ANR Ecritures in brief

- **www.univ-paris3.fr/anr-ecritures/**

Georgeta Cislaru, January 14 2013
gcislaru@univ-paris3.fr

WEBSITE

TEAM

- **13 participants** from **6 universities; 1 post-doctoral student**
- Inter- & transdisciplinarity:
  – Linguistics, Psycholinguistics, Text Genetics, Textometry
- Partnership with **social workers** (SAFE, Caen)

QUESTIONS AND GOALS

The programme is roughly **structured** by

- <u>2 general fundamental questions</u> we try to answer that concern
  1. Different types of constraints and their impact on the writing process
  2. Dynamics of socially and institutionnally framed writing
- <u>2 application goals</u>
  1. Contributing to the development of longitudinal analysis methos & to the evolution/development of keystroke logging softwear
  2. Proposing linguistic criteria and modelization applicable to the didactics of writing

DOMAINS

The project deals with drafts of social workers' writings from 3 points of view:

- Genetic Study
- Discursive Study
  – Professional writing
  – Sensitive to various internal and external constraints
- Textometric Study

The interpretive dimension is central to the project. Indeed, the **discourse analysis** approach is epistemologically fundamental. The project ECRITURES has been developped in line with two previous projects:

- Two previous projects

- 2005-2007: financed by the National Observatory of Endangered Children; this was a Discourse analysis project, aiming at describing the social reports (final versions) as textual objects and as performative tools.
- 2008-2010: financed by the Scientific Council of Sorbonne nouvelle. This project already integrated a genetic dimension and our corpus of "collection of drafts" was collected during this stage.
- The main discursive features we take into account are
  - The status of professional writing of these reports
  - Their high sensitivity to various internal and external constraints

The **genetic study** naturally arrived as the next step in our research. Indeed, the status of expert writers - that may be also discussed - of the social workers, the status of Literacy event one may attribute to the reports, and their high sensitivity to constraints constitute a fertile ground for studying the writing process. Alongside with this general assumption, the possibility to confront the interpretive approach of discourse analysis with genetic and psycholinguistic observations was too tempting (I will detail this a bit later). The possibility to have a rather complete insight into the writing performance process, from production to the eventual social impact, was also very interesting.

- Two approaches
  - Critical Text Genetics
  - Psycholinguistics
- One contrastive corpus: drafts of academic inspectors' reports

The **textometric method** is not chronologically the last component of our transdisciplinary approach. We have used it since the begginings, about 8 years ago. Yet working with drafs and texts produced via Inputlog asks for new textometric methods and tools, and Serge will not only explain you how textometry works, but also how it has recently developed, in the light of longitudinal corpora. Adrien will present the new tools inspired by some textometric methods and adapted to the nature of our corpus.

- Textometry and Discourse Analysis
- Aligned Corpora
  - Comparing various drafts
  - Studying the evolution of writing and revision gestures
- Developing new tools

SOME RESULTS

Due to the transdisciplinarity and the history of the project, the intermediate results may be summarized as follows:

- **Aligned corpus** online
  - 25 reports; 209 « drafts »; 300 000 words
- **Tools**
  - Le Trameur
  - A*l*longos
- **New issues** in the study of writing
  - An interpretive approach to the writing and revision gestures
  - An articulation textometry/psycholinguistics

NEEDS AND PERSPECTIVES

The actual needs of our research programme are directly related to our perspectives, that may be summarized in 3 points

- Writing performance: pragmatic and formal perspective
- Low-level and high-level annotation
- Fine-grained longitudinal methods of analysis

In will develop here the pragmatic and formal perspectives on writing performance, and connect to them the question of the annotation.

Writing performance: pragmatic perspectives:

- Communicative constraints
  - Who are the writers?
  - Who are the addressees of the reports?
  - Which is the purpose of the reports?
  - Which are the conditions of the evaluation?
- Material constraints

– How is the writing process organized?

– Where does the information come from?

Who are the writers? – expert writers as for their professional needs, non expert writers as for their writing education and experience

More than one writer

Who are the addressees? – two different identified addressees: the judge and the family; more than one unidentified addressee → implies opposite strategies of writing and revision

Purpose – evaluation of the situation of a concrete child and family in order to help taking an administrative decision concerning the intervention of the social institution

Conditions of the evaluation – social norms that are sometimes difficult to distinguish from personal norms; discussions during professional meetings, personal feelings or convictions

Material constraints

Organisation of the writing process – long-term non-linear process

Information sources – personal observation of the social worker, information transmitted by the institution (school, hospital, etc.) and its members, information transmitted by the child and the family

Writing performance: formal perspectives;
- Linguistics routines
  - Repeated segments, colligations, collocations, etc.
  - Bursts
- Linguistic choices
  - Interpreting deletions, replacement, adds, displacement
  - Studying the lexical and gramatical profile of the affected units (description and statistics)

Linguistic routines and linguistic choices: two non-exclusive points of view on discourse
- stable forms and relations that may be observed in the final version; are they pre-designed? This hypothesis of the discourse analysis may be fully confirmed only by a psycholinguistic research; the question is, how we define the notion of « pre-designed »? The maximal degree of routinization, that may be directly dependent on the degree of writing expertise, is the case where a burst, i.e. a chain observed at the pole « production » is identical or very similar to a repeated segment, i.e. a chain observed at the pole « interpretation »/reception
- Problem: what seems to correspond to regular practices that might give us a clear representation of the writing process in this frame do not necessarily correspond to stable and regular forms
- Solution: the low-level annotation would allow to identify colligations and, for instance, to situate the case of the non-verbal phrases which are rather frequent and regular in the first drafts, a kind of « incipit strategy »

Linguistic choices: the question of linguistic choices is opposite but non-exclusive of the question of linguistic routines; in fact, the notion of « choice » is understood here not in terms of absolute liberty of choice, but in terms of constrained choice.

CONCLUSION

The writing and revision process in the expert strategy of knowledge crafting is indeed dependent on the previously mentioned communicative constraints. Text evolution and, especially, text transformation through the revision process are probably oriented towards a prototype of evaluative report (genre norms) and a maximal performative efficiency on the one side, and towards an institutionnaly established ethos of objectivity and neutrality. From this point of view, each gesture may receive its contextual interpretation

But the linguistic choices, as well as the linguistic routines, are globally difficult to identify clearly, inasmuch as local specific interpretation of the gesture is situated at a particular level.

Solution: identifying recurrent lexical forms (lemmas) and recurrent grammatical forms that are affected by the crafting process

- The low-level annotation may help situating the deletions, substitutions, insertions, displacements
  - The high-level annotation may help to situate the revision strategies through text sequences

The longitudinal analysis would then allow to reveal the dynamics of the entire writing process, and answer to the question wether some regularities may be detected as for its progression. Allongos, the alignment tool developed by Adrien already shows some interesting results that should be completed due to low-& high-level annotation