

## Linguisticamente Falando: the dissemination/popularization of scientific knowledge in publications of an Instagram profile /

### *Linguisticamente falando: a divulgação/popularização do conhecimento científico em publicações de um perfil no Instagram*

*Juliana Marcelino Silva\**

PhD student in Linguistics at the Postgraduate Program in Linguistics (PROLING), at the Federal University of Paraíba (UFPB). Master in Linguistics at PROLING, UFPB. Bachelor in Letters (Portuguese Language) at the Federal University of Campina Grande (UFCG). Interested in the following topics: discursive/text genres, academic literacies, teaching-learning processes of academic textual production and teacher training.

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8475-435X>

*Thiago Felinto Oliveira de Queiroz \*\**

Programa de Pós-Graduação em Linguística (PROLING) of Universidade Federal da Paraíba (UFPB), João Pessoa, Paraíba, Brasil. MA in Linguistics. Applied Linguistics.

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2418-5655>

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#### **ABSTRACT**

The dissemination and popularization of linguistics is still a challenge in society, given the lack of knowledge or even ambiguity in the scientific status of the science of language (Bueno, 1984). Given this context, this research aims to analyze publications from an Instagram social network profile focused on the dissemination/popularization of linguistics, aiming to understand the contents, as well as the perspectives of scientific dissemination that underlie these publications. To this end, it is based on theoretical-methodological discussions on the notions of dissemination and popularization of linguistics (Bueno, 1984; Zamboni, 2001; Motta-Roth, 2009; Hochsprung, 2023). The broader corpus

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 [julianamarcelino54@gmail.com](mailto:julianamarcelino54@gmail.com)

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 [thiagofelinto451@gmail.com](mailto:thiagofelinto451@gmail.com)

consists of thirty (30) publications from the Instagram profile entitled *Linguisticamente Falando* (@linguisticamentefalando), of which four (04) were explored in this study. The results indicate the presence of three analytical categories, which were constructed according to Bueno (1984), namely: scientific popularization for non-specialists, intra-peer scientific dissemination and extra-peer scientific dissemination. Given the results, it is concluded that the processes of dissemination and popularization of linguistic knowledge on social networks, especially in the profile investigated, contribute to scientific literacy (Hochsprung, 2023) in relation to the knowledge of this science, since the publications occur in a standardized, systematic and effective way, with didactic and accessible language.

**KEYWORDS:** Scientific dissemination; Popularization of Linguistics; Instagram publications.

## RESUMO

*A divulgação e popularização da linguística ainda é um desafio na sociedade, haja vista o desconhecimento ou mesmo a ambiguidade no estatuto científico da ciência da linguagem (Bueno, 1984). Diante desse contexto, objetiva-se, nesta pesquisa, analisar publicações de um perfil da rede social Instagram voltado para a divulgação/popularização da linguística, visando compreender os conteúdos, bem como as perspectivas de divulgação científica que fundamentam essas publicações. Para tanto, fundamenta-se em discussões teórico-metodológicas sobre as noções de divulgação e popularização da linguística (Bueno, 1984; Zamboni, 2001; Motta-Roth, 2009; Hochsprung, 2023). O corpus mais amplo é composto por trinta (30) publicações do perfil de Instagram intitulado *Linguisticamente Falando* (@linguisticamentefalando), das quais quatro (04) foram exploradas neste estudo. Os resultados apontam a presença de três categorias analíticas, que foram construídas de acordo com Bueno (1984), a saber: divulgação científica para não especialistas, disseminação científica intrapares e disseminação científica extrapares. Diante dos resultados, conclui-se que os processos de divulgação e de popularização do conhecimento linguístico nas redes sociais, em especial no perfil investigado, contribuem para a alfabetização científica (Hochsprung, 2023) em relação ao conhecimento dessa ciência, uma vez que as publicações acontecem de forma padronizada, sistemática e efetiva, com uma linguagem didática e acessível.*

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Divulgação científica; Popularização da Linguística; Publicações no Instagram.

## 1 Introduction

Linguistics conceived as science, or modern linguistics, arises from the reflections of Ferdinand de Saussure, published in 1916, in the book *General Linguistics Course* by some of his students in Geneva. This publication is recognized as a milestone in the constitution of the field and its scientific attribution since it instituted modern linguistics as an autonomous science, language as a social institution and language as a legitimate object which can be investigated in and by itself. These Saussurian notions conveyed by researchers in the area influenced the construction of different theoretical-methodological orientations that constitute the science of language.

However, despite its robust theoretical and applied contributions in areas of fundamental knowledge in and to society, such as speech therapy, pedagogy, medicine, and journalism, among others, linguistics is a science still little known in our society. This "ignorance" of linguistic science, on the one hand, is due to its object of study – the language – being multisystem, complex and interdisciplinary (Bagno, 2014; Fiorin, 2018); and, on the other hand, its dissemination and

popularization is still restricted to the departments of literature and linguistics of Brazilian universities (Rodrigues; Souza, 2020).

In these terms, linguistic science is in a peripheral place regarding a collective consciousness of science (Sousa, 2022). There is traditionally a reductionist notion of what science is and what disciplines are conceived as scientific (Chassot, 2018). In his master's dissertation, Sousa (2022) points out that the understanding of science is directly associated with the science teaching area, linked to math and nature sciences in disciplines such as biology, chemistry and physics. As a result, the process of dissemination and popularization of linguistics remains (re) produced predominantly by scientists/experts in the field and directed to other scientists/experts.

Given this context, we aim in this paper to analyze four (04) publications of an Instagram social media profile focused on linguistic dissemination/popularization, aiming to understand the contents, as well as the perspectives of scientific dissemination that underlie these publications. To this end, we have selected the profile titled @linguisticamente.falando, which is described as an extension project created to disseminate and teach about linguistics from the production of content on social media. Regarding the profile in research, we analyzed four (04) most evident publications. It is noteworthy that our corpus is wider, consisting of thirty (30) publications, including the first three (03) fixed and twenty-seven (27) that comprise the interval from December 14, 2024, to February 14, 2025.

To respond to the objectives outlined, we resort theoretically and methodologically to the concepts of science, dissemination, and scientific and linguistic popularization. Regarding the first, we align with the concept of science broadly. Concerning the second, we are based on the concept of dissemination and popularization of science in contemporary society. In the third and last, we are anchored in definitions, theories, practices, and research related to language science, which are sometimes not recognized in society as scientific activities and concepts.

We believe that this paper brings relevant contributions to theoretical discussions already carried out on the research, as they subsidize a better understanding of how, in a widely used social media, the work of describing, presenting, and introducing people into language science. Moreover, by bringing greater knowledge and visibility of linguistics, this study can bring retroactive effects on neutralized, reductionist and simplistic views of linguistic science in our community.

This research is organized into four sections. In the first, referring to this brief introduction, we signal the context, objective, and contributions of this research. In the second, we commented on the science of language and the concepts of dissemination and linguistic popularization. In the

third, we explored our data regarding Instagram profile publications that had been mentioned (@linguisticamente.falando). In the fourth and last section, we weave our final considerations.

## 2 Dissemination, popularization and linguistic science

The dissemination of scientific knowledge in Brazil is the object of study of different researchers (Bueno, 1984; Mendes, 2006; Massarani; Moreira, 2016), which discuss the action of disseminating science, from the discussion of related themes, such as the objectives of the sender, structural, linguistic and stylistic characteristics of the message, receiver profile, means of circulation used, among others. In addition to the appointment “disclosure”, other expressions are also used to refer to the act of disseminating scientific knowledge, such as dissemination, popularization, diffusion and scientific culture (Silva et al., 2024).

In general, scientific dissemination comprises

the use of resources, techniques, and processes to convey scientific and technological information to the public. (...) It is seen that scientific dissemination presupposes a process of recoding, that is, the transposition of a language specialized by a non-specialized language, with the objective of making the content accessible to a vast hearing (Bueno, 1984, p. 1421-1422).

Thus, the dissemination of science is understood as a need for recontextualization of scientific information in terms of degree of precision or technicity. Such recontextualization demands reflections on the presentation of knowledge (tables, citations, drawings, notes etc.) since scientific dissemination is oriented to many stakeholders and not just a specialized audience. For this, content and language itself must undergo a recoding to make information more accessible and democratic.

From this perspective, the intentionality underlying acts of scientific dissemination differentiates the scientific discourse from scientific popularization discourse because the latter is an actual process of formulation with texts and not just a translation of scientific knowledge (Zamboni, 2001).

Regarding the relationship between science and society, Bueno (1984) draws attention to two science diffusion parameters, namely: 1) scientific dissemination, which presupposes the transfer or diffusion of knowledge to specialists and may be intra-peer (circulation of information between experts from the same area or similar areas, which characterizes specialized public, specific content and closed code) or extra-peer (circulation of information for experts in different

areas, which characterizes a multidisciplinary approach); and (2) scientific popularization, associated with promotion for the social public in general, comprises the use of different resources, techniques and processes for the circulation of scientific information.

However, it should be noted that, traditionally, the popularization of scientific knowledge was viewed in a reductionist way, conceived as “a low-level simplification, suitable for an audience that misunderstands most of what it reads” (Motta-Roth, 2009, p. 138). Such vision served (and still serves) scientists as an instrument to manipulate speech and select what information should or should not be transmitted according to the interests of the time and the vehicle of circulation.

As opposed to this perspective, in commuting Hilgartner's vision (1990), Motta-Roth (2009) lists the positive influence of the popularization of science in society: 1) the scientist's learning on different areas of knowledge, which allows restructuring his own knowledge, foundations and beliefs; 2) communication between the scientist and other experts in the areas in interaction; and 3) the social and collective reformulation of knowledge.

Regarding the process of dissemination/popularization of language science, known as linguistics, it is worth remembering the milestones of its foundation and its establishment in the academic-scientific field. The attribution of linguistics as a science is recognized in much of the academic community from the reflections of Ferdinand de Saussure and the book entitled “General Linguistics Course” published in 1916. According to Negri (2019, p. 56), the impact of Saussurian ideas structured the theoretical perspectives that are organized from that moment, since “the epistemological cutting [...] established the object of linguistics, the langue”. Thus, the theoretical object of linguistics is language, conceived as a “treasure deposited by speech practice in all individuals belonging to the same community, a grammatical system that exists virtually in each brain” (Saussure, 1969, p. 17).

Because it is a virtual system or a “hidden” object (Bagno, 2014), language is a different research object from research objects in other areas. According to Moura and Cambrussi (2018, p. 13), “human languages are both natural objects, in the sense that they have an objective reality in the natural world, as well as cultural objects, and, as such, strictly connected to the cultural environment”. From this perspective, because it has a complex and multisystem object, sometimes there is ignorance or even ambiguity in the scientific status of linguistics, so its popularization is restricted to the departments of letters of Brazilian universities.

Motta-Roth (2008), in a survey conducted in Brazilian newspapers from 2007 to 2008, observed almost no news of scientific popularization on the theme of literacy and its developments

(language teaching, linguistic analysis, and linguistic education, among others). Such a situation is reiterated by Sousa (2022) in his investigation undertaken in the master's degree, in which he questioned high school students about the degree of scientificity of school subjects. Students pointed to greater scientific status in the subjects of the math and nature sciences, such as mathematics, physics and chemistry and lower scientific status in the disciplines of the area of languages, such as the Portuguese language, Spanish language, and English language.

In this context, it is considered that the knowledge of a particular area will only be considered science in media discourse and, consequently, in social institutions when related to care linked to human life and technological development (Motta-Roth, 2009). This finding seems to justify the low popularization, or even the skewed popularization, of linguistics in the Brazilian media context. It is possible to realize, therefore, that the media acts as a fundamental instrument in the mobilization and engagement of society in relation to the scientific character of knowledge that comes from different areas of knowledge.

According to Bueno (2010), scientific popularization is not restricted to the academic environment, such as scientific communication, as it expands to media channels, such as newspapers and magazines, television, and radio. Currently, other digital media are also featured in the scientific popularization process, such as platforms like YouTube, Deezer and Spotify and social media such as Facebook and Instagram. Treulieb (2020) points out three advantages of social media for scientific popularization: 1) pierce the bubble, since knowledge goes beyond the niche of academic readers; 2) enable scientific interactions, since the information disclosed puts in contact with the different receptors, whether experts or not; and 3) present the backstage, contributing to the transparency of the work of the scientist or scientific journalist, which shares the tools and the mishaps of their daily activities.

Thus, scientific popularization in social media, when performed in a systematic, effective, and efficient manner, seems to contribute to the scientific literacy of society (Hochsprung, 2023). Scientific literacy is understood as “[...] a set of knowledge that would facilitate men and women to read the world where they live” (Chassot, 2018, p. 84). From this perspective, the scientifically literate person, besides reading and coding the world, would transform him, acting on him critically, situated and significantly.

In the case of popularization/dissemination of linguistics on social media, it is possible to observe profiles on the Instagram social media aimed at teaching or disseminating linguistics, such as “Com a palavra, Linguística” (@comapalavralinguistica), “Linguisticamente falando”

(@linguisticamente.falando), “Linguística básica” (@linguisticabasica), as well as units and Linguistic institutions profiles that use the social network as a channel for communication and popularization of linguistic knowledge, as Departamento de Língua Portuguesa e Linguística (@dlpl.ufpb), Associação de Linguística Aplicada do Brasil (@alab\_oficial), Programa de Pós-Graduação em Linguística UFRJ (@ppglin\_ufrj), among others.

Considering the presence of these profiles in a wide range of social media, we propose, in the next section of this article, to analyze four (04) publications of the profile entitled “Linguisticamente Falando” (@linguisticamente.falando), created to disseminate and teach about linguistics.

### 3 Dissemination/Popularization of Linguistic Science in Publications on Instagram

The Linguisticamente Falando profile describes itself as an “extension project that connects scientific dissemination and teaching of linguistics via material production to our website/portal and social media”. As an extension project, it has the participation of undergraduate students of linguistics in the production of content for Instagram and other activities of the project. This participation of students operates both to instigate them to the production of linguistics content and to make them interested in the scientific dissemination of this field of study. To fulfil your proposal as a project, on the Instagram profile, there are many publications related directly or indirectly to disseminate linguistic science.

This study aims to analyze the four (04) most evident publications. However, our corpus is broader, consisting of thirty (30) publications, including the first three (03) fixed and twenty-seven (27) that comprise the interval from December 14, 2024, to February 14, 2025. After collecting thirty publications, an effort was undertaken for its categorization according to the categories of analysis proposed by Bueno (1984). Therefore, we elaborated three categories: scientific popularization for non-experts, intra-peer scientific dissemination (experts in the same area) and extra-peer scientific dissemination (specialists from different areas).

#### 3.1 Scientific popularization for non-experts

This category brings together publications focused directly on disseminating scientific knowledge to a non-expert audience. These publications were prepared by students of the linguistics fundamentals subject of the UFPB Language/Portuguese Course. According to



information collected from the profile, “the themes were chosen based on the curiosity of students and were the objective of showing, in the first period, how linguistics, unknown to the vast majority of students and society, is interesting and comprehensive”. Also, according to information present in the caption of the publication, the materials were supervised by the teachers of the discipline.

The publication is structured in a familiar format on the Instagram platform called Carousel, which corresponds to a set of images in the same post. Thus, the dissemination of linguistic knowledge is made through various images that unite verbal and nonverbal signs. The themes chosen by students vary in different fields of linguistics, such as: “Do you know how human language came about?”, “Language is a cultural instrument”, “Why do we speak Portuguese in Brazil?”, “Braille: the writing that reads with hands” etc.

Figure 1: Example of the category scientific popularization for non-experts.



Source: <https://www.instagram.com/p/DGCSf4ytgqh/>. Access: Apr. 26 2025.

The carousels follow a standardization that is present in several publications investigated in this category: an initial image presenting the theme of the publication and instigating the viewer to read the other images of the carousel; a set of images that propose to dissect the theme; and the presentation of the references used to make the content.

As stated, the themes are indicated according to the interests of the students who produce the materials. However, there is a preference for topics that are also part of the non-expert's curiosity, such as the origin of language and the ability to speak. Despite the theoretical basis present in the publications, what is seen in the use of references and even the indication of certain theoretical currents, these are not content that aims to compare authors or discuss themes to reach only readers already inserted in the field of linguistics. Such a choice is also in line with the fact that students are only in the early years of graduation studying the subject discipline.



As pointed out by Hochsprung (2023), publications such as these aimed at disseminating linguistic knowledge can contribute to the scientific literacy of society. Upon being presented with a language-related theme, a member of society also gets contact with a scientific research product, which is even able to briefly present elements of the scientific research methodology. Thus, it is not simply promoting an ideation about language, but a scientific item that reaches the citizen and presents a knowledge of this order.

From this perspective, there is the process of recontextualization or reformulation in the presentation of scientific knowledge of language, which is strategically initiated by a question – do you know how human language came about? Such strategy is part of the use of linguistic resources for the publication of information to the public, which is situated in the virtual environment, presupposing the transposition of scientific discourse to the scientific dissemination discourse and making content accessible and thought-provoking to many recipients (Bueno, 1984).

Still in Figure 1, among the didactic elements that favor this transposition of the scientific discourse to the scientific dissemination discourse, stand out: (1) the definition – the question raises the conceptualization, which is an appeal for explaining scientific terms; (2) The appointment – the term human language is exposed, differentiating, for example, from animal language; and (3) the exemplification – in subsequent imagery carousel, there is the illustration of geometric shapes drawn on the stones to exemplify the first evidence of language emergence. For Sousa (2022), these elements are of great relevance to favor the understanding of the lay public, as it allows the text to be more descriptive, with a less formal style and a language closer to everyday life.

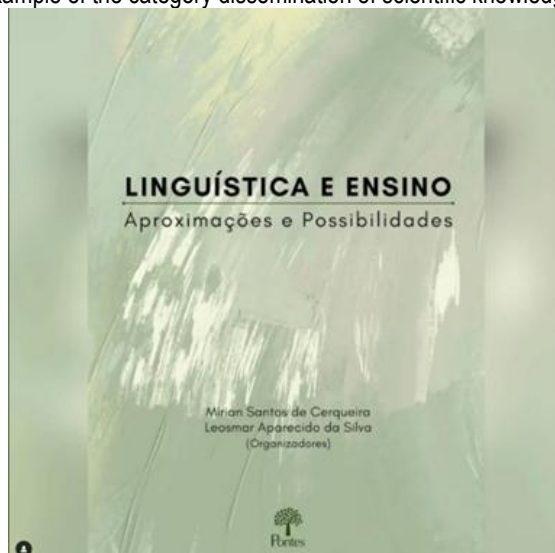
### 3.2 Intra-peer scientific dissemination

This category brings together publications that promote books related to linguistics as a reading indication for your audience. Most of these books are digital, available for free acquisition on the *Linguisticamente Falando* website. Moreover, most indications comprise books organized by some authors about a particular theme, such as functionalism, linguistics and teaching of the Portuguese language, applied linguistics etc.

Although it is not adapted for the dissemination and popularization of linguistics, at least in terms of the previous category, the dissemination of books in the area can reach a particular audience that knows some rudiments of the field and wants to know a little more about the research

that has been produced. This contact may boost this audience to a better understanding of the area and eventually enter a formal course in the field.

**Figure 2:** Example of the category dissemination of scientific knowledge intra-peers.



**Source:** <https://www.instagram.com/p/DD1-z2hp9AX/>. Access: Apr. 26 2025.

Publications regarding book dissemination are structured with just one image, specifically the cover of the book, as a static or lively image through some artificial intelligence tool. Within the period marked in this survey (December 14, 2024, to February 14, 2025), several publications were identified within this category. There is no indication as to the authorship of the publications.

This access provided by the project to materials produced by linguists in its research field is also valid for establishing a direct way between society and academic production. Such contents may also present science as a field of debate and antagonistic theories, as opposed to the common idea of science as the owner of truth and homogeneity.

The process of popularizing science opens and expands the space for questioning and, therefore, for debates about actors, institutions, and forms of authority involved in the production of knowledge to show the face of science as a discourse order, a land of practices that compete with each other by prevalence and hegemony (Myers, 2003, 267), rather than a monolithic science, with definitive truth character (Motta-Roth, 2009, p. 136).

From this perspective, the popularization of scientific knowledge, in the profile analyzed, seems not to be restricted to the publication of theoretical contents on linguistics but also through the dissemination of other vehicles and information channels involved in the production and circulation of knowledge related to the theme, as seen in Figure 2, with the illustration of the e-book

*Linguística e ensino: aproximações e possibilidades*, written by Mirian Santos de Cerqueira and Leosmar Aparecido. This diffusion of scientific knowledge, through the indication of free and available ebooks about linguistics, seems to provide potential readers with major contact with the scientific universe of language.

In addition to the dissemination of books produced within the linguistics area, this category also comprises publications that publicize academic events and public notices in the linguistics field. These are events and public notices promoted by postgraduate programs, humanities centers, linguistic laboratories etc. The dissemination of events promoted by linguists and the dissemination of linguistic notices aims mainly at an audience of graduates in the area, as well as communicating various initiatives for the formation of new researchers in the field of linguistics. In this sense, they are publications characterized by specific content and closed code, as they address a specialized audience located in the same area of knowledge (Bueno, 1984).

**Figure 3:** Second example of the category dissemination of scientific knowledge intra-peers.



**Source:** <https://www.instagram.com/p/DFdlqAIJLsU/>. Acess: Abr. 26 2025.

The publications of events and linguistic notices display an image with information from the event, such as title, theme, registration date, link, and participants, among others.

Although this communication instance turns primarily to an audience of experts or people with specific training and familiarity with the theme (Bueno, 2010), the dissemination of events and public notices can reach an audience of the profile that has evolved its interest in the area to the point of seeking entry into one of these opportunities. In this sense, scientific diffusion is directed to researchers, teachers and students who participate and are effectively interested in events in

the field, and to the lay public in general, who may have interest or curiosity in relation to the activities developed in the scientific field of language.

It is noteworthy that publications of events and linguistic notices enable users' engagement, as it is information that may interest an audience that is not yet part of linguistics, particularly those who are interested in entering undergraduate and postgraduate. Thus, social engagement, understood as scientific interaction by Treulieb (2020), contributes to the process of dissemination and popularization of linguistics in a virtual context because knowledge is shared among users of the social network Instagram, allowing the public not only to know the theoretical contents of the area of linguistics but also actively participate in different activities, events and selections related to the area.

### 3.3 Extra-peer scientific dissemination

Por fim, foram reunidas em uma última categoria nove (9) publicações do perfil no *Instagram* do Falando Linguisticamente. Essa categoria possui uma natureza diversificada, agregando materiais com diferentes propostas, mais ou menos vinculadas à popularização da linguística, sem obedecer a uma padronização comum. Nessa perspectiva, ao que nos parece, vincula-se a uma concepção de disseminação de conhecimentos científicos para um público especialista e interessado, mas não necessariamente situado em uma mesma área de conhecimento.

Figure 4 Example of the category dissemination of scientific knowledge extra-peers.



Source: <https://www.instagram.com/p/C7PXaYpPV7I/>. Acess: Apr. 26 2025.

As an example of this category, Figure 4 displays one (1) publication that promotes the possibility of purchases on the Editora Parábola website with access to a discount coupon, representing a commercial partnership with the publisher. This publication is fixed on the profile, indicating a perception by the project that it is a piece of high-value information, a priority for visualizing its audience. The publication also publishes publishers specialized in the launch of volumes related to Linguistics.

The other two (2) fixed publications propose to present to their audience information about the project and the team that coordinates it. In addition to presenting the extension project bond with the Universidade Federal da Paraíba and the participation of institutions in Brazil and Portugal, the initiative coordinators are also identified: Prof. Márcio Leitão and Profa. Carolina Gomes.

As pointed out by Alves et al. (2002), university extension is a very important tool for the dissemination and popularization of linguistics, precisely because it aims to bring to light the scientific discoveries to the external community of the university:

Scientific dissemination is even more enhanced when the target audience can become a replicator of scientific knowledge. It happens in the university extension aimed at teachers, who are excellent scientific disseminators in both quantitative and qualitative terms. They have contact with hundreds of people, including students and colleagues, and are able to share scientific knowledge effectively and productively due to their classroom experiences (Alves *et al.*, 2002).

Thus, the participation of various agents inserted in the academic field enables the broader and effective reach of the dissemination of linguistic knowledge. Students, for example, will have access to certain groups whose scope would be more challenging for teachers or other researchers.

### Concluding remarks

The initiatives for the dissemination and popularization of scientific knowledge are essential for the survival of the various fields of knowledge, since the academic work of research will need to rely on society for its promotion (Motta-Roth, 2009). Thus, the communication of the various discoveries and scientific elaborations in a recontextualized manner for a lay audience is of enormous relevance to scientific literacy and the support of society for new research.

Projects such as Linguisticamente Falando can reach a lay audience to address adapted linguistics, involving students of the undergraduate letters in the elaboration and understanding of the relevance of this process, and promote the entry of new students in the area by disseminating field research. In particular, the category entitled scientific popularization for non-experts brought together the most direct examples of popularization of linguistics, presenting topics of wide interest within the field of language and articulating the content accessible to the public and with theoretical basis. It is an effective initiative in didactically communicate scientific knowledge.

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