stories expressively and learn also to stop and check if the students understand and, at the same time that they are reading, discuss the interpretation in different situations, such as in reading circles or reading oralized by the teacher, to arrive at a collective interpretation to help understand the short story better. These are three different situations. But the short story is a very classical genre. And one of the contributions of our work is diversification; we work with both telling stories and participating in a debate or working on discussions, monological or pluridialogal texts. And dialogism is everywhere. It is important to work not only on oral reception and production, on orality but also on interpretation. Dialogue is indeed fundamental and the various forms of dialogue are very important for teaching orality.

Interviewers: In what ways have the emergence and spread of new digital technologies brought contributions (if any) to the field of orality teaching and learning?

Joaquim Dolz: I am an advocate of the use of technologies, and I have sometimes been criticized for it – and I always take the criticism that is made of me seriously –, because it can lead to a technicist drift; and it is true. Sometimes, I myself do get surprised when I see how children of two or three years of age fiddle with the television and the cell phone; and technology allows us to do things that, a hundred years ago, no one could imagine – like us, so many miles apart, in an interview, as if we were side by side. This wealth is important.

There are also environmentalist drifts. With the cell phone, you also do not realize how much energy you are using. There are also more important deviations from a strictly humanistic point of view; after all, communication is not going to be solved exclusively by technology, and distance learning and teaching have their limits. When some politicians advocate distance learning with younger students, we immediately realize the difference between a direct relationship and a distance relationship, and how, in education, direct contact is fundamental. In this sense, I see the possibilities of a technician drift and recognize that monitoring and learning cannot depend solely on tools. What I advocate is that, as soon as there are tools and we have a delay in teaching, the use of existing tools can facilitate learning.

In the case of orality, I would underline the following fundamental aspects. On the one hand, I am in favor of working with a diversified corpus; and we, by the way, represent, each one, a very particular Portuguese. And, in the case of Brazil, for example, I think it is important for Brazilians to listen to texts, oral songs from the most diverse places in the country, as well as from the most diverse places in Africa, including the Creole of different African countries and also from Portugal, so they end up acquiring a broader view of the language.

On the other hand, the technology that exists today opens the classroom to many possibilities that would not have been possible 30 or 40 years ago. Today, rich countries already have blackboards that are not handwritten, and there are even more possibilities in the classroom if there is a computer; in the case of orality, it becomes possible to record oral productions. We can also present a corpus of texts, and students learn to debate by listening and trying to understand; they can also document themselves in a multimodal way, they can record themselves orally, and they can listen to themselves and become aware of their performance. In addition, there can be metacognitive activities about speaking and understanding the speech of others, allowing them to listen to the oral text more than once if they need to.

Students can also communicate at a distance. All of this is important. During the pandemic, we were forced to change the type of contact. By changing the type of contact, teachers and other professionals found new ways of working, which I think should stay. For example, a teacher who started teaching Portuguese literature to deaf students at a distance, using, simultaneously, sign language, oral Portuguese, written Portuguese, and subtitles to facilitate the passage, created a system that – in one lesson that I have analyzed –, turned much richer, probably, than the face-to-face lesson, because there was a multiplicity of signs. I don't advocate, however, that you always have to work this way. The thesis that I defend, with Aina Monferrer, is that technologies are complementary to language learning, mother tongue, and foreign languages, even to develop orality in the language of schooling. So, not everything has to be done with podcasts or materials for distance learning, but the multiplicity, including devices for the self-correction of students, is enormous. And my complaint is that the technology exists, but the school has not yet appropriated these new technologies sufficiently to teach orality.

Moreover, the materials and the technological resources are very important. Therefore, I advocate the use of these resources in a controlled and critical manner. And this is true for the teaching of foreign languages, having contact with students from other places, as well as for the teaching of the first language, even to enrich the work with varieties; after all, for example, we can put students from a school in the Northeast in contact with students from a school in Paraná or a Portuguese school, and discover other ways of speaking or how a debate, an interview, etc. work. So I am in favor of the teacher having good working tools, adapting to the teaching situations, and taking the needs of the students into account, and I am aware of the possible consequences of this.

The truth is that the effects of this also exist in multi-literacies, for example, when researchers are very interested in multi-literacies, but forget about language. Working with comics and teaching how to read comics is important; however, these are texts that often have only two written sentences, and it is important not to forget about working with longer texts. Of course, the articulation between image and text in comics is interesting, but it is also interesting, in other situations, to give priority to text without image, just as it is equally interesting to work on orality without the help of other techniques, but directly in the dialogue between teacher and student. Therefore, I am not advocating a generalization, but rather an experimentation and an exploration of the new technologies that exist and that many teachers do not yet fully master.

Interviewers: Still on the subject of technologies and the new genres that have emerged, what is your opinion about the controversy concerning the podcast – which you have already mentioned –, in the sense of considering it as a genre or as a support?

Joaquim Dolz: Recognizing, right from the start, that it is a complex issue, I argue that it is a support that can give rise to several genres. Let's see. The song is a genre; if one analyzes the interaction between music and text, a nursery rhyme has certain linguistic and melodic characteristics, and is immediately identified as belonging, precisely, to the nursery rhyme genre, not being a song in general; and this happens with a rap song, a bossa nova song. We also have the examples of the lullaby, for sleeping; of the national anthem, with patriotic content and an equally particular structure. So, each genre has its specific characteristics and I think it is really important to bring this diversity of genres into the classroom. In the case of podcasts, for example, while there are many that are instructional, there are others that are not. In this sense, and for me, it is a resource that can give rise to different genres, therefore, of podcasts. Still, I recognize that my answer is debatable.

Interviewers: As Professor Joaquim has pointed out, current engineering research takes the analysis of practices into account, bridging the gap with teacher training itself, regarding orality and its teaching. What is important to consider in the initial and continuing teacher training process for working with orality?

Joaquim Dolz: I attach great importance to the fact that current engineering research already takes into account the analysis of teaching practices; after all, before, there was only Applied Linguistics, in the first sense of the term; the knowledge we had of phonetics, phonology, and others was applied to teaching, without starting from an analysis of the reality and conditions of the school and of what was happening in the classroom itself. Now, we start with an analysis of practices to build devices that facilitate the professional work of teachers.

Research on the activity of teaching orality and on teacher training is, thus, of utmost importance, because teachers – who are fundamental actors in this whole process – are being trained. I am thinking, for instance, of the research with Gustavo Lima and Juliana Zani, with teacher training, in the domain of orality, with a project to create and dramatize fables made by the teachers themselves.

In Brazil, linked to the pandemic, but also already before the pandemic, the interest in multiliteracies has allowed us to develop work on new Internet genres, such as podcasts, in the context of distance learning, which is also very important. In the case of our investigations, we have an analysis of the work of a teacher from Brasília on teaching visual poetry or concrete poetry to deaf students (DOLZ; LIMA; ZANI, 2022). This is a plurilingual combination of work in Portuguese, orality and written, with the Brazilian Sign Language (the Libras).

At the time of the pandemic, it was particularly interesting to see how remote work was carried out, combining the different languages, in the sense of semiotic systems; it is a multilingual activity in the full sense of the term. Here there are a lot of novelties, and I think that Brazil is a pioneering country in terms of multiliteracies.

To tell the truth, since the beginning of the work on orality, there has been precise work with its different semiotic systems. Back in 1997, we wrote a chapter (SCHNEUWLY; DOLZ, 1997) explaining how the different semiotic systems were interwoven in a text genre, how the paraverbal and kinesic dimensions were combined, and even the way of dressing, the written supports, etc. After all, when giving a lecture, one uses PowerPoint, gestures, facial expressions, intonation, and then there are all the issues of musicality itself.

Currently, I could also highlight the work on the song in four different languages (AS POTENCIALIDADES..., 2022); and, more globally, on song genres, in general, in language teaching. From a multimodal point of view, a song always involves music; it is not solely the lyrics that are important. But textbooks, when they work on a song, only take the lyrics into account and only do a critical analysis of the lyrics. I think that song genres are very diverse and allow a greater and more systematic work on the articulation

between musicality and lyrics. And this is of particular interest, because if you work on the song, implicitly you also work on the melody of the language, which is important to develop a language, namely to develop not only the expressive intonation but also the suprasegmental dimensions of the language, which are also very important.

Interviewers: Professor Joaquim said that in France there is a large-scale assessment for orality, and monologues as if it were our ENEM here. Could you talk a little more about this?

Joaquim Dolz: Currently, in France, and in what corresponds to the Brazilian ENEM, students are asked for an oral assessment, which now makes teachers more interested in everything related to orality, because they do not know how to do it, they do not know how to assess it.

In Switzerland, in elementary school, twenty years ago we introduced a listening comprehension test, and it was very interesting because you could see the following parallel: students who understood at the moment the text was read; and students who understood only after the oral recording was played a couple of times. But in foreign language teaching, of course, the test has an oral part.

The tendency is, therefore, toward a requirement for an assessment in orality. After all, and with further studies, being able to focus on orality, and not only on writing, is essential, because orality is required in various spheres, such as the professional one. We, in our professional training, including the professional maturity of the students who do professional training, work on the interview to get a job.

Interviewers: To conclude, about all that we have discussed, what are the main current challenges faced by the Didactics of Orality today?

Joaquim Dolz: If I have to speak of challenges, there are many.

The first challenge and this is a very important challenge for Brazil, is to analyze the practices of teachers within their respective working conditions, identifying what can be done, because Brazil is a country with very high-quality schools, both private and public, but there is a great diversity. This challenge would include, therefore, understanding what the needs and possibilities are in a country as large as Brazil, always improving what is done about orality, and concerning the other dimensions of language because it is not only orality; the priority is always, in fact, the communicative functioning. And, in this context, we must see what priority we have to give to orality, according to the aforementioned working conditions and the heterogeneity of the students. In short, to better understand the working conditions of the teachers and the needs of the students; and, for this, to also carry out research on orality teaching practices and analyze them to start working from them in the classroom.

A second challenge. Based on the observations of needs, we must establish more studies on the progression of learning, because the national curricular bases do not detail sufficiently what can be done at different ages.

A third challenge. The development of Didactic Engineering research, namely, with the creation of new devices. For example, I would like to work on the song and see how one can work on the song in Brazil because there is a huge culture in this genre. This work would allow an articulation between many dimensions and, culturally, it seems particularly interesting to me. However, I would not work on the same song genres for all levels of education, nor would I do the same type of activities.

A fourth challenge. The assessment of skills. How is it assessed? What are the criteria? Which oral skills are to be assessed, depending on the text genres? These are important reflections that must be considered when working with orality.

A fifth challenge. There are elementary aspects of phonology that the teacher must know because without phonological awareness it is very difficult to teach orality. The creation of a pedagogical grammar or a reference book, for teachers, about what we know today about oral text genres, about phonetics, would be important. And maybe this reference book would be different for primary and secondary school.

A sixth challenge. Teacher training. When I was teaching, courses on the Didactics of French were compulsory, but courses on the Didactics of Orality were not. I was indeed teaching French courses on orality, but I needed entire courses to present the basics of teaching orality. Now, in a case like Brazil, I think that themes of the sociodidactics of languages, in the plural, would be important, because there is a patriotic fervor in Brazilians that makes them forget that in Brazil there are other languages, such as the Amerindian and foreign languages. It would be relevant to make an articulation in seminars of different languages. Work to facilitate transitions from one language to another and to develop the plurilingualism of the students; this would be a very relevant challenge and of particular interest.

A seventh challenge. Coordinate an integrated teaching. There is the integrated teaching of different languages; and how to articulate learning in different languages? It is also necessary to reflect on this.

An eighth challenge. Teachers have to be able to discover how oral expression and comprehension facilitate the learning of different school subjects. This would be some relevant interdisciplinary work by itself. It is necessary to acknowledge that work on oral communication could facilitate both students' learning and the quality of the teacher's work.

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