Reflexive Teaching of Linguistic Knowledge: An Epistemological and Methodological Challenge

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Abstract

Research on Applied Linguistics, in the beginning of this century, gives support to the study of language practices in varied social contexts, oriented by several disciplinary fields. This tendency is reflected on the form of approach to language in school context, suggesting the change of focus previously established on rules to the focus on language in use, in order to describe resources, procedures and practices of common use. This paper aims at discussing the challenges of reflexive teaching of language facts, favouring the knowledge of Brazilian Portuguese characteristics from the observer's point of view, free from prescriptions. Academic work published since 1990 (when the influence of linguistic studies related to uses speakers make of language started to get to Brazilian schools) up to the present days (when books that consider the need to reflect upon language at school following a metalinguistic support, are published) was analyzed. Didactic books approved by the Programa Nacional do Livro Didático [National Textbook Program] from 2015 to 2017 were also analyzed. Results show that teaching applies both, contributions from the TG, when linguistic units are analyzed morphosyntactically, and from linguistic studies, when spoken and written texts are analyzed. Theoretical syncretism reflects the challenges in Brazilian Portuguese teaching: epistemological (teaching based on theories that coexist) and methodological (teaching based on repetition and knowledge transmission in activities on reflection, demanding analysis of how language works and of its metalinguistic classification).

Keywords

Language Teaching, Metalanguage, Epilinguistic Activity, Scientific Thought

1. Introduction

Research on Applied Linguistics (AL) has given support to the study of language practices in most varied social contexts, guided by contributions from cultural and social studies since the last decades of the 20th Century. This tendency is reflected on the form of approach to language in school context, suggesting the change of focus previously established on rules and codes to the focus on language in use, in order to describe resources, procedures and common use practices related to language.

This move creates a change in the construction of the object of teaching – language – that starts to be considered in its dynamic aspect, which is responsible for regularities and breaks in the object. In this sense, both the epilinguistic activities (that analyze language related to the interactive process in itself) and the metalinguistic ones (that use language as object for the description in a notional picture) are the focus of study in school, offering students the development of scientific thought.

The objective of this paper is to discuss the challenges of reflexive teaching of language facts, favouring the knowledge of characteristics of Brazilian Portuguese (BP) as mother tongue, from the observer's point of view, free from teachers' prescriptions. In order to achieve this objective, bibliographic data from academic production published in the 1990 (when influences of linguistic studies related to the use speakers make of language¹) up to present days (when books discussing the need to reflect upon language supported by metalanguage in school are published—see attachment 1); as well as bibliographic data from didactic books approved by Programa Nacional do Livro Didático [National Textbook Program]² (PNLD) was developed. The study carried out is presented in topics: (1) theoretical and methodological aspects of BP teaching; (2) the reflexive approach of linguistic knowledge, demanding the change of observation over the language in use and grammar; and (3) epistemologic and methodological challenge for the BP reflexive teaching.

2. Theoretical and Methodological Aspects of Brazilian Portuguese Teaching: A Brief Retrospective

At present, theoretical and methodological aspects of BP teaching, influenced by cultural and social studies developed in the area of AL, reflect the attempt to abandon the belief in the value of a determined linguistic variation or of a determined linguistic register as being the only legitimate one in Brazil. However, these aspects may also reveal a misunderstanding regarding the metalinguistic study of Portuguese.

To clarify the ideas above, the teaching of BP is outlined briefly. Up to the 1960s, Portuguese teaching in Brazil focused on the exploration of Traditional Grammar (TG) in order for the students to learn grammar classes and categories as a form to manage its metalanguage. Students in general came from social classes that spoke the same linguistic variation that schools explored, making use of morphological and syntactic analyses that TG imposed, following the prescriptive-normative view from Greco-Roman grammar.

Still in the 1960s – political context marked by the beginning of military dictatorship and also by the so called “teaching democratization” – government, for social pressure, promoted the enlargement of the state school system, which started to receive high amount of students coming from the least economically favoured social classes. The arrival of these students created linguistic heterogeneity in the classroom as well as the need for the teacher to deal with such a reality (RODRIGUES & CECÍLIO, 2013).

However, schools following the same teaching principles and methods continued the work, but, now aiming at making the new students to speak the “right” language, since the linguistic variation they spoke was “wrong”.

In the 1970s, because of the influence of structural linguistics (focussing its studies on the structure and organization of language), repetition exercises, transformation and substitution of linguistic structures in phrases started to be used recurrently as a resource to learning the “right” language. Structural exercises would offer this type of learning if the stimulus-response-reinforcement point of view were used as theoretical learning basis. Together with this theoretical-methodological perspective, TG teaching (emphasizing metalanguage and prescription) continued to be highlighted, also because the belief that learning grammar as a necessary condition to master reading and writing remained.

Therefore, there seemed to be a homogeneous aspect of linguistics being reinforced at schools, reflecting the political-ideological of linguistic ideal to be achieved. For that, the linguistic science, starting its influence in didactic books, was used mistakenly to reinforce this objective: even if linguistics developed descriptive study of language, the methodology used in the classroom, influenced by this linguistics, would distort description in favour of prescription, using structural exercises.

¹ These linguistic studies mark what was known as the “linguistic turn” linguistics has passed through in the second half of the 20th Century: several linguists have quit studying the abstract structure of language (Saussure's *langue*), its underlying system (Chomsky's *competence*) and started to get involved with phenomena related to the effective use of language by speakers (WEEDWOOD, 2002, p.143-4).

² The National Program that evaluates didactic material to be distributed in state schools of Brazilian basic education (part of the public policy education).

In the 1980s, the failure in learning reading, writing, and TG started to be evaluated and, among the alternatives in search for a solution, academic studies influenced by AL to teaching (that restricted itself to the application of linguistic theories highlighted at the time), defended a didactic work with cognitive theories of reading, aiming at developing students' reading ability (KATO, 1985, 1986), as well as their writing ability, proposing the rewriting of texts by students (GERALDI, 1984).

Academic research pointed out TG inadequacy for both, classification regarding terminology adopted and the focus on written language established as hegemonic. Consequently, teaching started to be questioned (BECHARA, 1986) and also the practice of linguistic analysis was proposed (GERALDI, 1984) as an alternative for the student to master the formal written language.

In the 1990s, besides the focus on the teaching of reading, the teaching of writing was also highlighted, no more based exclusively on TG prescription, but also observing pragmatic and interactional aspects of texts. Textual linguistics had an important role in the orientation of teaching, and literacy theories (based on effective uses of reading and writing) also became influential. Language here is seen as action among speakers who speak that language.

Teaching of TD morphology and syntax was losing ground, remaining the conventions of code: orthography, graphic accentuation, nominal and verbal concordance, verbal system...

In 2000, due to the influence of enunciation theories, teaching reading and writing broadened, focusing on text genre. The emphasis given to written and spoken genres from most varied communicative spaces made students broaden their literacy and their citizenship education among the objectives of basic education³. Consequently, there was more pressure for BP to include linguistic variation and more textual diversity in didactic books of Portuguese (PNLD, for example, has contributed to such a pressure). The search for more democratic teaching with language being studied in its application and use went on, without being limited to formal register. The consequence of this was the metalinguistic study in the light of TD being eliminated.

In 2010, another focus of attention came up: information technology started to be claimed as a resource to BP teaching; computers, tablets, cell phones are gadgets to be included in teachers' methodology, exploring reading, writing, and speaking, and so, language would be approached in its diversity. Linguistic analysis, understood as the description of aspects of language associated to teaching/learning, continues to be presented as alternative to traditional teaching, although the consolidation of this alternative is not seen (BEZERRA & REINALDO, 2013).

In fact, it is not possible to affirm that the idealization of pure, right language, accepted by prestigious social groups has been eliminated, nor that students are judged and assessed in their modes of speaking and of writing, in the light of a different parameter from the one considering language unique and patterned, according to normative grammar, as being essential for professional education. The challenge continues to be to establish the object to be taught and how.

The evolution of BP teaching briefly described here makes us see that, wishing to develop students' reading and writing skills and their use in varied communicative situations, there was a try to break the prescriptive paradigm of teaching, also taking for granted the reflexive character regarding language. This reflexive character favours students' development of scientific thought, which is essential to see the need for a broader approach to language, according to what is presented next.

3. Reflexive Approach of Linguistic Knowledge

The reflexive approach of teaching presupposes work based on challenging activities for students, making them search for new forms of knowledge. It refers to creative, constructive and reflexive teaching, having students and their abilities as

³ As proposed by Law number 9394/96, Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Brasileira [Law of Directives and Bases of National Education].

focus, seen as active participants of learning. Teachers advise students during activities demanding observation, investigation, questioning, inquiring, resulting in the acquisition of new knowledge.

If reflexive teaching demands observation, investigation and questioning, when it comes to language, teaching needs to consider its multiple manifestations, consequently, undoing a segmented posture: there is no place for reproductive and acrylic study of conceptions of “right” and “wrong”.

In this sense, reflexive teaching focuses on its constitution and functioning, making it possible through epilinguistic and metalinguistic activities (FRANCHI, 1987; GERALDI, 1993). The former are the ones understood as operating over the language itself: because of the fact that they come up in the gaps of linguistic activity, they make students compare expressions and choose the most adequate ones, transforming them, trying new forms, making the sistematization work of linguistic facts possible. The latter (metalinguistic activities) deals with speaking considering language itself: starting from knowledge about relevant facts of language, students create hypothesis over language nature, describe it based on a notional picture related to linguistic theories and methods of language analysis.

Considering the points above, there is a need to reflect upon language in order to understand how its units behave, in terms of syntagma, sentence and text formation, taking into account the morphosyntactic, semantic, pragmatic, textual and discursive points of view. So, the study of language grammar, from a scientific view, has its space in school, offering description and explanation of phenomena of the real world, (which is language in use). This procedure corroborates what Faraco (2008, p. 160) claims: “criticism over norms does not correspond to abandoning grammar reflection or to abandoning teaching formal norms. Reflecting upon language structure and upon its function is fundamental for the fluent skills of speaking and writing”⁴.

In other words, in Faraco’s (2008, p.160) point of view, besides broadening speaking and writing skills, students need to develop reflexive practice over language itself, integrating verbal activities and thinking about them.

Perini (2014) follows a similar position as Faraco (2008), considering teaching grammar as a contribution to students’ academic literacy, because it is more than “a source of information about the world, being a field for training independent thought, for training free and careful observation, respecting facts” (PERINI, 2014, p.62-63)⁵.

Still following Perini (p. 65), teaching grammar in a scientific perspective has the objectives of desconsidering the affirmation that TD is studied to develop written language; allowing questioning, the need to justify assertions, giving place to systematic doubts; presenting the idea that making grammar is to study language facts, and not building a prohibition code to guide people’s linguistic behaviour.

In 2017, Dolz defends that grammar helps the student reflect upon speech and upon text function in communication. So, language teaching does not have to be restricted to language practice, including reflection over linguistic procedures as well.

If reflexive teaching of language (linguistic analysis) is supported in academic studies, it is still not enough, having the how to do it being questioned. At this point there is the epistemologic and methodological challenge, overlapping BP teaching since from the influence of linguistic, educational and sociological theories.

4. Epistemological and Methodological Challenge for the Reflexive Teaching of Brazilian Portuguese

Revisiting the retrospective of BP teaching presented in 1, from the epistemological point of view, teaching is based on

⁴ Faraco (2008, p. 160): “*a crítica ao normativismo não corresponde ao abandono da reflexão gramatical e do ensino da norma culta. Refletir sobre a estrutura da língua e sobre seu funcionamento é indispensável para o domínio fluente da fala e da escrita*”.

⁵ PERINI, 2014, p.62-63: “*uma fonte de informações sobre o mundo, mas um campo de treino do pensamento independente, da observação isenta e cuidadosa, do respeito aos fatos*”.

sometimes the grammar paradigm (not considered as being of scientific basis), when the approach is directed to linguistic units, sometimes it is based on the linguistic paradigm (where the legitimacy of knowledge comes from, because it is about scientific knowledge), when the approach is direct to reading, writing and speaking. In other words, teaching language is produced in a syncretic form, aiming at keeping norms, the idea of linguistic uniformity, as a reflex of conservative society, imposing (although marked by social division and, consequently, linguistic variations), together with the search for developing students' skills in reading, speaking and writing, taking into account the several communicative situations we are exposed to in society, be them formal, informal or semiformal, in public or not.

This practice is identified in collections of BP didactic books approved by PNLD, whose reviews are published in *Guia do Livro Didático* (which has the purpose of guiding teachers while choosing the most adequate collection to their school realities). Some of the collection approved by PNLD in 2017 (referring to Secondary School: from 6th to 9th year); in 2016 (referring to Youth and Adult Education: from 6th to 9th year of Secondary School); and in 2015 (referring to Highschool) are cited next.

Guia do Livro Didático 2017 – Secondary School: from 6th to 9th year

Book	Author	Publishing House	Edition	Year
<i>Projeto Teláris – Português</i>	Ana Borgatto, Terezinha Bertin, Vera Marchezi	Ática	2 ^a	2015
<i>Português – Linguagens</i>	Thereza Cochar, William Cereja	Saraiva	9 ^a	2015
<i>Singular & Plural - Leitura, Produção e Estudos de Linguagem</i>	Laura de Figueiredo, Marisa Balthasar, Shirley Goulart	Moderna	2 ^a	2015
<i>Universos - Língua Portuguesa</i>	Collective work; Editor: Andressa Munique Paiva	SM	3 ^a	2015

Guia do Livro Didático 2016 – Youth and Adult Education: from 6th to 9th year of Secondary School

Book	Author	Publishing House	Edition	Year
<i>Caminhar e Transformar</i>	--	FTD	--	--

The collections above explore BP in the light of, at least, three theoretical perspectives: textual linguistics, when studying textual criteria; discursive/textual genre theories, when exploring spoken and written text comprehension and production; and grammar theories (traditional paradigms – when linguistic units are classified and analyzed morphosyntactically; and linguistic – when these units are analyzed in use). Considering the focus of this paper, the grammatical perspective is illustrated as follows.

Guia do Livro Didático 2015 – Highschool

Book	Author	Publishing House	Edition	Year
<i>Português: Contexto, Interação e Sentido</i>	Maria Luiza Abaurre, Maria Bernadete Abaurre, Marcela Pontara	Moderna	2 ^a	2013
<i>Língua Portuguesa</i>	Roberta Hernandez Martin	Positivo	1 ^a	2013
<i>Língua Portuguesa: Linguagem e Interação</i>	Carlos Faraco, Francisco de Moura, José Maruxo Junior	Ática	2 ^a	2013
<i>Português Língua e Cultura</i>	Carlos Alberto Faraco	Base editorial	3 ^a	2013

4.1. Traditional Paradigm

The study of word classes

The concern with word classification of language may be found in Greek philosophers, who define names as the main “parts of discourse”, because they constitute the essence of propositions [...]

In the point of view of grammar studies, which has the objective of describing linguistic systems, it is more adequate to speak in terms of word classes, for the fact that they make reference to the classification of words in the language, according to morphological criteria (their form and inflection), semantical (types of meaning) or syntactical (function that words have in enunciation).

Descriptive grammar organizes words of the language in ten classes: substantives, adjectives, articles, numerals, pronouns, verbs, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions and interjections. (ABAURRE, ABAURRE & PONTARA. *Português: contexto, interlocução e sentido*, 2º volume do ensino médio, 2016, p.164).

Activities

[...]

1) The advertiser Ciro Pellicano wrote a book, *Quando o poder corrompe, corrompe a não mais poder* [When power corrupts, it corrupts up to become powerless] (Global, 2010). In the title, the term poder comes twice with different meanings.

a) How is the term understood in the first occurrence?

b) In the second occurrence, the term makes part of the expression “a não mais poder”. What does the expression mean?

2) The different functions performed by the term poder in the syntactic structure of the enunciation determine a different grammar classification for each occurrence.

a) What is the grammar classification of the term poder in each one of the occurrences? (ABAURRE, ABAURRE & PONTARA. *Português: contexto, interlocução e sentido*, 2º volume do ensino médio, 2016, p.165)

The example shows that the didactic book follows the word classification presented by the Greek-Roman tradition (“Descriptive grammar organizes the words of the language in ten classes: substantives, adjectives, articles, numerals, pronouns, verbs, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions and interjections.”), without making any reference to critical studies over the matter, including that articles, numeral and interjection are not word classes, repeating the same mistake the TG makes, not distinguishing class from function (“The different functions performed by the term poder in the syntactic structure of the enunciation determine a different grammar classification for each occurrence.”): it is not the function of the term in an enunciation that determines its class; words are grouped in a class, following criteria that are common to them, apart from their function in enunciations (in this case, poder belongs to the verb class, having the function of a substantive).

4.2. Linguistic Paradigm

1) Go back to question 5 on page 67 and reread the titles indicated [...].

a) Identify the verbs in the titles.

b) Are these verbs in the present, in the past or in the future?

c) Why is the verb used in the present in the title of the pieces of news, even if the facts have already happened?

[...]

2) Considering what you have studied so far about news and about the indicative mode, answer: why are most verbs in the indicative mode in the pieces of news? (EDIÇÕES SM. *Língua portuguesa*, 6º v. ensino fundamental, 2015, p.68-69)

The example above, related to the linguistic paradigm, proposes an analysis of the function of verbs (in inflection of tense and mode) in a specific textual genre (journalism), making students relate verbal inflection to compositional and

linguistic characteristics of the text genre being studied. In other words, students reflect upon the effective use of the word, coming to possible conclusions, not limiting themselves to identify the verb tense and mode.

The analysis proposed in the second example (linguistic paradigm) also shows a common resource to didactic collections of BP (included in this paradigm), theoretical syncretism. Borges Neto (2011), referring to morphological studies carried out in Brazil, feels surprised regarding this practice of blending theories that are not consolidated very frequently:

My feeling [...] is that there are still fine bonds among modern theories and old theories – as if modern theories could not detach themselves from the load of tradition – and these bonds significantly limit its possibilities to develop⁶. (BORGES Neto, 2011, p.55)

Although Borges Neto (2011) mentions morphological studies from a theoretical point of view, his claims are related to the teaching proposal, since they demonstrate theoretical overlapping (RAFAEL, 2001), when using traditional and modern practices, as Kleiman and Sepulveda (2012) confirm:

Our option is in favour of grammar teaching, although, in a way being possible to assimilate what is positive in both traditional and modern practices, without radically opting for one or the other. The expected result is the development of the student's communicative skills, and the consequent empowering of its citizenship in modern society, essentially literate⁷. (KLEIMAN & SEPULVEDA, 2012, p.11).

On one hand, this option brings the belief that guides to BP traditional teaching, which is the realm of normative grammar as a condition to speaking and writing well, when the authors affirm that “the expected result is the development of students' communicative skills and the consequent empowering of their skills in modern society...⁸”. On the other hand, Perini's (2010) and Neves' (2000) positions concerning the category and the terminology adopted in their grammars echo: the choice for categories and terms coming from TG comes from the fact that they are of general knowledge and they are easily understood.

Perini (2010) affirms:

[...] I have tried to use a set of theoretical categories of acceptance rather general. Contrarily to what someone might believe, this theoretical framework exists, and it is vast: for example, if one talks about “verbs”, or about “concordance”, or about “preposition” [...] s/he is immediately understood; these terms evoke, if not theoretical definitions, they evoke at least sets of phenomena quite well-defined⁹. (PERINI, 2010, p.25)

Neves (2000), on his behalf, adds:

The Gramática de usos do português [Grammar of Portuguese use] starts from the traditional word classes, starting point chosen only because the reader or common consultant, without being a specialist in the area, can do his/her research better to get what s/he wants. However, the setting of these classes throughout the four parts of the book already shows that there are theoretical principles guiding the treatment for the questions. The parts are organized according to the processes that produce the organization of enunciation to come to the meaning of the text: predication, referentiation, quantification and indefiniteness¹⁰. (NEVES, 2000, p.13)

⁶ BORGES Neto, 2011, p.55: *Minha sensação [...] é que continuam existindo laços muito estreitos entre as teorias modernas e as teorias antigas – como se as teorias modernas não pudessem se desvencilhar da carga da tradição – e esses laços toham significativamente suas possibilidades de desenvolvimento.*

⁷ KLEIMAN and SEPULVEDA, 2012, p.11: *Nossa opção é pelo ensino da gramática, por óbvio, por uma vertente que assimile o que há de positivo nas práticas tradicionais e nas modernas, sem nos posicionarmos radicalmente por uma ou outra. O resultado esperado é o desenvolvimento do potencial comunicativo do aluno, e o consequente fortalecimento de sua capacidade cidadã na sociedade moderna, essencialmente letrada.*

⁸ KLEIMAN and SEPULVEDA, 2012, p.11: *“o resultado esperado é o desenvolvimento do potencial comunicativo do aluno e o consequente fortalecimento de sua capacidade cidadã na sociedade moderna...”.*

⁹ PERINI, 2010, p.25: *[...] tentei utilizar um corpo de categorias teóricas de aceitação mais ou menos geral. Ao contrário do que se possa pensar, esse corpo teórico existe, e não é nada pequeno: por exemplo, se alguém fala de “verbos”, ou de “concordância”, ou de “preposição” [...] é imediatamente compreendido; esses termos evocam, se não definições teóricas, pelo menos grupos de fenômenos bastante bem definidos.*

¹⁰ NEVES, 2000, p.13: *A Gramática de usos do português parte das tradicionais classes de palavras, ponto de partida escolhido apenas porque o leitor ou consultante comum, sem ser conhecedor do assunto, vai poder situar-se na sua busca, para chegar ao que quer saber. Entretanto, o agrupamento dessas classes pelas quatro partes da*

In other words, this grouping of traditional and modern principles favouring an effective language teaching makes us believe that modern theories have not developed a broad enough study over these categories, so, for us to comprehend an innovative theoretical proposal, it is necessary to be supported by the knowledge of TG. This idea can be supported by Pilati's (2017) and Gerhardt's (2017) examples.

Pilati (2017) intends

to show how linguistic knowledge can be used as theoretical framework guiding teaching practice and [...] to ally such knowledge to a methodology that is concerned with promoting the students' active learning.

[...] Without neglecting the compulsory grammar content for students in Educação Básica [Basic Education], approach I proposed here tries to articulate three basic aspects for language teaching:

- i. progress made by linguistic research regarding the property of human languages;*
- ii. knowledge about Portuguese linguistic variety; and*
- iii. active learning methodology, capable of making students use grammar more consciously, for the benefit of their text production¹¹. (PILATI, 2017, p.16)*

The author, when presenting her workshop (Chapter 4, p.113-142), proposes the items: 'students' previous knowledge assessment'; 'experiences of linguistic discovery and reflection'; 'organization of ideas found'; 'presentation of ideas'; and 'knowledge application in texts', as active learning for students to solve.

In workshop 4 – Constructing Sentences (p.131-134), students are asked to analyze the sentences presented, identifying the grammar class of a word created by the author present in the sentences; students must make a sentence with the word; creating phrases for a set of verbs taken from the text *Poema da necessidade* [Poem of necessity] (Carlos Drummond de Andrade); and they must analyze the verb definition in Houaiss online dictionary (similar definition to the one of GT). In other words, to develop active learning based on the "progress made by linguistic research regarding human language properties" (in this case, generative linguistics), students must know the terms sentence, word class, verb and phrase (knowledge acquired from TG).

Gerhardt (2017) seems to be in tune with the points above, affirming that:

One of the purposes of Portuguese teaching-learning as a mother tongue is to promote people's metacognitive and metalinguistic development and improvement through the comprehension of facts and phenomena composing cognitive experience to practice language¹². (GERHARDT, 2017, p.17)

After the theoretical explanations of the concepts "learning", "metacognition" and "metalinguistic development", in the light of the studies of information processing, of cognitive and linguistic sciences, the author proposes a set of exercises (Chapter III, p.101-225), exploring grammar aspects proper of the internalized grammar; related to structural problems of students' written texts (p.104):

III. Word order in sentences

The concept of ORDER is related to the position of elements forming the argumentative structure regarding its center, and also the position of non-argumentative elements in sentences. [...]

obra já revela que há princípios teóricos dirigindo o tratamento das questões. As partes se codividem segundo os processos que dirigem a organização dos enunciados para obtenção do sentido do texto: a predicação, a referenciação, a quantificação e a indefinição, a junção.

¹¹ PILATI, 2017, p.16: *mostrar de que forma os conhecimentos linguísticos podem ser usados como fundamentos teóricos norteadores da prática docente e [...] aliar tais conhecimentos a uma metodologia que se preocupe em promover o aprendizado ativo dos estudantes.*

[...] Sem fugir dos conteúdos gramaticais obrigatórios para os alunos da Educação Básica, a abordagem que proponho nesta obra tenta articular três aspectos fundamentais para o ensino de línguas:

- i. os avanços alcançados pelas pesquisas linguísticas em relação às propriedades das línguas humanas;*
- ii. os conhecimentos sobre as variedades linguísticas da língua portuguesa; e*
- iii. a metodologia da aprendizagem ativa, capaz de levar os alunos a usar a gramática com consciência e em benefício de sua produção textual.*

¹² GERHARDT, 2017, p.17: *Um dos propósitos do ensino-aprendizado do português como língua materna é o de promover o desenvolvimento e o aprimoramento metacognitivo e metalinguístico das pessoas, através da compreensão dos fatos e fenômenos que compõem a experiência cognitiva de praticar a linguagem.*

The canonic order of elements in sentences in Portuguese is SVO: SUBJECT – VERB – OBJECT.

See the exemple below.

João beijou Maria. [John kissed Mary.]

Observe that if we invert the order, we will have a sentence with a very different meaning:

Maria beijou João. [...] [Mary kissed John.] (GERAHDT, 2017, p.156)

Just like Pilati's (2017) proposal, this idea pressuposes a modern theoretical help, supported by TG knowledge: meta-cognitive and metalinguistic learning happen together with the concepts of "order" and sentence terms (subject, verb and object).

This procedure seems to induce didactic book authors and, consequently, teachers to use traditional studies for support, in order to guarantee students' learning.

Because of this epistemic behaviour, it was observed that, from a methodological perspective, at least two paths are followed: transmissive teaching, in terms of the classification of Greek-Latin grammar knowledge and its metalanguage; and reflexive teaching, in terms of the use and functioning of linguistic units in order to make students reflect on the roles of these units for the construction of texts and meanings. Next, some examples taken from Haüy's *Gramática da língua portuguesa padrão*, and from Neves' *Texto e gramática* are presented.

4.3. Transmissive Knowledge

Adjective

I. Concept

Adjective is the word the is affixed to the substantive or similar to attribute quality to it (inherent or not), property, condition or state.

Example:

Limpos, regulares, modernos como um escritório com "guichets"

[em redes de arame amarelo, [...]] (Fernando Pessoa)

II. Classification

The inherent quality was called explanatory adjective before the *Nomenclatura Gramatical Brasileira* [Brazilian Grammatical Nomenclature] (NGB): *homem mortal, Deus Todo poderoso; and he noninherent quality was called restricted adjective: homem sábio, bom conselho [...]*

III. Structure

In terms of structure, the adjective is classified as: either primitive or derivative, either simple or double/composto. (HAUY, 2014, p.601)

In the grammar acknowledgement, the author claryfies that the book is "a result of decades of research, elaboration and teaching experience, being a sistematization experiment of the TG theory of academic Portuguese, aiming at a critical reflection over the present situation of the Portuguese language regarding what it has in terms of being systematic, grammatical and, above all, over the importance of norms in the didactic book, in its sociofunctional role." (HAUY, 2014, p.33).

By pinpointing "the importance of norms in didactic books", the author makes reference to BP teaching according to grammar tradition, in basic education. Besides that, because of the fact that the content is presented following the organization "concept, classification, structure", followed by examples and some comments, the transmissive perspective of its teaching is observed. There is no reflection over the matter.

4.4. Reflexive Teaching

No verbal form is defined in isolation or out of context. Remaining in the realms defined by structural ou syntactic relations (where the unit is the sentence), we have to conjugate the functional complex of morphic status– the verb – in the syntactic context. The verb belongs to the semantic sphere of relations and processes (Halliday, 1985) (states/events), being responsible for the syntactical-semantic union of participants.

[...]

In order to illustrate with a text to be analyzed regarding the use of grammar categories, the chronicle by Luis Fernando Veríssimo “Segurança” [Safety] will be analyzed, considering the union of verb tenses with the construction of the text (in this case, essentially narrative). (NEVES, 2006, p.68)

The exploration of the use of verbs in the chronicle shows the construction of the narrative and the retrospective part. In other words, it is not enough to know tenses and modes in isolation. It is necessary to observe their uses in the construction of the text.

Although having checked examples of reflexive studies (in Neves, 2006), we have not identified a proposal that makes students reflect upon the function and description of language by TG in a broad way in order to develop their capacity to investigate and, so, to see that no linguistic study totally describes one language and that TG, for having developed its study based on a use of language different from today, has some proposal (in terms of categories and both descriptions and prescriptions) that deserve to be revisited.

Regarding BP didactic books, they develop more epilinguistic activities than metalinguistic ones, having the grammar tradition terminology as support. There is a similar behaviour in academic studies on BP teaching, mainly from the decade of 2010 on. There is no imposition by the academy considering that TG should not be associated with BP teaching and, in prefaces or in book acknowledgments, authors highlight the interest in proposing alternatives for the teaching of contents from GT, reminding the importance of its knowledge:

We start from the analysis of concrete situations of language teaching and we aim at presenting some proposals, suggestions for possible manners to apply the grammar we consider doable for most Portuguese teachers. [...] we simply aim at building the basis for the teaching of grammar showing how the introduction to metalanguage can be made, always considering concrete situations. The objective of this book is to present a way to introduce grammar notions and categories for students from the third and fourth cycle of Secondary School and of Supplementary Schooling, so that we can build the basis for future grammar and linguistic studies¹³. (KLEIMAN & SEPULVEDA, 2012, p.10-11)

This explicit position made by TG brings renovation in the methodological procedure, but not in the content. Observe the summary:

A primeira lição: por que estudar gramática?

Palavras e objetos

Nomes e substantivos

Atividades

Verbo, pessoa e tempo

O adjetivo

Sujeitos, predicados e outras considerações

¹³ KLEIMAN and SEPULVEDA, 2012, p.10-11: *Partimos da análise de situações concretas de ensino da língua e buscamos apresentar possibilidades de encaminhamentos, sugestões de possíveis maneiras de se trabalhar a gramática que consideramos realizáveis para a maioria dos professores de língua portuguesa. [...] visamos apenas construir as bases para o ensino de gramática mostrando como pode ser feita a introdução à metalinguagem, mirando-se sempre em situações concretas. O objetivo deste livro é apresentar uma maneira de introduzir noções e categorias gramaticais a alunos do terceiro e quarto ciclo do Ensino Fundamental e do Ensino Supletivo, para assim construir um alicerce para estudos gramaticais e linguísticos posteriores.*

[The first lesson: why studying grammar?

Words and objects

Names and substantives

Activities

Verb, person and tense

The adjective

Subjects, predicates and other considerations]

(KLEIMAN & SEPULVEDA, 2012, p.07)

In the case above, word classes from grammar tradition selected to be studied are substantive, verb and adjective and some functions of the clausal syntax (subject and predicate).

Another example that illustrates the association between traditional and modern theories in BP teaching is seen in the acknowledgement of the book *Práticas de ensino do português* [Portuguese teaching practices], organized by Palomanes and Bravin:

*We have proposed the authors some reflection that associated tradition and break in the studies on the Portuguese language in order to bring to the reader discussions offering new knowledge built in the linguistic science that will add to their practice as well as to the knowledge already acquired. [...] In the second part of the book, criticisms and proposals to the teaching of some morphological and syntactical structures will be presented, having linguistic theories of the 20th Century as support: the relationship between the meaning of verb and the structural organization of the sentence, more specifically, the meaning of the verbs traditionally classified as transitive, i.e., those followed by subject and direct object, will be discussed [...]'*¹⁴ (PALOMANES & BARVIN, 2012, Acknowledgement)

The authors (2012) make it clear that studies carried out in linguistics are associated to TG teaching (“reflection that associated tradition and breakage in the studies on the BP language”) in order to have an orientation to BP teaching (“criticisms and proposals to the teaching of some morphological and syntactical structures will be presented, having linguistic theories of the 20th Century as support”), without questioning, however, (or without proposing changes) categories and terminology of TG (“the relationship between the meaning of verb and the structural organization of the sentence, more specifically, the meaning of the verbs traditionally classified as transitive will be discussed” – our highlight).

Possenti, even having some constraints, also participates of this group of authors who consider the teaching of grammar: *So, in order to do a similar work to what I have done, when dealing with teaching issues: not believing that we are up to revolutionize the school – although, being absolutely necessary – I wanted to contribute to an inside reading of the body of doctrines that work, to my view, as a blind spot of education: grammar.*

*The material was in priority destined to highschool students – or their teachers*¹⁵. (POSSENTI, 2011, p.11-12)

The author still says:

Consider, for example, the case of the so called adjectives working as adverbs, in examples like Ele anda rápido [He walks fast]. In the classroom, a teacher may want to convince students that ‘rápido’ [fast] in this case is an adverb

¹⁴ PALOMANES e BARVIN, 2012, *Apresentação: Propusemos aos autores uma reflexão que associasse tradição e ruptura nos estudos sobre a língua portuguesa, a fim de levarmos ao leitor discussões que lhe ofereçam novos conhecimentos construídos dentro da ciência linguística que vão somar-se a sua prática e aos conhecimentos que já domina. [...] Na segunda parte do livro, serão apresentadas críticas e propostas ao ensino de algumas estruturas morfológicas e sintáticas, tomando como apoio as teorias linguísticas do século XX: serão abordadas as relações entre o significado do verbo e a organização estrutural da oração, mais especificamente dos verbos tradicionalmente classificados como transitivos diretos, ou seja, aqueles acompanhados de sujeito e objeto direto; [...]*

¹⁵ POSSENTI, 2011, p.11-12: *Assim, quis fazer um trabalho em tudo semelhante ao que tenho feito quando trato de questões de ensino: não acreditando que estejamos a ponto de fazer uma revolução na escola – no entanto, absolutamente necessária – quis contribuir para que se lesse por dentro aquele corpo de doutrinas que funciona, a meu ver, como o ponto cego da educação: a gramática.*

O material foi prioritariamente destinado a estudantes do ensino médio – ou a seus professores.

(working as adjunct, not being a predicative of the subject), or that a candidate in an exam has to answer the question about the syntactic function of 'rápido'. [...] it is perfectly possible to prove that it is an adverb. For that, simply change one variable. It is a simple procedure. If it is a predicative of the subject, "rápido" is in concordance with the subject."¹⁶ (POSSENTI, 2011, p.43)

Even though Possenti (2011) recognizes that change in schools is necessary, regarding grammar, he proposes a reflexive teaching, so that students understand linguistic facts and builds their own knowledge. In this case, the author proposes tests using variables: change of masculine word – "Ele" [He] – for a feminine one – "Ela" [She], in order to verify the morphosyntactic function of the sentence constituents ("rápido" as "adjective" and, consequently, as "predicative of the subject", case in which it is in "concordance with the subject"; or as "adverb", case in which it works as "adjunct"). The procedure of using variables to know the language and its function is a demonstration of analysis, just like scientific areas do. This is a characteristic of reflexive teaching, which takes into account metalinguistic knowledge.

The examples shown refer to the study of word classes and grammar and syntactic categories, to identification and analysis. But these word classes are also found in studies that tackle another teaching unit: text genre. In this case, the study of these classes is associated to the materialization of genre. For example, Angelo and Loregian-Penkál's (2010) study over linguistic analysis associated with the genre "science divulgation" was mentioned.

The following aspects were included in the activities of analysis and reflection of language:

- . the study of the condition of text production and of the specific characteristics of text genres. (...);
- . the reflection over the reason for the choice for one linguistic form over the other. This way, linguistic elements will not be seen as "frozen" forms, but as resources that serve the communicative efficiency;
- . the use of verbs. In the study of verb forms, it will be importante to highlight that the choice for terms is not made randomly, because there is always a target interlocutor of productions, who the texts is directed to;

(ANGELO & LOREGIAN-PENKAL, 2010, p.143-144)

The quote shows the work proposal prepared for students of secondary school (initial years), including, among other aspects, the verb¹⁷ as a constitutive unit of the genre in study (science divulgation).

The sistematization of this study involves the reflection upon verb tenses and modes:

ACTIVITY 11

11.1. Verify the tense and mode of the verbs in the text.

11.2. Why were the verbs used in this way in the text?

11.3. Which of the underlined verbs in the sentences next give the idea that something is repeated, something is continuous:

a) "Um louva-a-deus vai chegando perto do vaga-lume (sic) 'apagado'".

b) "De repente, o pirilampo pisca e o louva-a-deus desanima".

(ANGELO & LOREGIAN-PENKAL, 2010, p.155)

The reflection here constructed makes students identify the use of the present tense in a different sense from the moment of enunciation: being a scientific text, scientific conclusions are mentioned in this tense and mode, presenting permanent truth.

Although the authors do not focus on the verbal aspect ("vai chegando"), they make the analysis of this linguistic unit (verb), showing its role in the construction of the text genre. In other words, the authors propose something new sup-

¹⁶ POSSENTI, 2011, p.43: *Considere-se, por exemplo, o caso dos chamados adjetivos com função de advérbio, em exemplos como Ele anda rápido. Em aula, um professor pode querer convencer o aluno de que 'rápido' aqui é um advérbio (com função de adjunto adverbial, não de predicativo do sujeito), ou que um candidato, em uma prova, tenha de responder a uma pergunta relativa à função sintática de 'rápido'. [...] é perfeitamente possível provar que se trata de um advérbio. Para tanto, basta alterar uma variável. O procedimento é simples. Se for um predicativo do sujeito, "rápido" concorda com o sujeito."*

¹⁷ The authors also include the discussion over the use of reporters, the formulation of orthographic rules and the expansion of the lexicon.

ported by something old. This is the challenge of the reflexive teaching of language: sometimes being supported by the theoretical perspective of tradition, adopting modern methodological procedures (like Possenti, 2011); and sometimes being supported by a modern theoretical perspective, without breaking the bonds with tradition (like Angelo & Lorengian-Penkal, 2010), according to Borges Neto (2011).

5. Conclusion

Reflexive teaching of linguistic knowledge underlies the proposal of the books here analyzed, but in two different directions: one making students reflect upon language in use, observing its adequacy to the communicative situation and contributing to reading, writing and speaking (epilinguistic reflection); and another making students observe, compare facts of language in order to categorize and, consequently, appropriate a terminology (metalinguistic reflection).

Academic production on this last reflection is not as developed as the first one. The fact that TG is based on varied criteria for the classification, categorization and explanation of language contributes to criticism and, consequently, for studies to be questioned by researchers that analyze language with more rigorous criteria accepted by science. Therefore, BP teaching faces a challenge that seems to be far from solved: which grammar theory should be taught under which methodology?

The authors, although recognizing the limitations of TG, do not completely discard its proposals. So, some researchers propose its study with changes, sometimes in content, sometimes in methodology.

Reflexive teaching does not ignore metalanguage that guides students' activities in search for understanding the function and structure of language, but being far from the traditional behaviour of presenting a code of rules to be followed, so precious for a prescriptive teaching. This observative posture over language demands a methodological approach in the classroom causing objections, doubt, but they do not bring assurance or dogma, which is not frequent in the books analyzed.

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Attachment 1

Books with a TD approach proposing teaching methodology including grammar points (use and metalanguage)

Book	Author	Source	Publishing House	Year
<i>Perspectivas para o trabalho com análise linguística</i>	ANGELO, Cristiane M.P. & LORENGIAN-PENKAL, Loremi.	MENEGASSI, Renilson J. <i>Leitura, escrita e gramática no ensino fundamental</i>	EDUEM	2010
<i>A gramática da oração: diferentes olhares.</i>	FURTADO DA CUNHA, M. Angélica. (org)		EDUFRN,	2015
<i>Ensino de português e sociolinguística.</i>	MARTINS, Marco Antonio; VIEIRA, Sílvia R. e TAVARES, Maria Alice.(org).		Contexto	2014
<i>Ensino de língua materna e formação docente: teoria, didática e prática.</i>	APARÍCIO, Ana S. & SILVA, Sílvia R. da (org)		Pontes	2013
<i>Análise linguística: afinal, a que se refere?</i>	BEZERRA, Maria A. e REINALDO, Maria A.		Cortez	2013
<i>Oficina de gramática: metalinguagem para principiantes.</i>	KLEIMAN, Angela. e SEPULVEDA, Cida.		Pontes	2012
<i>Práticas em sala de aula de línguas: diálogos necessários entre teoria(s) e ações situadas</i>	MENDES, Edleise & CUNHA José C. (org)		Pontes	2012
<i>Práticas de ensino do português. São Paulo</i>	PALOMANES, Roza e BRAVIN, Angela Mariana. (org).		Contexto,	2012
<i>Questões de linguagem: passeio gramatical dirigido</i>	POSSENTI, Sílvia		Parábola	2011
<i>. Verbo e práticas discursivas.</i>	VARGAS, Maria Valéria		Contexto	2011
<i>Questões de linguagem: um passeio dirigido</i>	POSSENTI, S.		Parábola	2011
<i>Gramática em questão</i>	MATTOS, M. Augusta B.de (org)		Mercado de Letras	2010