

Relationship to writing and knowledge development with regard to writing appropriations in future teachers' first, second or third language

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Presentation

Here we deal with the future teachers' relationship to writing rather than with their relationship to the writing process only (Barré-de-Miniac, 2002). Thus we consider simultaneously the writing process, the practices and representations associated with it, writing as an object, as well as written productions; further, analysis and research approaches to this theme are not only descriptive, analytic and reflective, but they can also be applied generally, opening on the development of knowledge with regard to the practices and representations in writing appropriations.

The objective of this paper – which results from a 2005-2008 study of a corpus of writings written by students intending to become teachers and based on the question of their relationship to writing – is a three-fold contribution, in terms of knowledge in progress, didactic reflection and reflection on research methodology, to:

1. Allowing the reader to approach the relationship to writing and representations of a group of trainee teachers (of French as a foreign language) from two distinct age groups (around twenty years old/around forty years old; in their initial training/taking up their studies again), through their writing practices;
2. Questioning, through these writing practices in the academic context, the place held by the relationship to writing and its representations within the teachers' training;
3. Showing methodologically that the evaluative dimension inherent in writing, most specifically school and academic writing, must be acknowledged by the research tool, and that neither the relationship to writing nor the representations attached to it can be judged if not situated.

The three objectives are connected to one another: if the methodology-related difficulty specific to the analysis of the relationship to writing and representations attached to it is to reconcile the grounding in practices, discourse listening, and the standing back necessary for a study which purports to move beyond these determinations, then the relationship to writing and the representations attached to it, materialized in the practices and showing such or such configuration of a given relationship to writing, must not be grasped solely through declarative procedures such as interviews or questionnaires, but also through the very activity of writing on this theme, that is, through a situated activity.

We will first consider the theoretical framework and methodology. Next we will present the results obtained.

1. Theoretical framework and methodology

1.1. Notions, situations, corpus

1.1.1. Relationship to writing and representations

Learning to write, knowing how to write, making improvements, all these desires, all these aspects include representations of the activity, as well as of the value, difficulties, requirements and rewards attached to it. These representations function as “linguistic and social knowledge” (Dabène, 1987: 39). Beyond this, if the representation is a “form of knowledge socially developed and shared that has a practical goal and contributes to the construction of a reality common to a social body, [...] as a concrete content of the act of thinking, it bears the stamp of the subject and of his or her activity. The latter aspect refers to the constructive, creative and autonomous characteristic of the representation that composes a part of reconstruction, interpretation of the object, and expression of the subject” (Jodelet, 1989: 43, 54).

Each writer would thus develop a specific relationship to writing as an object, product and process, within the framework of a changing representation, since all representation is an “iconic and linguistic path that leads back to ‘source ideas’ while aiming at regulating what is downstream with the help of semantic domains and well-argued schemes that are easy to disseminate” (Moscovici, in Guimelli, 1984).

Finally, each writing situation is associated with personal and social issues; in practice, though writing might seem devoid of any evaluative dimension, it is never entirely so, as Barré-de-Miniac showed in her investigation into the writing practices of upper secondary school students (2002: 162-163).

1.1.2. Writing in situ: towards learning to write and teach

Taking the writing situation into account means availing oneself of the means to identify how relationships to writing and representations take shape and, in turn, to be able to formulate didactic propositions about writing appropriation. This situation, individually acknowledged, represents an opportunity for a future teacher to write down the results of a process of remembering, reflective observation, and analysis of his or her personal relationship to writing so as to better understand the issues and difficulties involved, but also the possible rewards, linked to the practice of writing. This also represents an opportunity for them to train in research.

But the requirement is more general: as Jodelet wrote (1984: 31), “one has to be aware of the application scope of the representative activity [the activity which consists in developing representations] to specify its nature”. According to Abric (2001: 237), “the analysis of a social representation requires the discovery of the principles of its actualization”.

1.1.3. The corpus: Interest and composition

The corpus is exploratory and, therefore, not very voluminous, as shown by this table:

Total number of writings -- Total number of students: 22

Students under 28 years old: 18

Students over 40 years old: 4

Native speakers of French: 16, of whom 7 have a plurilingual background

Non-native speakers of French: 6 (North Africa, Asia, South America)

The interest of this corpus lies in its potential to coordinate several tools:

- A training tool for teachers of French that relies on the knowledge and reflective position of the future teachers who chose the optional teaching unit “*Représentations socio-culturelles de l’écrit et évaluation*” (Socio-cultural representations of writing and evaluation);
- A tool providing an introduction to research that is based on self-observation, remembering, analysis and general summary;
- A tool for exploratory research on the pieces of writing produced, the conditions in which they were produced, and on the choice of the method most appropriate for dealing with such a corpus.

1.1.4. Construction of the corpus and objectives

The corpus was built with a view to bringing together discourses on the future teachers’ relationship to writing, representations, and practices observed *in situ* around several points of view:

- The student writer [future teacher]’s point of view. Within the framework of a chosen topic, the student writer must read and formulate his or her lived experience of the writing, and interpret it in the light of his or her “source ideas” and current “semantic domains and well-argued schemes” (Moscovici, 1994);
- The teacher-researcher’s point of view. After initiating the writing of the corpus within the framework of this optional topic, the teacher-researcher must reread, interpret and also connect what the students chose to address with their choices of the practice through which each written discourse was produced. Afterwards, the teacher-researcher must bring to light the possible biases as well as the necessary palliatives in this context.

A number of questions were addressed through the corpus that regard the forms and formations of the students’ relationship to writing, the relational interplays and issues linked to their relationship to writing, and their definition of the relationship to writing.

1.2. Methodology

1.2.1. Determinants of the teaching/research situation

Situation and framework, participants, temporality and issues at stake

Within the context of the Master’s degree in French as a foreign language, the one-semester course and optional tutorial section I was in charge of sought to lead teachers or future teachers to understand – as far as writing is concerned – what representations are, their strength in teaching and learning situation, as related to their evaluative dimension; to

experience this strength by themselves in their own work by connecting their past and present experiences; and to question their own representations of and relationship to writing¹. Within this academic context are coexisting theoretical approaches and practical work which place the student in a situation of producer so as to feed a situated reflection that involves him or her as a future professional and as a speaking subject.

Whatever their backgrounds, the students had overcome the various compulsory stages of their school years. Therefore they had no major difficulty with writing. Writing practices, however, were varied in terms of choices, doing and being modes, and meanings. The course was given in French and the final works were written in this language, but the students had learning cultures, most specifically writing representations, which could not be said to be entirely homogeneous, even if the academic paths had certainly contributed to smoothing the disparities.

The overall issues at stake considered *a priori* were not negligible and the perspective of the degree was certainly not the most important: enrolment in this course was not – or at least not only – related to the fact that marks in this program had a low weighting, it translated a variety of individual motivations. At the private and social (academic, but also professional) level, writing is at once an object of study, a source of knowledge, the main means of evaluation and a means of contact, of introducing oneself, for instance to potential employers or in private relationships. This accounts for the fact that the temporality connected with writing deploys itself over long spans of time, from the most remote (that of past taken up and commented on) to the closest (that of the school and of the academic year).

From directions to academic evaluation... and to treatment of the corpus

The direction regarding the task required of the students, which was given at the start of the course, reads as follows: “Formulate the characteristics of your relationship to writing, supporting your argument with precise facts”. The paper was written at home and was used as a basis for final evaluation, for reflective activity, for introduction to research – according to differentiated procedures relating to the students’ path. Here is, for example, the incipit of a student’s piece of writing written down at the end of the one-semester course (this is an excerpt from the long opening paragraph):

“How to bring together themes totally different from one another such as my script, my relationship to school writing of essays and notes, my experiences with personal writing of songs or texts and my current relationship to the learners’ writing while I am preparing for teaching. [...] And at the same time, they were closely related all the same, weren’t they?”

We can observe, through the key words and verbal tenses used, that the consideration moves from the personal to the professional level, with a concern with the organisation of both the

¹ These modalities for teacher training have been applied in branches of French as a foreign language since 1983 and have been the object of a study of large corpuses (see Berchoud, 2002, “Le ‘journal d’apprentissage’ : analyse et résultats d’une pratique de formation de futurs enseignants”, *Recherche et formation* n° 32). In the branches of French as a mother tongue, reflective analysis of practices has been developing for a decade or so within the academic framework of IUFMs (University Institute for Teacher Training; a specialised department of the university).

thought and the text, and with a sketched problematic potentially opening on research related to teaching.

The criteria for evaluation of this piece of writing required:

- 1 – *To present and analyse the facts* related to writing in the context of the student's life path;
- 2 – *To link all or part of these facts* to their context and to try to *interpret* them;
- 3 – *To summarize* the overall information with a view to answering *the question asked*.
- 4 – The overall information is *organized in a piece of writing available* to readers such as teachers, but also to the other students.

This was to be done within a limit of 10-20 pages. Thus, the academic evaluation based on those four criteria also made it possible to distinguish between complete and incomplete pieces of writing.

Beyond the criteria for immediate evaluation (10% of the annual mark), a more qualitative grid for reading the texts was proposed during the course, in relation to the reflection conducted and introduction to research:

Elaboration of the written discourse

A – Enunciative stance adopted by the writer;

B – Text organization method;

C – Manner of presenting and explaining for answering the question asked;

Discourse content

D – Themes and thematic progression

E – Choices made in the final answer (see point 3 mentioned above).

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1.2.2 Research questions and treatment of the corpus data

Questions asked in the corpus

– How do representations of writing take a written form in an academic practice, with what source ideas (question 1), in what relational interplay (question 2), with what issues at stake (question 3) and, ultimately, with what personal engagement (question 4)? Then is it possible to speak seriously of relationship to writing (question 5)?

– What knowledge of writing appropriation can be built up in this fashion in and from these situated writing works? (question 6)

We can expect students to become aware of new or more advanced know-how as well as of a knowledge of themselves; the researchers, for their part, must ask themselves whether, in the operation that consists in making representations emerge, it is really possible to develop further the knowledge of language appropriations in a pluricultural and often plurilingual context, since French is not necessarily the students' mother tongue, nor the only language they use in their work and more generally in their lives.

Treatment of the data collected

Marks present in the texts were identified within the framework of a reading grid: more specifically, incipit and desinit, key words, themes and progression, verbal tenses, choice of pronouns and connectors.

The interpretive framework is that of the elaboration of discourse understood as the “schematisation [...] from the point of view a speaker A reaches or has with regard to a given reality R, performed for an interlocutor or a group of interlocutors B, [...] in a given situation of interlocution” (Grize, 1989: 172).

The interpretive framework is also that of the analysis of representations in that they are expressed by and in the language, this under the form of semantic contents (images, implicit or explicit references, valued terms) and relational systems acquired through society and school, the whole serving as knowledge for living.

Moreover, in line with Moscovici’s results (1989: 82) and given that researchers are seeking further information with regard to innovations as well as to the remembered situation, “the necessity to turn representation into a bridge between the individual sphere and the social sphere, to associate it, in turn, with the perspective of a changing society which motivates the modification in question” is considered essential. This is the backdrop to the reading grid chosen.

2. Results: themes, processes, relationships

2.1. Writing and me: How I situate myself in relation to “me”, to “us” and to “them” (questions 1 and 2)

2.1.1. Content of “source ideas”

All the students value writing. However, a number of them consider writing as a whole, something indefinable, an entity that cannot be analysed but which is undoubtedly present, something like a second world: the writing productions of these students are most incomplete, imprecise, with this “incomplete aspect of representations” as observed by Grize, and “it is the argument that will generate this lack” (1989: 178). These students are the most imprecise and incomplete writers. For them, writing is a pre-existing, accepted form not subject to discussion, just as its power and the norm or norms. In such conditions, the writer places himself or herself solely from the standpoint of someone who reproduces, continues, rather than someone who produces or creates.

Writing is first and foremost associated with reading, the latter activity being much valued, though not described, whether it is practised or not. Writing is also associated with compliance with the rules, whether these are respected or not. Everything proceeds as though a superficial respect, perceived as a consensus, then allowed for a variety of transgressions, should the need arise, at the level of trivial, daily necessities, without affecting the value of writing.

In more complete writings, however, writing is seen rather as reading-writing and, concerning certain areas of writing, facts and individual situations of engagement are mentioned, implying not only that sometimes writing is reproduction (a great number of facts and analyses related to school experience) but also that it is production and personal appropriation by the writer as a subject.

Two distinct cases can be identified:

- Students who reproduce and produce are the most in phase with the task required; but they question the norms, more or less astutely, depending on the balance achieved between those two poles of writing;
- Students who reproduce are not enough in phase with what is required of them and do not question anything.

2.1.2. Textual organization: an individual schematization, several discrepancies

The first schematization concerns the organization of the representation as well as its expression in a practice. The plan used by each writer is not the only component deserving to be examined, for plans look like one another: thematic plan outlined in an introduction and in a summary-conclusion; chronological plan from childhood to today; or alternation of the two.

The texts written by “reproducers”, however, are most often based on the model of the research or placement report; sometimes they are mere “chronologies”, in the sense that they are not narrative texts, not by any means, since they are made up of juxtapositions obscuring the main line of thought.

All the other texts use the narrative as an overall form or juxtaposition of short thematic narratives accompanied with explanations. Half of them lay claim to a deviance from the academic norm as governing their choice of the narrative, whilst in fact this possibility had been open to them. Most of the texts display the difficulties to be overcome, such as the learning of reading and writing, the move to a foreign language, exile or a change of school, etc.

The unfolding of these writings shows how the representation is displayed and sheds light on the choices, constraints, and practices this representation serves. Below the plans and the narratives, logical invariants appear in the complete productions:

- A self-asserted writer (see above);
- “Source ideas” that are differentiated, positive **and** negative, borne out by facts; for example: “I liked writing, but I was hopeless at spelling”, “I loved writing in English... I felt blocked in French”;
- Valorization of the writer, and feedback on the norm or norms;
- Assertion of the writer’s individuality, including through possible lacks and elements forgotten;
- Assertion of the personal nature of the act of writing,
- The relationship established between the social and the personal;
- Formulated acknowledgement of the other’s judgement.

Incomplete productions, for their part, do not refer to the last three points mentioned above, namely, the elaboration of one’s position, of one’s relationship to the other, and of one’s relationship to the judgement derived from the situational norm. These productions are elliptical, reserved, and do not refer to any well-defined cultural model. The enunciative aspect seems to account for such incompleteness: the writer’s other persona, which is able to validate him or her in their existence, is a pre-existing, accepted figure that is not mentioned (and perceived as unauthorized?).

Schematization thus reveals several types of producers, some of whom are here, and others are there, elsewhere, outside the shared culture. Should we therefore provide for several types of evaluation for a single course? And is it possible to spare the students their engagement in a reflective feedback on their (future) job and on their lived experience regarding this job?

The effect to produce on the reader is chosen, estimated, implemented in varied ways, according to the enunciative position adopted and according to the image of self that is disseminated. We can identify two distinct series:

– Between challenge and affiliation, we can observe the formation of a kinship relationship and a swing between centre and limits and between what is allowed and what is forbidden. Thus we observe an autonomous, specific, imperfect writer; a reader who is not omnipotent; a challenge or the beginning of a challenge to the reader who stands for the norm, that is, the teacher-researcher; a form that answers **and** does not answer the rules pertaining to academic writing.

Example 1: Plan, introduction-conclusion, but also narrative; and/or narratives presented in a more personal fashion than a report, a more relaxed attitude as regards spelling, illustrations, literary fragments.

– Between conformity and disaffiliation (or temporary affiliation), we can observe a relationship of acknowledged constraint and of self-expression, this relationship being nonetheless restricted to a few attempted explanations or illustrations of its shortcomings and assets. Here in this case, we observe: a writer who is restrained, who leaves a lot to the reader; a disoriented reader in search of what is unsaid; a form modelled on academic writings of the report kind.

Example 2: No or few personal marks can be seen on the cover, there is not even one single literary quotation, while the computing layout is perfect.

The first schematization noted corresponds to a representation of writing, a process and result related to literature and personal development, and the second, by contrast, is that of writers who, as producers, are not personally related with the process of writing.

2.1.3. *Enunciative positions and interactions involved*

These elements can mostly be identified at the beginning of the texts, since the incipit² is the place where one moves from social reality to the personal sphere: we can note the presence or absence of first-person pronouns – *je* (I), *moi* (me), *mon*, *ma*, *mes* (my) – in the titles and first sentences as well as of quotations, highlighted or placed at the beginning of the text. The presence of the writer is more or less asserted and what varies is the way the students elaborate their texts:

– Several places where *je* appears, such as the title, the first sentence and the reformulation of the direction (the move from “your relationship to...” to “my relationship to...”), with the reader having to find himself or herself a place within this enunciative fabric;

² See BAKHTINE, M., *Esthétique de la création verbale*, 1953, 1984 and ARAGON, L., *Les incipit ou je n'ai jamais appris à écrire*, 1979, Skira, Genève.

– Several places where *je* appears, as well as a legitimizing quotation put as an epigraph to the text, so that the reader is included in it and may even be invited to collaborate;

– Only one place where *je* appears, a discrete *je*, either in the title or in the first sentence, which leaves ample room to the reader, who must refrain from giving full rein to his or her imagination so as to stick to the text. The latter is either quite poor in terms of facts and interpretations – and both are compounded –, as though remembering were related to the skill of analysis, or is embellished with personal marks that show a voluntary elaboration: for example, absence of personal determinants in the titles and subtitles, with a generalization applied to one person only, namely, the writer – who avoids saying *je* and thus does not acknowledge his or her own identity.

Among the texts studied, those in which *je* is less firmly asserted are those in which analysis and explanation appear to be hampered and incomplete and where blanks and non-analysed aspects are present, which would testify to the central place held by the institutional.

2.2. Elaboration of narratives, choices and hierarchies (questions 3 and 4)

We will now focus on the most complete texts, with a view to highlighting the characteristics of writing representations and practices which are positive for the students.

2.2.1. Elaboration of narratives, presentation and explanation processes: role of the positive aspects

The elaboration of narratives is related to the academic norm and to its transgression; it also asserts the presence and value of an individual writer who has appropriated writing for his or her own usage and taste; lastly, it is suffused with Brémond's works on the narrative scheme, which have been in the public domain for about twenty years. Not surprisingly, the powerful aspects we can observe in this scheme are, most specifically, the difficulty to overcome or its resolution in the writings.

We observed collective schematizations: institutionalized, even sanctified, writing; schematizations including more individual elements in complete writings. The latter show both types of schematizations, but distinguish themselves from incomplete writings in how they specifically combine these schematizations.

Let us examine the high spots and the hero of the narrative scheme:

– In the beginning, the initial situation:

All the students positioned as producers are aware that their situation is particular, and are sometimes bombastic about it. This allows them to take a vantage position in the sphere of writing. But who would be so masochistic as to enter a sphere in which he or she would be nothing? Here we observe that the adults, most particularly the teachers, are those who must provide pupils with positive elements so that the latter can build up a good place for themselves in writing, as readers, but also as writers. The issue at stake is not as much to help the pupils with the task as to make it desirable to them and to set them in a vantage position.

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Examples:

“I became interested in spelling when I was very young and it always remained something I ‘could do’ in my years of schooling. [...] I’d rather present spelling to my children or pupils as a difficult, but passionate, art rather than as an instrument of social rise.”

“As I see it, writing necessarily involves art, creation and the intimate, it’s only when reflecting on this that I become aware that writing also corresponds to much more mundane aspects of my life, but for me, these are secondary. [...] Writing thus took on its deeper meaning: it was a symbol of freedom.” (The student’s father and mother wrote books and corresponded with prisoners.)

Here we can observe the fragments of a well-argued scheme in which the speaking subject is protected and valued within a collective framework – most often a family – with a memory and feats.

– The principal actor, an individual of distinction and relation

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The writer is the hero; his or her experience is specific:

“I learned in two languages – Corsican and Malagasy – that things, and plants in particular, could have no name of their own beyond the circumlocution that describes usages and virtues... [...] And these people, who felt a little unsociable and who felt guilty for being unsociable, talked like a book.”

In less complete, if not very incomplete, writings, the writer and his or her specific experience and know-how are not highlighted. This is certainly a mistake on the part of the writers. However, we would have to work on the basis of individual interviews so as to attempt to make this evolve. The writer must take risks, confront challenges and disillusion, or a task particularly difficult for him or her – and the task required of them is difficult for them. Hence the individual interview conducted prior to the second test.

– Salient moments, a challenge and risks:

These may take the form of a failure, self-denial, a loss, exile, whether voluntary or enforced, that occurred during the writer’s life or during that of his or her forebears, whose memory is taken up by the writer. And this concerns all writers. Only those who are producers, however, can tell, account for, explain and formulate arguments with regard to such things.

The writer-reader who is denied in his or her individuality and in his or her close relationship to writing is a recurrent theme:

“I was so naive as to think that the aim of written works was to give our opinion on subjects of reflection, but our teacher would not have it this way. [...] We wouldn’t give our opinion until we were philosophers.”

“The years spent at the university were very disappointing, because I expected much of them. Literature, which had been so present and lively in me since I was a child congealed like a sauce on a plate. By the way, a teacher had told me: ‘You’ll think when you have the aggregation.’”

The journey of initiation is another theme, a very cultural one, but which relates to personal choice and commitment:

“As he was aware of my taste for books, he [the student’s step father gave me an old Korean book he had found at an antique dealer’s in Seoul. [...] I was 22 and it felt as though I were out of step with life. I had lived much of my life through books, it was time for me to go off in search of adventure.”

Very often, the issue of loss is also addressed:

“[In Corsican and Malagasy] Later, that is, too late, I became aware that a heritage was waiting for me there, behind the language, which was not a written language. I lost everything of it.”

“I stopped reading. I stopped writing. What was the point of it all? One day I threw away my rubber in the very middle of a verse, I moved away from the poem and all. For the thing is, with writing – the writing you’ll never write down –, not what you do, but what it does to you.”

And behind writing, the school is looming:

“When asked, ‘who are you?’ the pupil was supposed to answer, ‘what you’ll teach me’,” says a writer who, having taught English, gave up teaching (so as to become a perfumer: was it owing to memories of scents and plants from childhood?) and came back to it through French as a foreign language, the French language seen from outside.

“There was a library at the secondary school – that was enough to put you right off reading. It felt like I was in one of those cells created by ingenious torturers who had made it impossible for the prisoner to lie or sit down. That was sheer torture. I boycotted the place.”

We must note, however, that the difficult moments evoked become positive through their very evocation, which is both made present and kept at a distance.

2.2.2. *Issues at stake in writing (object, activity, product) in studies and pre-professionalization situation*

The issues linked to writing pertain to the school, academic and professional spheres, but they are also symbolic and even identity-related issues. A variety of cultures express themselves: traditional cultures value bodily constraint and imitation (which differs from mimesis in that the latter does not fall within the province of culture, but within that of biology); current cultures (in Europe) put forward the subject’s activity and his or her ability to build knowledge.

But the activity is not understood everywhere in the same way: here it is personal commitment to a given task; there it is (apparently docile) submission to a model, imitation.

In the latter case, activity will rather come down to rush job, “production by the consumers”, thus following the logic of “action plays relating to types of circumstances”, as valued by M. de Certeau (1980, 1990: XI, 40), with a view to “sketching out a *theory of daily practices*

so as to set free from their rumour the ‘correct thing to do’ which, though in a majority in social life, often appear to be mere ‘resistances’ or inertias in relation to the development of socio-cultural production.”

Language practices which are valued neither in nor by writing might be identified thanks to complementary methods: through interviews, which might open on writings derived from the writing appropriation grown to the subject’s rhythm: it is probably necessary to listen to pupils and students prior to having them write, so as to perceive the logic at work in a practice, most often accompanied by language expression, as shown, again, by de Certeau. And this might explain the massive choice of the narrative, among our writers, as a way of accounting for a practice, grounded both in literature and daily life.

2.2.3. *Writers’ personal expression and choice*

It is possible to find traces of personal expression and well-argued schemes through the succession of the themes addressed and what is said about them.

Well-argued schemes appear to be very collective and non-marked when restricted to a chronology. In this case, writers then account, *in fine*, for their difficulty in writing and for the reason for this difficulty: tiredness, disinterest, uncertainty with regard to what is “good”, an excess of reading to digest, memory failure. Some writers feel bad and therefore it is necessary to give them back their self-confidence, by telling them, for instance, that this type of work can be improved upon and by offering them an opportunity to improve.

More personal texts *in fine* show individualization – beyond the facts recounted – through the order adopted in the themes dealt with. Several typologies appear, among which these are the most differentiated (taken from the corpus of complete texts):

- What plan? / What concerns me / the norm / orthography / my readings / oral reading / written form / writing in the classroom / writing for me;
- Writing and memory / language and my languages / my first steps into writing (reading, school writing, writing of lived experience / writing and speech / spelling / the norm / French as a foreign language;
- First writings / writing as a constraint / writings by others / books / readings / professional life / the physical dimension of writing / writing and reading today;
- The first representations of writing / learning: school years / travelling as a source of individual thinking / teaching of writing and reading / written transmission, oral transmission / evaluation / links.

Each of these typologies situates the writer in what he or she considers to be his or her world: the lineage, the first family practices and representations. Each typology offers recurrent themes (except for written form, which is not always addressed, whatever the corpus: Is written form unworthy of it? Is it sacred?) in an individual interpretation that takes place within a collective structure, namely, the university.

There, the constraint linked to writing is mainly shown, illustrated or formulated in general terms. Typologies also vary by age group: the norm (seen as unique) and constraint are more

frequent among younger students. Lastly, we can note that the typology elicits a joyful tone in the complete texts, which probably testifies to a relationship to writing of the same kind.

Through their *final choices*, the writers highlight the end of a reflective path with regard to their practices and representations, defining a specific configuration of their relationship to writing:

- Non-hand-written, dehumanized writing, non-me, praise for the draft;
- Oral/writing complementariness, language and human relationships;
- Oral and writing, contribution of speech and writing, mutual limits and personal results;
- Omnipresence of writing observed and simultaneous opening on the plurality of norms.

These personal choices are related to socio-school spheres. Is it possible, however, to pinpoint one single relationship to writing or several differentiated relationships to writing? The relationship seems rather to be a specific given within a structure. We can point out the influence of the writers' age and past experiences: thus the oral/writing complementariness is recurring among the students who take up their studies. We can also note that a happy relationship to writing is a relationship which is valorized, valorizing and personal, whatever the configuration of these terms.

Conclusion: perspectives (questions 5 and 6)

Relationship to writing

Here (in question 5) the knowledge produced is personal knowledge about oneself and procedure-related knowledge (how to integrate a narrative in academic writing, for example).

Thus, an *a minima* definition is required. Relationship to writing is a set of processes by which an individual or collective subject, on the basis of knowledge and know-how related to writing representations and practices, expresses argumentative schemes that make it possible for the subject to think about and feel the social and natural world and also to think, situate himself or herself in his or her own sphere and possibly in other (pluricultural and plurilingual spheres), so as to maintain his or her place in these spheres and avoid blockages of communication and relationships with other people.

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Thus the relationship to writing is marked by the emotions and personal and family history. It is grounded on the one hand in the past and, on the other hand, in current and future practices; and if didactic intervention actually makes sense, it lies in the fact that it favours the emergence of more knowledge, know-how and freedom of thought and being. The didactic intervention also has meaning because it raises the question of knowledge development.

Development of knowledge of appropriations

Working on practices, representations and relationship to writing highlights knowledge that is socially shared, individually expressed or in suffering. But what do we learn about writing appropriations, whether they be school-related appropriations or not?

We noticed the presence of implicit cultural and institutional elements, as well as of school and social determinants, but what did we notice beyond this? Awareness of these elements and determinants appears to be very important for the process of language appropriation: when writers discover these elements and determinants by and for themselves, instead of just reading a sociologist's description of them, they make this return to themselves the basis for their evolution.

This study also brings personal dimensions to knowledge in human sciences: We certainly should renounce experimenting, "all things being equal", as in mathematics and physics, and developing another rationality, according to subjects, who as such are all engaged in actions and in "relationships with collective memory that are necessary for justifying and maintaining identity, existence and attitudes" (Moscovici, 1989: 161), and this is all the more true since we are engaged in a plurilingual and pluricultural world.

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