

REVIEW

The proposal for the teaching of grammar in three axes

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ABSTRACT

In this text, we present a review of the conference *The teaching of grammar in three axes: a matter of science, citizenship, and linguistic respect* delivered by Silvia Rodrigues Vieira and mediated by Isabel Monguilhott on July 16th, 2020 at Abralín Ao Vivo – Linguists Online event. Overall, Vieira discusses the teaching of grammar and presents her proposal for a teaching in three axes (**reflective activity – conveying meaning – norms/varieties**), associating them to issues related to **science, citizenship, and to linguistic respect** (VIEIRA, 2017a; VIEIRA, 2017b). The lecturer i) makes an overview of the teaching of grammar under the repercussions of the National Curriculum Parameters (PCNs); ii) makes her proposal for the teaching of grammar in three axes explicit; and iii) presents results of productive research on the teaching of grammar.

RESUMO

Neste texto, apresentamos uma resenha da conferência *Ensino de gramática em três eixos: uma questão de ciência, cidadania e respeito linguístico* proferida por Silvia Rodrigues Vieira e moderada por Isabel Monguilhott no dia 16 de julho de 2020 no evento Abralín Ao Vivo – *Linguists Online*. De modo panorâmico, Vieira discute sobre ensino de gramática e apresenta sua proposta de um ensino em três eixos (**atividade reflexiva – produção de sentidos – normas/variedades**), associando-os a questões relativas à **ciência, à cidadania e ao respeito linguístico** (VIEIRA, 2017a; VIEIRA, 2017b). A conferencista i) traça um breve panorama do ensino de

gramática à luz das repercussões dos Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais (PCNs); ii) explicita sua proposta de ensino de gramática em três eixos; e iii) apresenta resultados de pesquisas produtivas sobre ensino de gramática.

KEYWORDS

Teaching of Grammar. Teaching of grammar in three axes. Pedagogic proposals.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Ensino de gramática. Ensino de gramática em três eixos. Propostas pedagógicas.

Approaching the teaching of grammar is not an easy task. The issue has been already regarded as an object of thought for a long time, but it is still in its early stages of development concerning resolutions. Currently, the discussion is not **if** we should teach grammar; the gaps are **how**, **why**, and **for what** teaching grammar (acc. FREITAG, 2017).

In the face of these challenges, we highlight Professor Silvia Rodrigues Vieira's proposal for a teaching of grammar in three axes, which proposes a work with grammar that integrates **reflective activity**, **conveying meaning**, and considers the linguistic phenomena as manifestations of **norms/varieties** in the continua speech/writing and of stylistic monitoring. The proposal is approached in the conference *The proposal for the teaching of grammar in three axes* delivered by Vieira and mediated by Isabel Monguilhott on July 16th, 2020 at Abralín Ao Vivo – Linguists Online.

Silvia Rodrigues Vieira is an Associate Professor of the Department of Vernacular Letters at the Faculty of Letters of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro and acts on The Graduate Program in Vernacular Letters and in the Professional Master's Degree in Letters at UFRJ. The researcher has devoted herself to Sociolinguistics, and mostly to what concerns the description of Portuguese varieties. Vieira is a reference on the study of the teaching of grammar across Brazil. She has written books such as *Gramática, variação e ensino: diagnose e propostas pedagógicas* (VIEIRA, 2017a) and *Variação, gêneros textuais e ensino de Português: da norma culta à norma-padrão* (VIEIRA, 2019).

In her talk at Abralín Ao Vivo – *Linguists Online*, which we review here, Vieira discusses the teaching of grammar and presents her proposal for a teaching in three axes, associating them to issues related to **science**, **citizenship**, and **linguistic respect**, as her lecture title mentions. The professor i) makes a brief overview of the teaching of grammar under the repercussions of the National Curriculum Parameters (PCNs); ii) makes her proposal for the teaching of grammar in three axes explicit, stressing conceptual matters related to the senses of norms; and iii) presents results of productive research on the teaching of grammar.

From the publishing of the National Curriculum Parameters (PCNs), there has been a paradigm change in the teaching of grammar – at least theoretically – causing a replacement of a traditional model of teaching – supposedly inefficient, which presupposes a didactic transposition based on the evidences of contemporary Linguistics.

The official documents, based on those discoveries, guide the teaching from a social interactionist approach to language. Through this prism, the text is the privileged teaching object; the linguistic, grammatical component, on the other hand, assumes an instrumental character. Vieira clarifies that the official documents recognize the legitimacy of linguistic variation and assume the commitment to the teaching of the cult norm. Therefore, the official guidelines recommend a teaching model based on the tripod **use – reflection – use**, involving linguistic, epilinguistic, and metalinguistic activities.

Despite these advanced in the official guidelines, the lecturer highlights that there has not been a proposition and effective application of an alternate framework to the traditional teaching. Concerning this aspect, the researcher points out problems and challenges of three types that reflects the lack of scientific maturity in the teaching of grammar: i) theoretical and descriptive inconsistencies both in relation to norm and grammar and to sociolinguistic description of linguistic phenomena; ii) delimitation of the object of work, which is always observed in contrast to another as excludable –it is either text or phrase; and iii) teaching methodologies based on personal experiences, without scientific proof.

After saying that, Vieira (2017a, 2017b) proposes a teaching of grammar in three axes which intends itself to be conciliatory and scientifically founded. In her talk, the lecturer didactically materializes her proposal in the figure of the “language teaching stool” (Figure 1), which we report here because we consider it exemplar to the proposal:

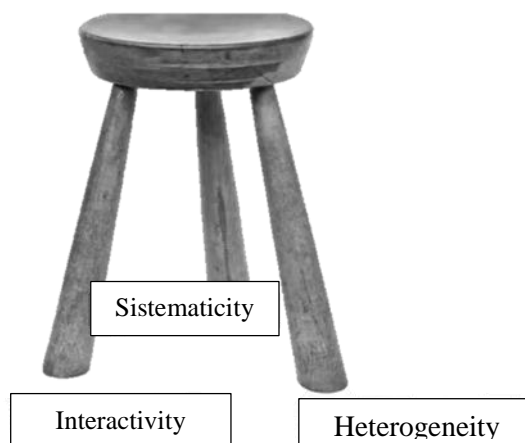


FIGURE 1 - Language teaching stool

The structure of the stool is representative of Vieira's proposal for the teaching of grammar in three axes. The pillars of the teaching of grammar are the three features inherent to languages: **sistematicity**, **interactivity**, and **heterogeneity**; which need to be equally treated in the pedagogical practices, ensuring "the strength of the stool". Therefore, the teaching of grammar centered in the three axes must conjugate them, conciliating the contributions from diverse theoretical frameworks related to the three linguistic features.

Vieira (2017a, p. 85-86) argues that the language teaching must work with grammar:

- i) considering the functioning of linguistic resources in different levels (phonetic-phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic-discursive);
- ii) allowing the access to practices of reading and of oral and written text production, making the student recognize and use the linguistic resources as fundamental elements to the conveying of meaning; and, also,
- iii) affording conditions to the student to have access to prestige varieties in society, according to the continua of variation (BORTONI-RICARDO, 2005), which configure a plurality of use norms without diminishing other varieties presented by the student and/or in the diverse used materials.

Vieira also argues that the relationship between the three axes must be of complementarity; but, she emphasizes that the axis **grammar and reflective activity** must be transversal to the other axes, as the scheme of Figure 2 illustrates bellow:

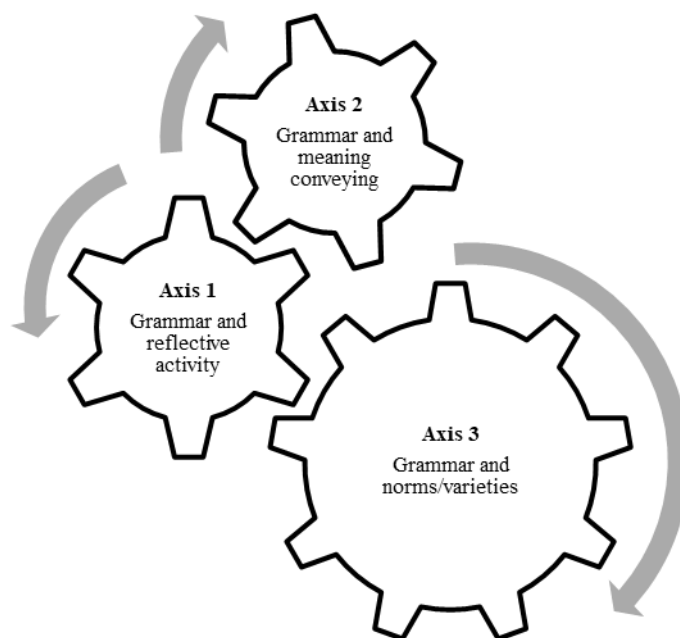


FIGURE 2 - Three axes for the teaching of grammar

The proposed teaching of grammar integrates formal aspects related to the sistematicity of the language, involving metacognition activities; the meaning conveying, both in relation to reading and text production; considering the analysis of linguistic phenomena as a manifestation of norms/varieties in the continua speech/writing and of stylistic monitoring.

Therefore, regarded as a conciliatory proposal, the teaching of grammar in three axes: i) stems from the inherent grammatical knowledge of the speaker to the systematization of the theoretical objects and of uses, in continuous feedback process; ii) considers the contributions of diverse theoretical frameworks; and iii) argues that the theoretical objects and objects of use must be based on scientific studies of description. In the face of that, the professor proposes an alternative to the teaching proposal recommended by the PCNs, the following methodological scheme:

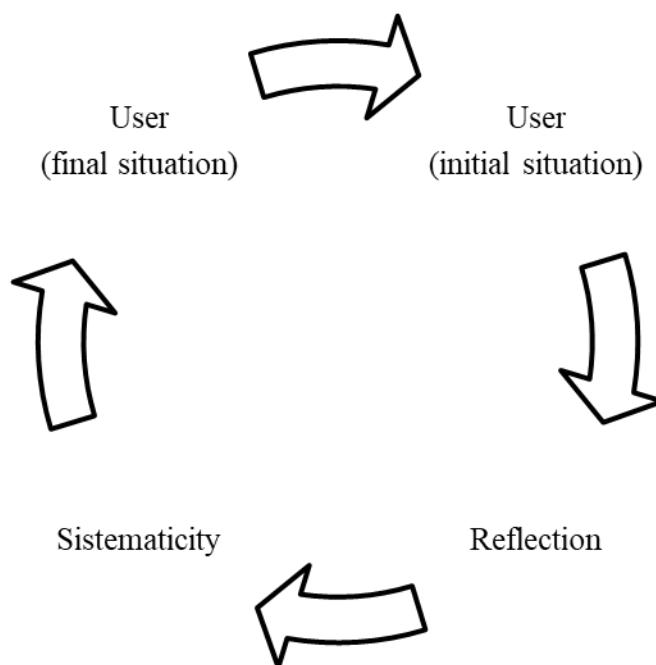


FIGURE 3 - Vieira's methodological scheme to the teaching of grammar

Complementing the discussion, Vieira problematizes the terminological and conceptual confusion that affects the issue of the reference norm, as Faraco discussed (BASES, 2020). The lecturer emphasizes that it is necessary to invest in a reference norm based on the cult uses, supported by descriptive research and considering the continuum speech-writing-monitoring, in a way that the normative instruments reflect these uses.

In the third section of her talk, Vieira briefly presents pedagogical proposals developed under the three axes to the teaching of grammar (acc. VIEIRA, 2017). The professor emphasizes the proposals developed in the Professional Master's Degree in Letters (Profletras). The program, in Portuguese language field, is designed to state elementary teachers and is aimed to the development of a pedagogical product, which integrates descriptive work, pedagogical practices, and the testing of its

efficiency and replicability (FREITAG, 2017a). Vieira evidences the productivity of the discipline “Grammar, variation, and teaching” (“Gramática, variação e ensino”). As Freitag (2017b) points out, it is through this discipline that the language teacher goes under a process of “dogma” deconstruction in relation to *how*, *if one should*, *for what*, and *why* teaching grammar, in contrast to the conception of static language and unchangeable grammar.

Among the pedagogic proposals cited by the lecturer, we highlight the work of Paes and Freitag (2020), which was developed in the scope of Profletras, as an example of the approach to the teaching of grammar in three axes. Paes and Freitag (2020) developed a pedagogical product for the work with the expression of the second person in discourse. It is entitled “Scale of Social Relationships”. The development of this pedagogical object went through a thorough methodological procedure in order to test its functionality, involving a pilot study, with diagnosis in text productions and interviews, application of the product, and testing its efficiency from questionnaires handed to the students (PAES; FREITAG, 2020). The pedagogical product articulates the three axes in an exemplar way when working with second person linguistic forms and the social differences that compose these linguistic marks, considering the conveying of meaning in diverse socio-communicative situations.

In the face of pedagogical proposals such as this, it is sensitive that the teaching of grammar needs to be seen as a scientific object. From this, it is possible to develop methodological practices of research and teaching, and investigate the teaching of grammar in order to validate, under scientific rigor, the success of the developed pedagogical proposals. In this scenario, we highlight the figure of the teacher-as-researcher, an agent responsible for developing and experimenting teaching methodologies that are scientifically grounded in the practical context of classrooms.

Vieira ends her overall talk making explicit the importance of the teaching of grammar from the three axes and of researching the teaching of grammar, relating the three axes of teaching to the issues that entitled her lecture. Thus, it is necessary to teach grammar and to research the teaching of grammar i) for a matter of science, from student’s scientific reasoning development (axis 1); for a matter of citizenship, so that each citizen has conscious access to meaningful literacy practices (reading and text production) (axis 2); and for a matter of linguistic respect, in order to promote linguistic variants, enabling students to recognize or produce them according to their socio-communicative needs (axis 3).

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