

Genre Theory

- · Genres are socially-constructed practices
- Context plays an important role in shaping genres (Holquist, 1986)
- Speech genres are recognizable patterns of language-in-context (Bakhtin, 1986)
 - Speech genres include both oral and written forms of language
 - We focus on <u>written</u> genres
- · Genres embody collections of specific features (Hasan, 1989; Paltridge, 1994)

Our Definition of Genre

- Written (textual) genres are social constructions that represent specific purposes for reading and writing within different social activities, created by social groups who need them to perform certain things. They change over time, reflecting essential shifts in social function performed by that text.
- · Genres also represent constellations of textual attributes
 - Some attributes are necessary
 - Other attributes are optional

Identifying Genres

- Individual genres may be identified and distinguished by:
 - Purpose (social function—realized in semantic attributes)
 - Structural/textual attributes essential to the genre
- e.g: Classified Ad
 - <u>Purpose</u>: to post items, services, personal relationships, etc that are wanted or offered
 - -<u>Structural Elements:</u> Abbreviations, contact information, what is offered/desired

Genre and Textual Form

- We distinguish between genre and the form in which the genre is represented
- · One genre may be embodied in many physical forms
 - Employment postings: flyers, newspapers, posters, webpages, online database
- One form may embody many genres
 - Books: novels, dictionaries, textbooks, holy texts, children's stories, plays, poetry, etc
 - Newspapers: news stories, ads, comics, coupons, opinion pieces, crossword puzzles, etc

Genres in CPLS Data (N = >300)

- Tx: Classified ad
- Tx: Complaint letter
- Tx: Credit card
- Tx: Gift tag
- Tx: Headline
- Tx: Health exam result
- Tx: Holy text
- Tx: Item list
- Tx: Medication label

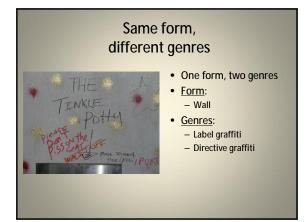
- Tx: Medicine wheel
- Tx: News story
- Tx: Order form
- Tx: Personal letter
- Tx: Receipt
- Tx: Schedule
- Tx: Slogan • Tx: To-do list
- Tx: URL

Documenting Text Form

 Including textual form along with genre helps us more fully capture literacy practices - They document the literacy environment







Forms in CPLS data (N = > 110)

- We have identified <u>115</u> individual *forms*, including:
 - Banner Blackboard Book Bus stop Card Envelope Flyer Magazine Newspaper

Pamphlet Piece of paper Poster Sandwich board Scoreboard Sign Ticket Wall

This does not include digital texts •

Digital texts: A special case

- · Documenting the multimodal nature of digital genres requires us to code form at two levels - Form within digital world
 - Form of technology
- e.g., Classified ad as a digital text
 - Digital form: dating webpage
 - Technology form: computer

Digital Forms

Form within digital world

- (N = < 50)- Database page
 - Dialogue box
 - Education webpage
 - Email page
 - Instant/text message
 - Operating system interface
 - PDF document
 - Tax payment software
 - Weblog page
 - Word processing page

- ATM machine
 Cell phone

Form of technology (N = 4)

ComputerHand-held electronic

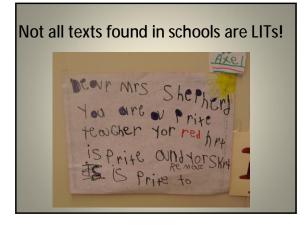
A Special Case: Literacy Instructional Texts	
 Texts used for teaching and learning basic literacy skills did not fit our definition of genre No authentic, social communicative purpose Named these "Literacy Instructional Texts" (LIT) 	Eutopuo tatula "Base Fact. I my two and have are is one blue gray said orange seven six green pink three see black ten eight play red for brown nine four the here to yellow he she purple five like a go white

Literacy Instructional Texts, cont. Track LIT varieties by Duc 3-30 identifying text type and form 'n O 2-20 m • Examples: 쪻 F - LIT, alphabet letters, notebook - LIT, basal reader, book 1820, À Ş Ð. - LIT, skill practice text, workbook V - LIT, spelling list, chart



LIT Genres and Forms in CPLS data

- We have identified <u>55</u> individual LIT genres, including: Alphabet letters Copy text Essay Fiction narrative Morning message Phonics chart Primer Skill practice text Spelling list Writing journal
- We have identified 15 LIT forms, including: Blackboard Slate Book Tag Card Tile Chart Unknown Notebook Wall Piece(s) of paper Workbook Poster Worksheet School exam



Why distinguish between LITs and other genres?

- While LITs do not have authentic communicative purpose, they mediate many literacy activities in and out of school
 - This appears to be especially true in many of our case studies
 - "Doing school" or helping children with schoolwork represent many literacy practices in our data
- Relates to third goal of CPLS
- Design of models of literacy instruction that reflect students' home/community literacy worlds

Function & Purpose

- · Communicative Function of reading, writing, etc. of a particular type of literacy engagement on the closer level of participant fulfillment of a communicative function
- Social Purpose of LE are the ways that particular literacy events mediated social activity within socio-cultural contexts.

Sample Functions Codes (N =>320)

- "What is the reader reading this particular text for?"
 - Fn: To discover how story unfolds
 - Fn: To ensure they are credited with paying rent
 - Fn: To check health record for information

"What is driving the composition of the text? What is the writer trying to do with this literacy engagement?"

- Fn: To inform of illness of child
- Fn: To inform self/family about family
- Fn: To request item

Social Purpose Codes (N = >300)

- Pr: In order to apply for/get a driver's license
- Pr: In order to decide how
 Pr: In order to learn about to vote
- Pr: In order to extend stay
 Pr: In order to marry in country • Pr: In order to join an

organization

• Pr: In order to keep

family/self healthy

someone • Pr: In order to pass time

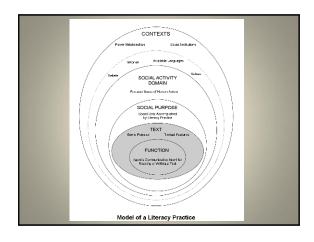
of work

God

• Pr: In order to speak at an event

• Pr: In order to keep record

· Pr: In order to treat patient



Next Steps: Cross-Case Analyses

- Resistance & Appropriation: Power & Agency within Hegemonic Contexts (Perry & Purcell-Gates; 2005)
 - Analysis of early data from 7 Michigan cases
 - Agency within literacy practices patterned by type of hegemonic context
- Language and Literacy Brokering
 - Different dimensions of brokering in multi-lingual & immigrant/refugee communities
 - Role of context in shaping brokering