

REVIEW

Linguistics at school: a debate on the three axes for grammar teaching

Vitor HOCHSPRUNG 

Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC)

Sandra QUAREZEMIN 

Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC)



OPEN ACCESS

EDITED BY

Raquel Freitag

REVIEWED BY

Isabel de Oliveira e Silva
Monguilhott

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Vitor Hochsprung
Contributed with Sandra
Quarezemin. Roles:
conceptualization, writing –
original draft, analysis and
editing.

Sandra Quarezemin
Contributed with Vitor
Hochsprung. Roles:
conceptualization, writing –
analysis and editing.

DATES

Received: 22/07/2020

Accepted: 07/08/2020

Published: 0/08/2020

HOW TO CITE

Hochsprung, V.; Quarezemin, S.
(2020). Linguistics at school: a
debate on the three axes for
grammar teaching. *Revista da
Abralin*, v. 19, n. 2, p. 1-6, 2020.

ABSTRACT

The conference given by Silvia Rodrigues Vieira makes linguists look at school, addressing the teaching of grammar. Based on a reflection on the current context in which Portuguese language teachers are inserted in, Vieira suggests three axes for teaching: a scientific and reflective approach of grammar; the role of grammar in the construction of meanings, which links grammar with reading and textual production; and a consideration of a heterogeneous language, which contributes to the development of linguistic respect. Also, the lecturer stresses the importance of a teacher who also researches and keeps studying.

RESUMO

A conferência proferida por Silvia Rodrigues Vieira aponta os olhos dos linguistas para a escola, abordando o ensino de gramática. A partir de uma reflexão sobre o contexto atual em que nos encontramos enquanto professores de língua portuguesa, a autora propõe três eixos para o ensino: uma abordagem científica e reflexiva da gramática; o papel da gramática na construção de sentidos, que relaciona a gramática com a leitura e produção textual; e a consideração de uma língua heterogênea, que contribui para o desenvolvimento do respeito linguístico por parte dos alunos. Além disso, a conferencista ressalta a importância do professor-pesquisador e da formação continuada de docentes.

KEYWORDS

Grammar. School. Linguistics.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Gramática. Escola. Linguística.

During the pandemic context we are living in, the Brazilian Association of Linguistics (ABRALIN), together with other international associations¹, promoted an event entirely online, which has been exhibiting, since May, lives, debates, and dialogues that come from linguists and can easily arrive at our homes through YouTube. In this way, linguists, teachers, professors, academics, and those who are interested in language can access qualified content that promotes discussions, exchanges, and even the opportunity to public reviews.

Among many other names, one of the guests to deliver a speech was the researcher Silvia Rodrigues Vieira, a renowned expert in grammar teaching. Author of the book *Gramática, variação e ensino: diagnoses e propostas pedagógicas* (VIEIRA, 2018) and one of the organizers of the book *Ensino de Gramática: descrição e uso* (BRANDÃO; VIEIRA, 2011), Silvia Rodrigues Vieira proposes three axes for grammar teaching, which aim to achieve scientific reasoning, meaningful literacy practices, and linguistic respect.

However, before talking about the three axes and other appointments made by the researcher, we will briefly present the structure of the content to be presented in this review: we will make a summary of Vieira's speech, relating it to our point of view about teaching grammar, which comes from an ongoing master's degree in the Postgraduate Program in Linguistics at the Federal University of Santa Catarina (PPGLin/UFSC) and considers mainly the contributions of Theoretical Linguistics which is closely related to the researcher's speech, especially to the first axis that she mentions, which defends the reflective and scientific approach of grammar in schools.

In addition to this first axis, which takes into account the knowledge that the student (who is also a speaker) already has of his language to develop scientific thinking on grammatical constructions, Vieira also brings the second axis, which concerns the teaching of grammar and the production of meanings, recognizing grammar as an important tool in enabling good work with reading and writing activities, and the third axis, the teaching of grammar, variation, and norms, which makes the students reflect about linguistic prejudice, as it considers language as something heterogeneous, but also allows the student to reflect on structures he might not know, as they belong to the variety he does not master, which is often the case with the reference standard (FARACO, 2020) in contexts of written production.

¹ Event promoted by Abralin together with CIPL – Comité International Permanent des Linguistes, ALFAL – Asociación de Lingüística y Filología de América Latina, SAEL – Sociedad Argentina de Estudios Lingüísticos and LSA – Linguistic Society of America.

At the beginning of the lecture, Silvia Rodrigues Vieira raises suggestions from the official documents that guide education, such as the National Curriculum Parameters (PCN) (BRASIL, 1998) and the Common National Curriculum Basis (BNCC) (BRASIL, 2019), for teaching grammar. In the first document, the discussion is not about teaching grammar or not, but how to do it. The second one considers issues of linguistic/semiotic analysis, textual production, orality, and reading.

Taking this as a basis, the researcher says that we have already had certain advances if we compare to older contexts, but they have happened in very different ways, leaving some problems. Among them, the fact that the grammar approach we have is a polysemy caused by various conceptions of grammar adopted by teachers (and, unfortunately, the most adopted is still the traditional/prescriptivist one, which is worked in a way that promotes prejudice linguistic and even anti-scientific senses); the object to be taught that, according to Vieira, is bound to limits - for example: it is either text, or it is a sentence. It is either gender, or it is grammar. It is either description, or it is the prescription - even though it can work with all these contents; and categorical statements without scientific composition, such as the idea that working with grammar does not help reading and writing, or that we should not work with technical terms in the classroom. After this reflective introduction, Vieira begins to talk about the three axes of grammar teaching mentioned above.

Vieira, to illustrate them, presents an image of a bank:

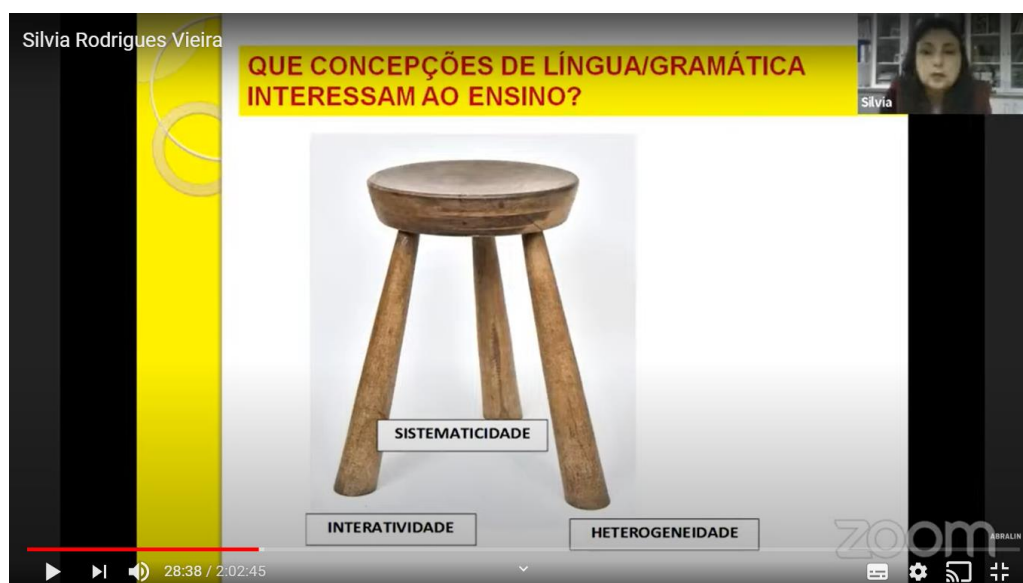


FIGURE 1 - Conceptions of language/grammar that interest teaching (bank metaphor - interactivity, systematicity, heterogeneity)

The idea is to present these three conceptions as necessary in grammar teaching, because if we remove one of them, the bank cannot be sustained. The lecturer recognizes, however, that these are practices that vary according to the theoretical perspective, but argues that they should be treated equally in grammar classes at schools.

From this metaphor, three reflections are proposed: (i) what elements should students know? (ii) what is the relationship between grammar and production of meanings? (iii) is the grammar variable? These reflections are related, respectively, to the first, second, and third axes proposed by the researcher.

The three axes raised by Vieira consider what the student who speaks Brazilian Portuguese already brings to school, considering the starting point for effective work with reading and producing texts and promoting respect for linguistic diversity. The idea of a more reflective approach to grammar is strongly related to the proposal by Pires de Oliveira and Quarezemin (2016; 2020), who argue the importance of considering the students' internal grammar so that, from it, it is possible to (re-/des-)construct grammars through a scientific methodology that instigates the student to think about hypotheses and analyze data about the language they speak.

When we propose scientific teaching of grammar, surely we do not advocate that the same molds of the university be adopted in basic education classes (QUAREZEMIN, 2017), but we recognize that working with scientific methodology allows, in grammar classes, to develop critical thinking and creativity of students, in addition to promoting interest in science. We also assume that considering what the student brings to school as a speaker is important for this work since it is from this internalized grammar that linguistic hypotheses and intuitions are taken, and they will be a starting point for working with grammar, even if the "target" grammar is the reference standard. We can say that the grammar teacher who does not consider what the student brings to school as a speaker can be compared to a hypothetical physical education teacher who does not consider that students already arrive at school with the ability to run.

As the three axes raised by the researcher must be correlated, it is also important to mention that this scientific work contributes for the student to understand and produce texts stily, by understanding how the language works in the most varied contexts, which is already related to the suggestions of the National Curriculum Parameters (PCN) (BRASIL, 1998) and also with the suggestions of the Common National Curriculum Basis (BNCC) (BRASIL, 2019), as previously said. Furthermore, one of the first steps to understand language as a scientific object is to believe that it is not something ready and let alone unique, which is what defends the third axis, reinforcing the importance of working with linguistic variation in the classroom.

Experts (BAGNO, 2007; BORTONI-RICARDO, 2004), advocate a pluralized approach to working with language in schools. These and many other authors understand the relevance of working with sociolinguistic concepts in the classroom for the development of a linguistic awareness that understands and respects the most diverse linguistic variants and contexts of speech.

We perceive, in this way, the contributions that theoretical currents, such as Gerativism (cf. KENEDY, 2013), sociolinguistics, and other ones, bring to the teaching of language(s), as well as we consider important some works that describe proposals to teach grammar scientifically (FRANCHI, 2006; CASTILHO, 2010; PERINI, 2010; PIRES DE OLIVEIRA; QUAREZEMIN, 2016; PILATI, 2017; HOCHSPRUNG; ZENDRON DA CUNHA, 2019; PIRES DE OLIVEIRA; QUAREZEMIN, 2020; AVELAR, 2017; and others).

With that, we have already entered in another point raised by Vieira at the end of her speech: the importance of a teacher who is also a researcher. The lecturer defends scientific work for the teachers, too, so they develop researches that include the students themselves, through, for example, diagnoses that allow the teachers to understand the needs of the class and work with better approaches to teaching grammar in that context that they are inserted in. However, we also argue that it is essential that the teacher is a constant student, looking for content and always seeking to be updated on the discussions made between experts. Thus, the much-desired bridge between the academic world and basic education is increasingly strengthened.

Therefore, understanding the points raised by the lecturer, we strongly recommend the live for linguists, (native or foreign) language teachers, academics of Letras course, as well as master's and doctoral students who research about working with grammar in schools.

REFERENCES

- AVELAR, Juanito Ornelas de. *Saberes gramaticais: formas, normas e sentidos no espaço escolar*. São Paulo: Parábola, 2017.
- BAGNO, Marcos. *Nada na língua é por acaso: por uma pedagogia da variação lingüística*. São Paulo: Parábola, 2007.
- BASES por uma pedagogia da variação linguística. Conference presented by Carlos Alberto Faraco [s.l., s.n], 2020. 1 video (1h 9min 15s). Published by Brazilian Association of Linguistics channel. Available on: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3kS-RHie0Zw>. Accessed on June 07th 2020.
- BORTONI-RICARDO, Stella Maris. *Educação em língua materna*. São Paulo: Parábola, 2004.
- BRANDÃO, Sílvia Figueiredo; VIEIRA, Sílvia Rodrigues. *Ensino de gramática: descrição e uso*. Editora Contexto, 2011.
- BRASIL. Ministério da Educação. Secretaria da Educação Básica. *Base nacional comum curricular*. Brasília, DF, 2019. 595p.
- BRASIL. Ministério da Educação e do Desporto. *Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais*. SEF. Brasília: MEC/SEF, 1998.
- CASTILHO, Ataliba de. *Nova gramática do português brasileiro*. São Paulo: Contexto, 2010.
- ENSINO de Gramática em três eixos: uma questão de ciência, cidadania e respeito linguístico. Conference presented by Sílvia Rodrigues Vieira [s.l., s.n], 2020. 1 video (2h 2min 45s). Published by Brazilian Association of Linguistics channel. Available on: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ypVJ2fVT3Yw>. Accessed on July 19th 2020.
- HOCHSPRUNG, Vitor; ZENDRON DA CUNHA, Karina. Que gramática se ensina na escola? Uma análise das classes de palavras em livros didáticos. *Miqulim-Revista Eletrônica do Netlli*, v. 8, n. 2, p. 589-603, 2019.
- KENEDY, Eduardo. Possíveis contribuições da Linguística Gerativa à formação do professor de Língua Portuguesa. *Revista de Letras*, v. 1, n. 32, 2013.
- PERINI, Mário A. *Gramática do português brasileiro*. São Paulo: Parábola, 2010.
- PILATI, Eloisa. *Linguística, gramática e aprendizagem ativa*. São Paulo: Pontes, 2nd ed., 2017.

PIRES DE OLIVEIRA, Roberta. QUAREZEMIN, Sandra. *Gramáticas na escola*. Petrópolis: Vozes, 2016.

PIRES DE OLIVEIRA, Roberta. QUAREZEMIN, Sandra (Orgs). *Artefatos em Gramática: Ideias para aulas de Língua*. Florianópolis: Dados Eletrônicos, 2020.

QUAREZEMIN, Sandra. Ensinar Linguística na Escola: um confronto com a realidade. *Working Papers em Linguística*, v. 18, n. 2, p. 69-92, 2017.

VIEIRA, Sílvia Rodrigues. *Gramática, variação e ensino*. Editora Edgard Blücher, 2018.