

REVIEW

Grammar teaching: the tripod and its gains

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ABSTRACT

Professor Silvia Rodrigues Vieiras' conference, entitled *Ensino de gramática em três eixos: uma questão de ciência, cidadania e respeito linguístico*, held at ABRALIN Online, addresses the challenges and proposals of grammar teaching in Brazil as a central theme. Contextualizing, with a brief history, the problems of this theme, the teacher manages to demystify some beliefs of Portuguese teachers themselves about what it would be like to teach grammar and how to do it, showing that this teaching can be guided by three fundamental axes, which respect the documents the most recent scientific discoveries and the testimonial experiences of the teachers themselves. In this way, she reassures her colleagues in the field, showing that it is not necessary to make a choice for Sofia and that teaching grammar is not only a scientific practice, but presents satisfactory results on how to deal with the topic.



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RESUMO

A conferência da professora Silvia Rodrigues Vieira, intitulada *Ensino de gramática em três eixos: uma questão de ciência, cidadania e respeito linguístico*, realizada na ABRALIN Online, aborda como tema central os desafios e propostas do ensino de gramática no Brasil. Contextualizando, com uma breve história, os problemas desse tema, a professora consegue desmistificar algumas crenças dos próprios professores de português sobre o que seria ensinar gramática e como fazer isso, mostrando que esse ensino pode ser pautado em três eixos fundamentais, que respeitam os documentos oficiais, as mais recentes descobertas científicas e as experiências testemunhais dos próprios professores. Dessa forma, ela tranquiliza os colegas da área, evidencia que não é necessário que seja feita uma escolha de Sofia e que ensinar gramática não só é uma prática científica, mas apresenta resultados satisfatórios sobre uma forma de lidar com o tema.

KEYWORDS

Grammar teaching. Three axes. Science.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Ensino de gramática. Três eixos. Ciência.

The purpose of this critical review is to make some reflections succinctly about the online conference of professor Silvia Vieira, entitled *Teaching grammar in three axes: a question of science, citizenship and linguistic respect*, presented at ABRALIN (2020). When discussing grammar teaching, Vieira (2020) divides his lecture into four parts, in addition to the time to answer questions asked by online participants. Each is centered on a point. They are: I- introduction of the theme; II- initial and current phase of grammar teaching; III- teaching of grammar in three axes (VIEIRA, 2014; 2017); and IV- examples of scientific research in the area and final considerations. The references for this lecture, as the professor says, were based on official documents, such as PCN (1998) and BNCC (2017), reference works, textbooks, testimonials from teachers and lives from ABRALIN (2020). Finally, the author also warns that she will not stop talking about all Portuguese language teaching in schools (that is, she will not contemplate the four practices as stated in the aforementioned official documents), she will not evaluate the teaching materials, nor lines of research and official documents, nor will it present any advice on pedagogical practices.

In the first part of her presentation, the teacher makes her initial considerations and introduces the subject of her lecture. It presents the problem of teaching grammar, places listeners in their general panorama and shows the importance of the theme: teaching grammar is a scientific issue, has social relevance and is an interdisciplinary topic, which is related to linguistic respect. After this presentation, she cuts out her speech, stating her goals, showing how far she goes, and limits her, putting boundaries in her reach. Thus, Vieira (2020) shows how the division of his conference will be, and continues his initial considerations already reaching a panorama of teaching grammar, which will be the second part of his presentation.

In part II, *overview of grammar teaching after PCNs*, Vieira (2020) highlights the importance of PCNs for Brazilian education. Reporting the impact of this document on grammar teaching, she points out that its influence in schools was varied. However, the main milestone of the document was “the substitution, not the coexistence of knowledge”. This is largely due to the concept of education and language adopted by the PCNs themselves: sociointeractionist conception. In practice, says the author, the readings that were taken from him replaced the teaching of grammar (in the metalinguistic sense) with the teaching of text, through which grammar was spoken. Thus, the text is the focus, and the grammar is an instrument.

Although the general recommendations on the treatment of grammar advocated a teaching path, namely, USE> REFLECTION> USE, there was no development of an alternative framework to

the traditional approach - when it is necessary to use it, even more so with regard to sentence study. Regarding linguistic variation, it was embraced and legitimized at school. This without leaving aside the teaching of the standard norm. Thus, the teaching of the Portuguese language was permeated by the teaching of grammar through the text, taking into account linguistic variation and the standard reference standard.

As a result of this phase, the author points out some problems. Among them, we have the grammatical approach. For example, Vieira (2020) enumerates it: (a) conceptual and theoretical inconsistencies, such as the 'grammar' polysemy, which understandings of traditional grammar, different conceptions of norm, in addition to the problems in characterizing some grammatical phenomena; (b) what the teacher's choices would be: either the text or the sentence. Either the textual genre or the sentence grammar; (c) categorical and general "beliefs" of the teachers themselves about teaching grammar: "teaching of nomenclature / taxonomy harms", "one should go from the data to the description", among others.

After that, the proposals came. In the third part, Vieira (2020) brings his proposal of teaching grammar in three axes. With a stool metaphor, she proposes that systematicity, interactivity and heterogeneity are fundamental parts on which the teaching of grammar is based. In the metaphor, each of these parts are the "legs" of the bench, which cannot have different sizes or mass. Thus, these three pillars are equally important for teaching. From this, the axes appear. Each of them, then, connects more directly to one of these parts in the teaching of grammar.

Axis I, *Grammar and Reflective Activity*, refers to which theoretical-descriptive concepts the student must consciously master so that a certain grammatical theme is well worked. Axis II, *Grammar and Production of Senses*, refers to the relationship of a grammatical theme and the production of meanings, whether in the scope of reading or in the production of utterances, at local or global. Finally, axis III, *Grammar and Norms/Varieties*, refers to how a theme is related to the domain of norms in the face of the reality of linguistic variation. With this explanation, the speaker defends that there is a relationship between them, since they are transversal, with multiple and varied contributions. Then, it proposes a conciliatory grammar teaching, with a conception of grammar that can be outlined in: The student's internal grammar (his grammatical knowledge), which leads to external grammar (linguistic reflection and descriptions of systematized theoretical objects). This, in turn, is linked to a descriptive approach (theoretical objects - contributions from each theoretical framework - and objects of use - scientific results that consider the continuum of variation on modality, variety and registration) and a prescriptive one.

Raising the teaching of grammar to a scientific object, Vieira (2020) sees it as being based on teaching and research practices, which involves teacher-researchers. Thus, on teaching, she argues that use should be started. That is, an initial situation that leads to reflection, leading to a systematization, and, finally, to a final situation of use. As a research object, it is important that different theoretical currents can measure the "success" of the teaching-learning process, in addition to the identification of a teaching problem, fundamentals and reassessment of the initial problem, making it possible to re-apply the research.

In the last part, she presents some works and research results - often coming from PROFLETRAS - that use the three axes or just two of them. She ends her speech with the final remarks, in which she summarizes several points of her presentation, and, soon after, she opens up to questions. In them, she responds about the importance of continuing education for teacher-researchers, in addition to defending the importance of formulating reference standards (s), through continuous speech/writing, with their respective genres. He then concludes by saying that the three axes have the same importance for the teaching of grammar, but, depending on the activity, the objectives, the diagnosis, one or the other axis may have different weights.

In this conference, Professor Silvia Vieira deals strongly with the teaching of grammar within the Brazilian reality post-PCN, showing gains and losses, giving suggestions and presenting proposals. Speech, in general, demystifies what it is to teach grammar and that teachers should not fear it.

In a conciliatory way, it shows that the teaching of grammar does not need to depend exclusively on the text, as many now defend. It shows that it is possible - and desirable - to link grammatical teaching, which may not even completely abandon traditional grammar, teaching text - or sentence - to linguistic variation, which is important to reduce linguistic prejudice. Through a praxis, the teaching of grammar, which can be used throughout basic Portuguese language teaching, permeates concrete data of use, within the various social and literacy situations, of speech and writing, which generate a reflection about them and the functioning of the linguistic system, a systematization of the grammatical theme / phenomenon, and which return to a real interaction data. There is, therefore, no kind of Sofia's Choice, a Manichaeism: or one or the other. What exists is a way of bringing together not only the skills mentioned in the official documents mentioned above, but also the axes of grammatical teaching, that is, inductively working the data with the current normative rules and textual analysis. Even, depending on the situation and the objective, give up a text - in the popular sense of the term - and use the sentence as a major element. This last case is explicit when working, for example, with word formation processes. It would not be necessary, a priori, of a long text to arrive at a reflection and systematization of the linguistic phenomenon.

Teaching grammar, therefore, does not need to be plastered or excluding. When it is an object of scientific research, with methodology and results, one must give up prejudices and preformed beliefs or without scientific support. It must be supported by aligning official determinations with the experience of teacher-researchers. Thus, grammar is taught so that there is scientific rationality, conscious access by citizens to meaningful literacy, reading and production practices, in addition to promoting more linguistic variants, so that the student can identify and produce them if necessary.

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