What is an Exposition in the Portuguese L1 syllabi and textbooks?

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Presentation outline

1. Contextualization

2. Analysis of Portuguese L1 syllabi

3. Analysis of Portuguese L1 textbooks

   a) Definitions

   b) Text production activities

4. Discussion

Project "Texts, Genre and Knowledge"

MAIN GOALS:

- To map the genres of Portuguese compulsory education (grade 1-12), in the subject areas of Portuguese, Science and History

- To provide teachers with aplliable descriptions of the main genres in each subject area (social purpose, structure, lexicogrammatical features)

Contextualization (2)

HISTORY & SCIENCE

- No prior concepts of genre in syllabi or textbooks
- Clean slate to introduce SFL informed descriptions

PORTUGUESE

- Concept and categories of genre already present in syllabi and textbooks
- What do they look like?
- Why and how to introduce SFL informed descriptions?

Contextualization (3)

- Current Portuguese L1 syllabi adopt a textual perspective informed by the notion of genre. (Gouveia, Alexandre & Caels; 2017)

- 2 "genres of schooling" are foregrounded in the official documents:

    - "Exposition"

    - "Argument"

Contextualization (4)

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:
- What is an "Exposition" according to the syllabi?
- What is an "Exposition" according to the textbooks?

Contextualization (4)

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DATA:

2 SYLLABI	20 TEXTBOOKS
• Program and curriculum goals for Portuguese – Basic Education (DGE, 2015) • Program and curriculum goals for Portuguese – Secondary Education (DGE, 2014)	• Grade 1 - Grade 12 • 18 definitions • 79 text production activities

ANALYSIS OF SYLLABI

Exposition in syllabi (1)

- No definition of "Exposition"

- No theoretical references

- Naturalisation process
(everybody knows/ should know what an Exposition is)

Exposition in syllabi (2)

- Several concurring concepts
- Relations between concepts are not made clear
(1 genre or 6 genres?)

Exposition	(Exposição)
Expository text	(Texto expositivo)
Expository/informative text	(Texto expositivo/informativo)
Exposition on a topic	(Exposição sobre um tema)
Predominantly expository text	(Texto de dominância expositiva)
Text with expository features	(Texto de características expositivas)

Exposition in syllabi (3)

- Multitude of other non-literary textual categories
   (30 in Basic Education and 14 in Secondary Education)

- Relations with "Exposition" are not made clear

- Categories are not organized into a classification system

Exposition in syllabi (4)

- The role of the Exposition (and similar text types) in construing and evaluating school knowledge is not made clear.

  - *Which subjects employ expositions?*

  - *Do the features of the exposition vary according to subject/knowledge?*

  - *How can the Portuguese language class prepare students for subject specific literacies?*

Exposition in syllabi (5)

Based on the (sparse and disperse) information in the syllabi, the term "Exposition" seems to imply:
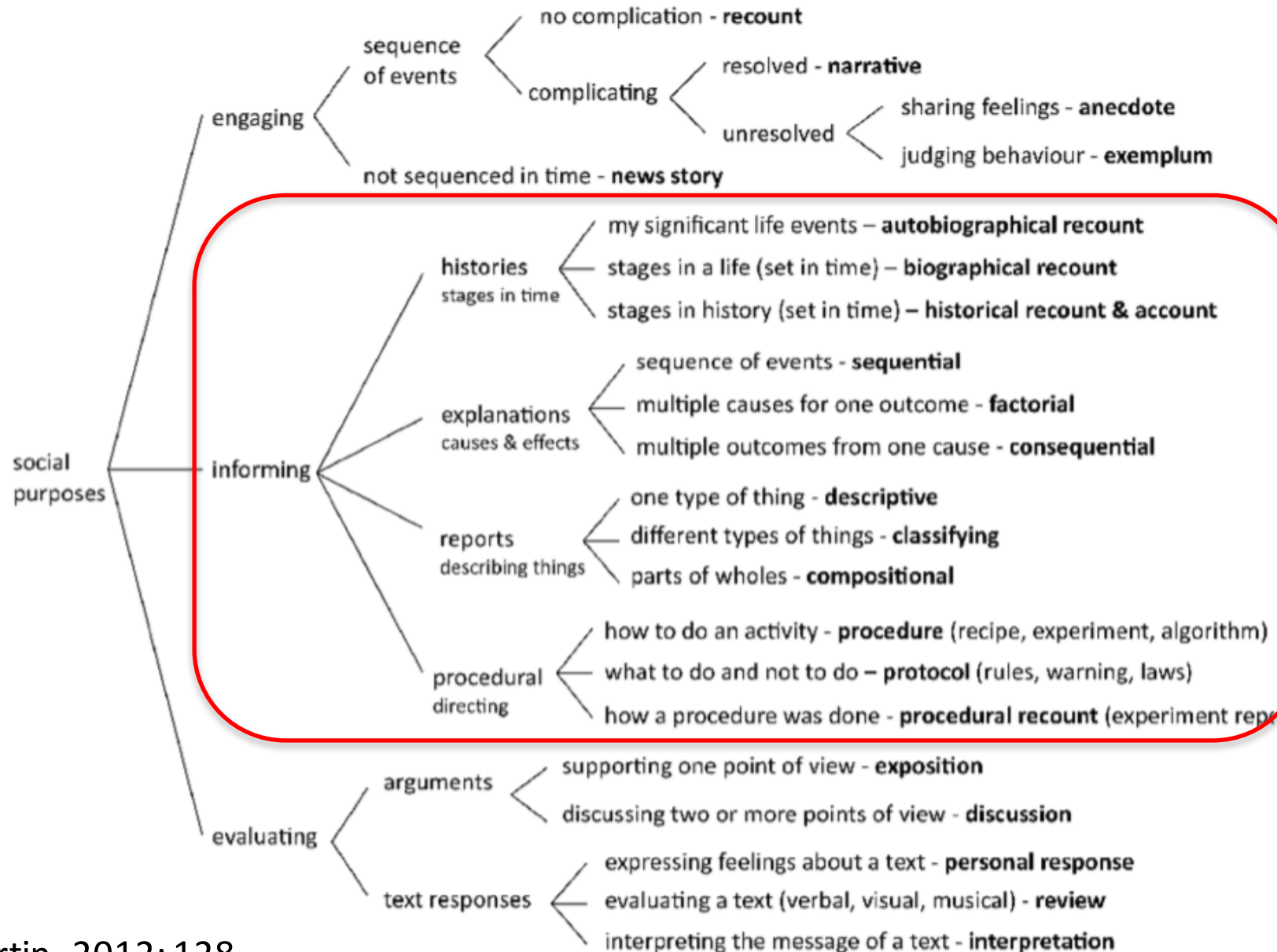
    Exposition   ≠   Literary texts

    Exposition   ≠   Argumentative texts

From an SFL perspective (Sydney School):

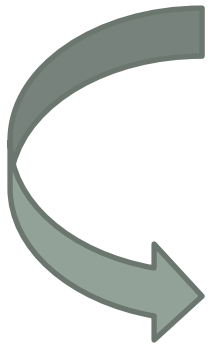   Exposition   =   Factual texts

Exposition in syllabi (6)

engaging

- sequence of events
  - no complication - **recount**
  - complicating
    - resolved - **narrative**
    - unresolved
      - sharing feelings - **anecdote**
      - judging behaviour - **exemplum**
- not sequenced in time - **news story**

social purposes

informing

- histories
  stages in time
  - my significant life events – **autobiographical recount**
  - stages in a life (set in time) – **biographical recount**
  - stages in history (set in time) – **historical recount & account**
- explanations
  causes & effects
  - sequence of events - **sequential**
  - multiple causes for one outcome - **factorial**
  - multiple outcomes from one cause - **consequential**
- reports
  describing things
  - one type of thing - **descriptive**
  - different types of things - **classifying**
  - parts of wholes - **compositional**
- procedural
  directing
  - how to do an activity - **procedure** (recipe, experiment, algorithm)
  - what to do and not to do – **protocol** (rules, warning, laws)
  - how a procedure was done - **procedural recount** (experiment rep...)

evaluating

- arguments
  - supporting one point of view - **exposition**
  - discussing two or more points of view - **discussion**
- text responses
  - expressing feelings about a text - **personal response**
  - evaluating a text (verbal, visual, musical) - **review**
  - interpreting the message of a text - **interpretation**

Rose & Martin, 2012: 128

ANALYSIS OF TEXTBOOKS

PART 1: DEFINITIONS

ANALYSIS OF TEXTBOOKS

PART 1: DEFINITIONS

- Do textbooks define the concept of "Exposition"?
- Do definitions address the purpose, structure and/or lexicogrammatical features of Expositions?

Definitions of Exposition (1)

- 0 textbooks define "Exposition"

- 61% of the textbooks include a definition of similar concepts: "Exposition on a topic", "Expository-explanatory text", "Informative text", "Descriptive text", "Scientific article"

Definitions of Exposition (2)

PURPOSE

- 78% of definitions refer to Purpose
("purpose", "goal", "function", "communicative intention")

- Specific content varies; no single common element

- Recurring verbs:

  - Present
  - Inform
  - Explain
  - Analyse
  - Increase (knowledge)

Definitions of Exposition (3)

CONTEXT OF USE

- Some definitions specify contexts of use.
- Very wide range of contexts, encompassing:

  – Educational and professional contexts

  (Textbooks, encyclopedias, science dissemination books for children/youngsters, specialized magazines, scientific journals, theses)

  – Any field of knowledge

  (Physics, Biology, History, Art, Philosophy, Geography, Literature, etc.)

Definitions of Exposition (4)

STRUCTURE

- (only) 50% of definitions refer to Structure

  - Of these, 40% promote "introduction, body, conclusion"

  - Remaining 10% (2 definitions) propose a different, more specific structure

Definitions of Exposition (5)

LEXICOGRAMMATICAL FEATURES

- (only) 56% of definitions refer to linguistic features

- Features vary; no single common element

- Recurring elements:

- Verbs "to be" and "to have"
- Present tense
- Declarative sentences
- Impersonal/objective language

Definitions of Expositions (7)

TO SUM UP:

- No definitions of "Exposition", only of similar terms.

- Definitions provide general information, applicable to a wide variety of texts.

- According to SFL parameters, definitions may apply to:

  - Factual texts (map of genres of schooling)
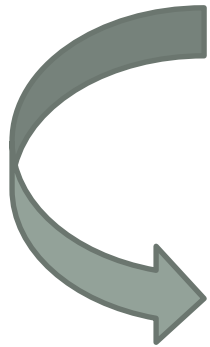 - Later genres in the academic repertoire (scientific paper, technical article, thesis)

ANALYSIS OF TEXTBOOKS

PART 2: ACTIVITIES

ANALYSIS OF TEXTBOOKS

PART 2: ACTIVITIES

- Are textbooks explicit about the target text-type?
- What relations with SFL genre categories?
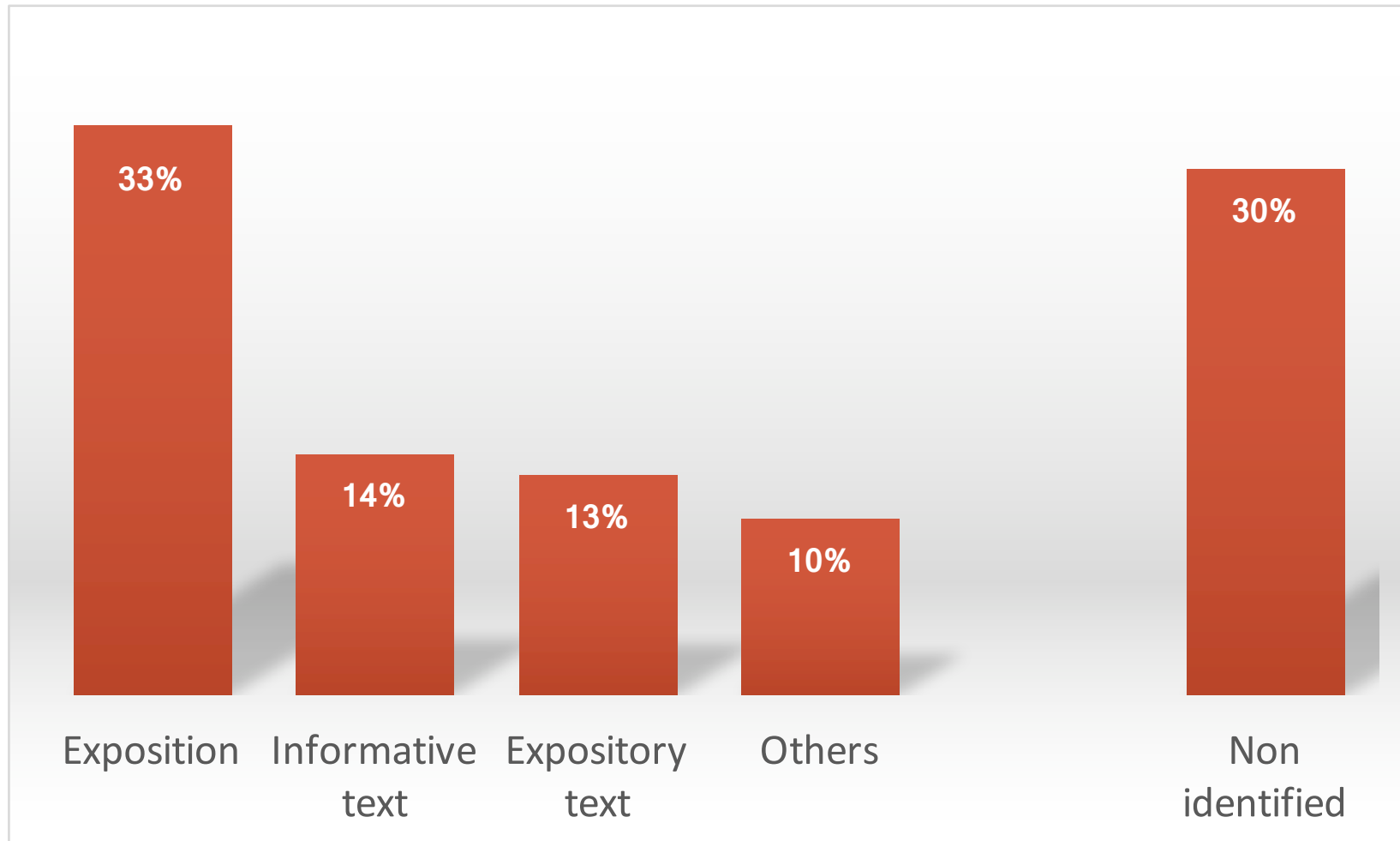
Text production activities (1)

- 90% of textbooks elicit the production of one or more Expositions (or similar text types)

(more textbooks with activities than textbooks with definitions)

Text production activities (2)

TEXT TYPE

33%	14%	13%	10%	30%
Exposition	Informative text	Expository text	Others	Non identified

Text production activities (3)

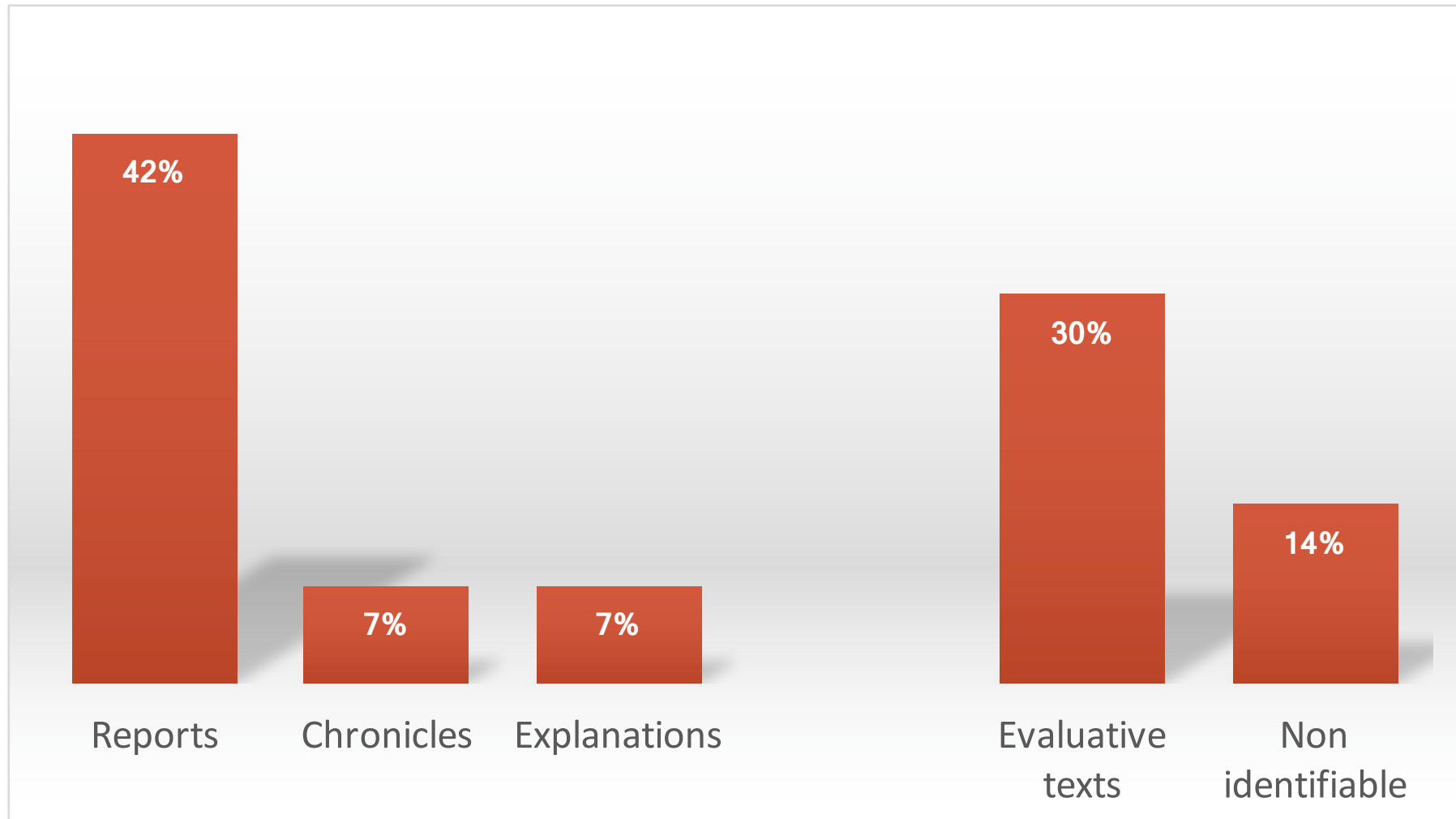NON IDENTIFIED TEXT TYPES

- Text types not identified in the wording of the activity (30%):

    – may be specified elsewhere (general table of contents, outset of chapter, top or margin of page) – inferential reading

    – may require interpretation skills of the reader (e.g. verbs such as "present", "inform", "explain")
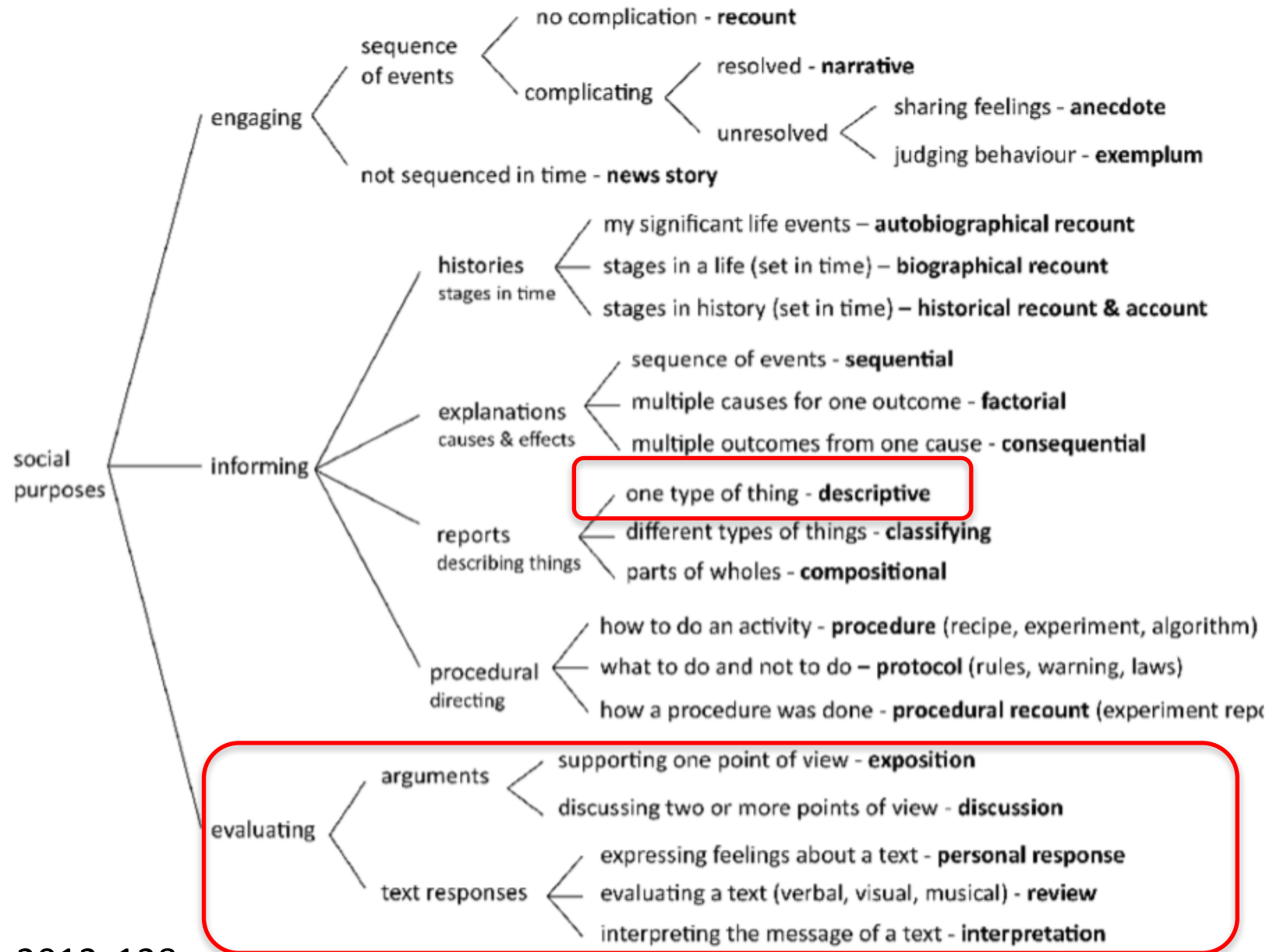
Text production activities (4)

TEXT TYPE (according to SFL parameters)

Text production activities (5)

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social purposes → **informing**
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Rose & Martin, 2012: 128

DISCUSSION

What is an exposition according to the PL1 syllabi and textbooks?

Nobody knows for certain.

Anything goes!

What is an exposition according to the PL1 syllabi and textbooks?

PESSIMISTIC VIEW

What is an exposition according
to the PL1 syllabi and textbooks?

OPTIMISTIC VIEW

Why and how to introduce SFL?

SYSTEMIC APPROACH

- Consistent parameters for identifying and describing genres

- Organizing genres into a system (different levels and relations between categories)

Why and how to introduce SFL?

FUNCTIONAL APPROACH

- Recognizing the pivotal role of language in teaching and learning curricular content

- Preparing students for the literacy demands of schooling, which involve subject specific literacies

- Acknowledging the relation between language and knowledge
  - Different subject areas do not use the same set of genres
  - Genres give form to different knowledge structures

Why and how to introduce SFL?
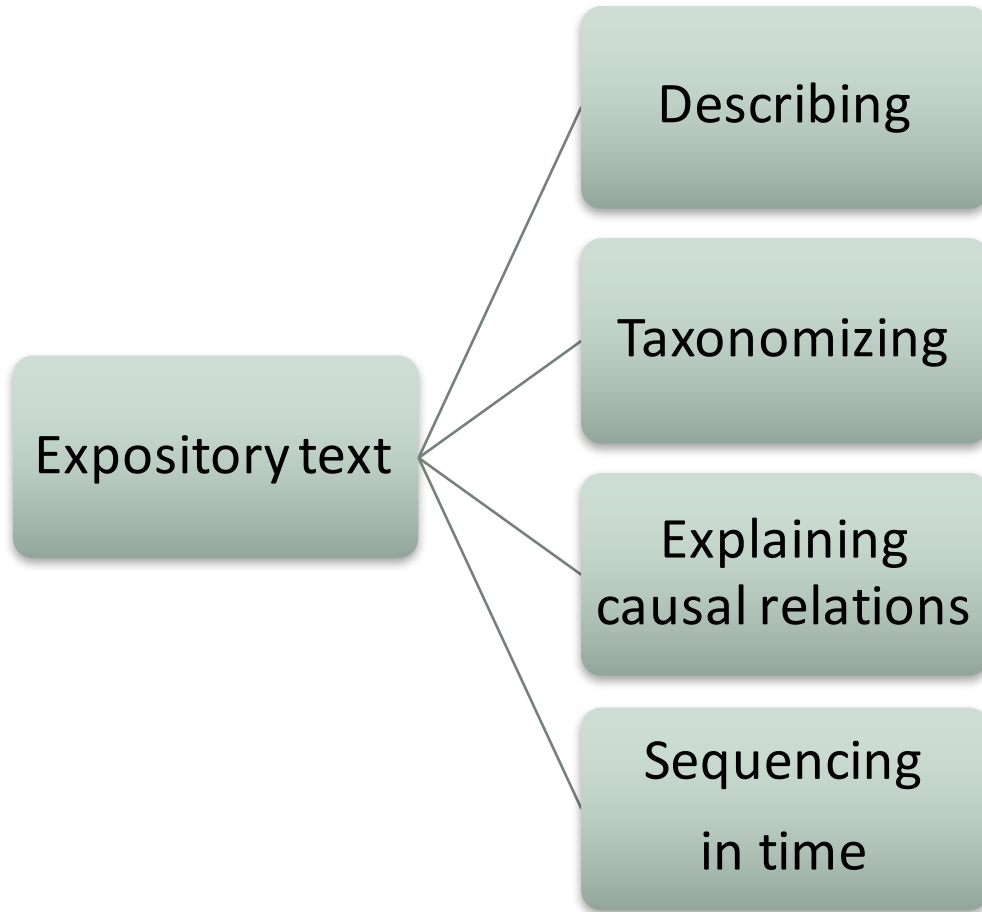

Expository text
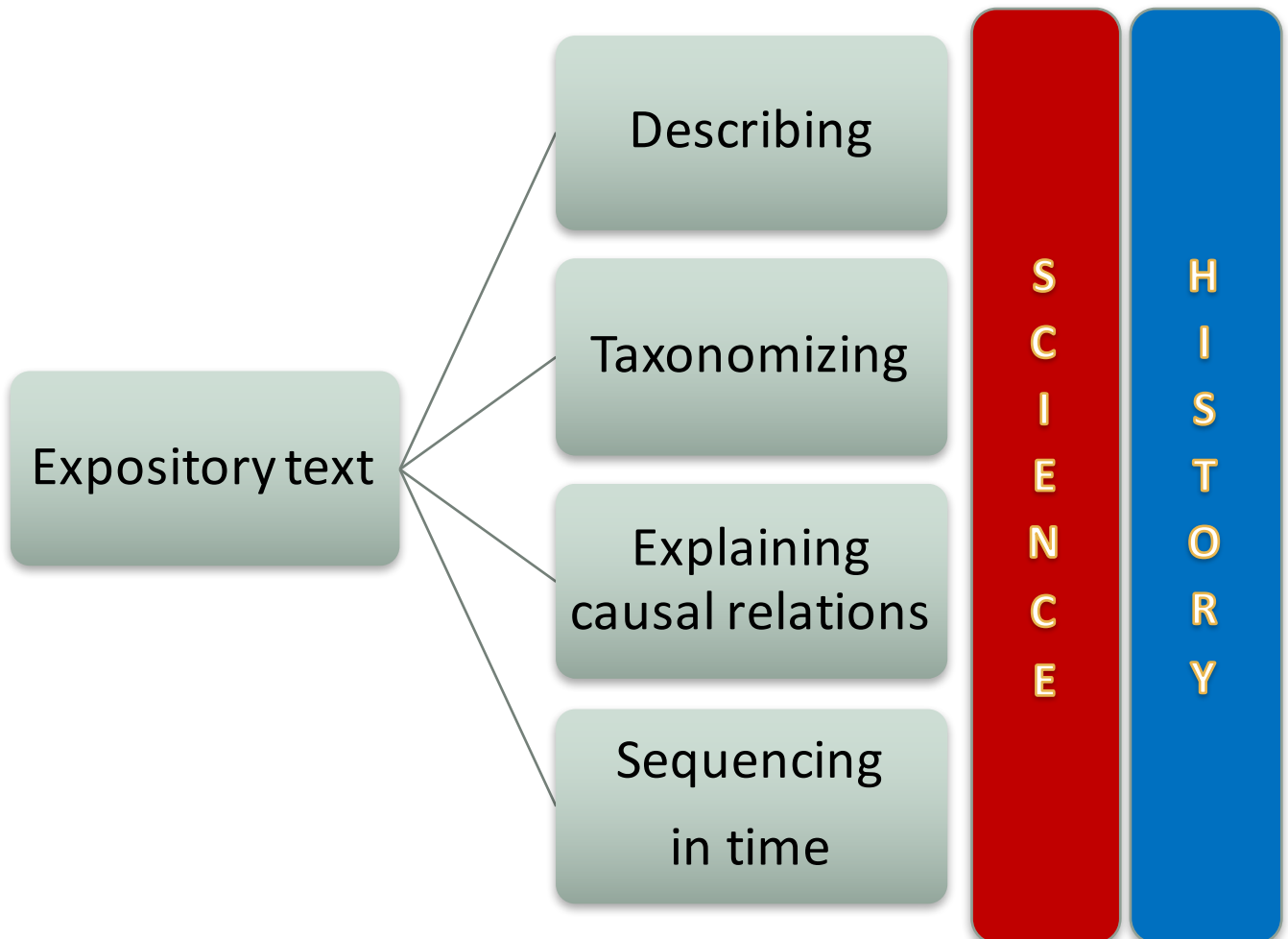
=

Factual / informative text

(≠ Evaluative text)

Why and how to introduce SFL?

Describing

Taxonomizing

Expository text

Explaining causal relations

Sequencing in time

Why and how to introduce SFL?

Texto Expositivo

Expository text
- Describing
- Taxonomizing
- Explaining causal relations
- Sequencing in time

SCIENCE

HISTORY

Obrigado!