

The Portuguese Language teacher in Basic Education as a potential disseminator/popularizer of linguistic science in school /

O professor de Língua Portuguesa da Educação Básica como potencial divulgador/popularizador da ciência linguística na escola

Guilherme Moés*

Doctor in Linguistics from the Postgraduate Program in Linguistics (Proling), at the Federal University of Paraíba (UFPB). Member of the research group Ateliê de Textos Acadêmicos (ATA/CNPq/UFPB). He conducts research in the area of Applied Linguistics, with interests in the following topics: teaching and learning of reading and text production; genres, sequences and text-discourses; scientific literacy; scientific dissemination and popularization.



<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3372-0795>

Regina Celi Mendes Pereira**

PhD in Letters from the Federal University of Pernambuco (2005), she is a professor at the Department of Language and Linguistics (DLPL) and at the Postgraduate Program in Linguistics (PROLING) at the Federal University of Paraíba. She is a member of the Atelier de Textos Acadêmicos ATA/CNPq/UFPB and of the research group GELIT/CNPq/UFPB, coordinator of the Textual/Discursive Genres (2023-2025) and member of the group ALTER-PUC/SP. Researcher CNPq 1 D and editor of Revista Prolíngua.



<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5538-035X>

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guilherme.moes09@gmail.com

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reginacmps@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

We aim to evaluate the social role of the Portuguese Language teacher in Basic Education as an agent in the language practices of scientific dissemination/popularization of Linguistics in school and, specifically: i) characterize teaching as a bridge between scientific production and dissemination/popularization; ii) discuss the place of Linguistics in school, emphatically in Portuguese Language classes; and iii) investigate the agentive dimension of the teacher in relation to actions of scientific dissemination/popularization of Linguistics in Portuguese Language classes. To this end, in addition to recovering studies on teaching, scientific dissemination and scientific popularization, we analyzed, supported by the categories of Semantics of Action (Machado; Bronckart, 2009), the responses – generated from a questionnaire on Google Forms – of thirty (30) Portuguese Language teachers working in Basic Education, who collaborated with Sousa's research (2025). The results point to Teaching as a path that, in dialogue with scientific dissemination, can favor society's access to/use of scientific knowledge, from the perspective of scientific popularization. Regarding the place of Linguistics in school, teachers are aware of the importance and need to disseminate/popularize Linguistics knowledge in Portuguese classes, as well as there is a demand from these teachers for access to scientific linguistic knowledge, in addition to the fact that there are already actions by research groups and institutions to include Linguistics in schools and to train teachers in this perspective. Regarding the agentive dimension, there is a need for greater motivation to build the teacher's identity as a potential agent to disseminate/popularize Linguistics in school.

KEYWORDS: Portuguese Language Teacher; Basic Education; School; Linguistics; Scientific Dissemination/Popularization.

RESUMO

Objetivamos avaliar o papel social do professor de Língua Portuguesa da Educação Básica como agente nas práticas linguageiras de divulgação/popularização científica da Linguística na escola e, especificamente: i) caracterizar o Ensino como ponte entre a produção científica e a divulgação/popularização; ii) discutir o espaço da Linguística na escola, enfaticamente nas aulas de Língua Portuguesa; e iii) investigar a dimensão agentiva do professor em relação a ações de divulgação/popularização científica da Linguística nas aulas de Língua Portuguesa. Para tanto, além de recuperarmos estudos sobre ensino, divulgação científica e popularização científica, analisamos, amparados nas categorias da Semântica do Agir (Machado; Bronckart, 2009), as respostas – geradas via questionário no Google Forms – de trinta (30) professores de Língua Portuguesa atuantes na Educação Básica, que colaboraram com a pesquisa de Sousa (2025). Os resultados apontam para o ensino como uma via que, em diálogo com a divulgação científica, pode favorecer o acesso/uso pela sociedade aos conhecimentos científicos, sob a ótica da popularização científica. No tocante ao espaço da Linguística na escola, há consciência do professor sobre a importância e a necessidade de se divulgar/popularizar saberes de Linguística na aula de Língua Portuguesa, bem como há demanda desse professor pelo acesso aos saberes científicos linguísticos, além de já haver ações de grupos pesquisa e instituições para inserir a Linguística na escola e para formar os professores nesse prisma. Quanto à dimensão agentiva, percebe-se a necessidade de maior motivação para a construção da identidade do professor como agente potencial para divulgar/popularizar a Linguística na escola.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Professor de Língua Portuguesa; Educação Básica; Escola; Linguística; Divulgação/Popularização Científica.

1 Starting point

1) Who created the Theory of Relativity?; 2) Who discovered the Fundamental Law of Gravitation?; 3) Who created the light bulb?; 4) Who wrote the book “The Origin of Species”?; But what is it? You might ask: but what do these questions have to do with linguistics or, even better, what do

they have to do with the Portuguese language teacher¹ in basic education as a potential disseminator/popularizer of linguistics at school? Before we settle your concerns, let's answer the four questions: 1) Albert Einstein; 2) Isaac Newton; 3) Thomas Edison; 4) Charles Darwin. We assume that at least one of these names must have crossed your mind and that, most likely, you heard them in your classes at school, if not in other contexts, such as television, newspapers and/or digital social media. Are these names of scientists? Is there any doubt that they are scientists? You'll probably answer that they are four great scientists. The first is strongly linked to the field of Physics, as are the second and third. The fourth represents the field of Biology. So, we have representatives of the exact and biological sciences. And what's so special or important about that? Let's move on.

On with the provocations. In Basic Education, in the school context, more precisely in High School, have you ever heard of, for example: 1) Ferdinand de Saussure and the Theory of the Linguistic Sign?; 2) Roman Jakobson and the Theory of Communication?; 3) William Labov, by any chance?; 4) Marcos Bagno?; 5) Maria Helena de Moura Neves?; 6) Luiz Antônio Marcuschi, yes?; Or not? Who are these people? Are they scientists? If so, what area of knowledge do they represent? Linguistic science, is that right? Can you tell? In Brazilian secondary schools, to what extent have students had explicit access to the names of linguists and the contents of their theories? We know that the current school subject that comes closest to this knowledge is Portuguese Language, and even this linguistic knowledge is discussed implicitly, for example: 1) the notions of language, language, speech and meaning are present in the Portuguese language classroom, although it is not usually the case to mention Ferdinand de Saussure, considered the “father of modern linguistics”, the founder of linguistic structuralism, who conceived, among other concepts, the notion of a linguistic system; 2) Jakobson's Theory of Communication is based on the elements of communication (addresser, addressee, message, common code, contact and context) and the respective functions of language (emotive, conative, poetic, metalingual function, phatic and referential); 3) the relationship between language and society, based on discussions about linguistic variations, which are so recurrent even in textbooks, are usually

¹ We justify the use of the masculine form “O professor” (the teacher) in this work to refer inclusively to the teaching profession as a whole, encompassing all sexes and genders. In Portuguese, the masculine form is traditionally employed as a gender-neutral term for general reference.

made without any mention of the founder of Sociolinguistics, Labov; 4) linguistic prejudice, closely linked to stereotypes created in relation to variations, which was addressed in a work with the same title by Brazilian linguist Marcos Bagno, which may not be known to high school students; 5) Reflections on language in use, in operation, linked to the functionalist theory, studied for a lifetime by the linguist Neves, sometimes get overlooked by the normative grammar approach, and neither do they tend to be explicitly attributed to the authorship of a linguistic scientist; 6) the content on textual genres is recurrent and underpins the construction of various activities throughout basic education, but one of the great Brazilian scholars on the subject, Luiz Antônio Marcuschi, is perhaps no more than a “nobody”, an ‘unknown’, a “so-and-so”.

Consider: why is it that primary school students generally know the names and may even know the theories of scientists related to the exact, natural, biological and/or health sciences, but probably (not to generalize) know little about scientists in the field of linguistics? Why, at school, do Biology teachers explicitly mention Gregor Mendel when they cover genetics, Chemistry teachers, when working on atomic models, discuss the “Dalton atomic model”, the “Thomson atomic model” and so on, Physics teachers talk about Newton's three “Laws”, Kepler's Laws”, Mathematics teachers sometimes quote Euler-Venn when discussing diagrams for graphical representation of sets, but Portuguese language teachers often don't share with their students the scientists and theories related to the linguistic-grammatical-discursive knowledge covered? To what extent should Linguistics be explicitly taught (or not) in Portuguese language classes in basic education? What does (or does not) this explicit teaching entail? How should it be done (or avoided)? How can the explicit teaching of Linguistics in schools promote (or fail to promote) society's access to and conscious use of this scientific knowledge in daily life, from the perspective of scientific dissemination/popularization?²

In light of these provocations and this brief contextualization, this study aims, broadly, to evaluate the social role of Basic Education Portuguese Language teachers as agents in the language-related practices of scientific dissemination/popularization of Linguistics in schools. Against this backdrop, we also aim, more specifically: i) to characterize education/teaching as a bridge between the construction of scientific knowledge and its dissemination/popularization; ii) to discuss the role and

² This paper is related to the project “Scientific dissemination/popularization of Linguistics: theoretical, formative and textual-discursive aspects”, process number: 421969/2023-7 (Edital Universal 2023), to whom we thank for the financial support.

integration of Linguistics in schools, particularly in Portuguese Language classes; and iii) to investigate the agentive dimension of teachers in relation to actions for the scientific dissemination/popularization of Linguistics in Portuguese Language classes. To this end, we will analyze responses — collected through an online questionnaire administered via Google Forms — from 30 teachers collaborating in the doctoral research of this article's first author (Sousa, 2025). These participants represent all five regions of Brazil, hold degrees in *Letras*³, and confirm they are currently teaching Portuguese in Basic Education. Additionally, the analyses and discussions are grounded in studies on teaching, dissemination, and scientific popularization, as well as the categories of the Semantics of Action proposed by Machado and Bronckart (2009), under the overarching theoretical-methodological framework of Sociodiscursive Interactionism (ISD), in line with Bronckart (1999).

In organizational terms, beyond these introductory remarks, this article comprises five additional sections in the following order: the methodological section; the section addressing the relationships between teaching, dissemination, and scientific popularization; followed by the section portraying the place of Linguistics in Basic Education; the penultimate section explores the potential role of Basic Education Portuguese Language teachers as key agents for disseminating/popularizing linguistic science in schools; and finally, the concluding remarks, which are followed by the references.

2 Methodological aspects

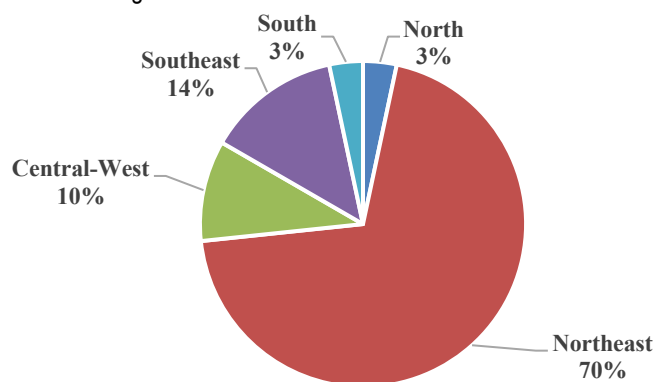
This work represents an unfolding of Sousa's (2025) doctoral research, which examined the socio-historical aspects of the establishment of Linguistics as a science in Brazil, its dissemination/popularization, the actions of linguists as disseminating/popularizing agents of the science they represent, and society's responses to the dissemination/popularization of Linguistics. For this article⁴, we focus on responses from one group of research collaborators — namely, Portuguese

³ In Brazil, the undergraduate course *Letras* (literally "Letters") focuses on the study of language, literature, and related disciplines. While often translated as "Language and Literature" in English, *Letras* encompasses broader linguistic and communicative competencies, aligning with the training of educators, researchers, and professionals in fields such as translation, editing, and cultural mediation. The course emphasizes critical engagement with language as a social, historical, and cultural phenomenon, reflecting its interdisciplinary nature.

⁴ This article utilizes data from Sousa's (2025) doctoral research but examines it through a distinct analytical lens, thereby establishing the originality (*ineditismo*) of this discussion.

Language teachers working in Basic Education in Brazil — to better understand their role as scientific disseminators/popularizers of Linguistics through teaching in Portuguese Language classes in schools. These responses (30 in total) were collected via an online form (Google Forms) that remained open for participation from September 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023. In Fig. 1, we illustrate the regional distribution of these Portuguese Language teachers across Brazil's five geographic regions.

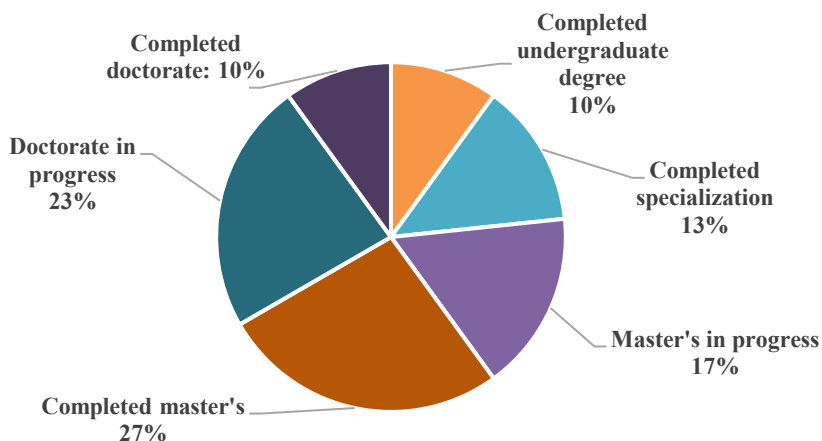
Figure 1: Regional distribution across Brazil of Portuguese Language teachers working in Basic Education who collaborated in the research.



Source: Data from Sousa's (2025) research.

As can be observed (Fig. 1), there is a predominance of participants from the Northeast Region, which can be attributed to the researcher's affiliation with the region and the fact that the data collection instrument (the Google Forms questionnaire) was shared with colleagues, friends, and family through WhatsApp groups — including some dedicated to postgraduate programs. This dynamic may also explain the educational profile of the collaborators (Fig. 2), among whom 60% hold at least a master's degree, indicating a high level of academic training.

Figure 2: Educational background of Portuguese Language teachers working in Basic Education who collaborated in the research.



Source: Data from Sousa's (2025) research.

The questionnaire they answered — in addition to questions about age, state/city, highest educational background, degree program, whether they work in their field of training⁵, institution type (public or private), teaching modality, and Basic Education level — included the following inquiries: 1) In your view, what is science?; 2) Why is Linguistics a science?; 3) What is the investigative focus of linguistic science?; 4) What does it mean to disseminate/popularize linguistic science?; 5) As a linguist, what is your research focus — i.e., what have you been researching/practicing?; 6) Have the results of your research reached lay or non-specialist audiences?; 7) Are scientific research findings in Linguistics (re)cognized by society at large? Why or why not?; 8) As a Portuguese Language teacher, do you incorporate scientific knowledge into your daily classroom practice? If yes, provide examples; 9) Are contents of linguistic science addressed in your classroom practices? If no, why not? If yes, how is this done?; 10) Do you consider yourself a disseminator/popularizer of linguistic scientific knowledge in the classroom? Why?

⁵ From these broader questions, the following findings relevant to this article emerge: Of the 30 collaborators, 26 teach in public schools, 3 in private schools, and 1 in both public and private schools. Regarding their teaching levels within Basic Education: 7 teach exclusively in High School; 16 teach exclusively in the Final Years (6th to 9th grade) of Elementary School (*Anos Finais do Ensino Fundamental*); 5 teach in both High School and the Final Years of Elementary School; 1 teaches in the Initial Years (1st to 5th grade) of Elementary School (*Anos Iniciais do Ensino Fundamental*) and High School; 1 teaches in Early Childhood Education and High School.

For this article, the research was conducted through a qualitative-interpretivist approach, of an applied nature, with exploratory and descriptive objectives, and employing documentary, bibliographic, and case study methodologies (Silveira; Córdova, 2009; Gil, 2002). In this vein, we selected for analysis the collaborators' responses to questions 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10, given their direct relevance to the objectives outlined for this work. The analysis of responses to question 4 is presented in the section *What is the Place of Linguistics in Basic Education?*, while the subsequent section addresses the remaining questions, engaging in dialogue with reflections on teaching, scientific dissemination/popularization, and the Semantics of Action (Machado; Bronckart, 2009).

With these considerations in mind, let us now proceed to systematize the notions of teaching, dissemination, and scientific popularization and their interconnections.

3 Teaching, dissemination, and scientific popularization: intersections

In the context of school education, one cannot meaningfully discuss either teaching or dissemination/popularization without first addressing the construction/production of scientific knowledge.

Doing science is the foundation for teaching, dissemination, and scientific popularization. The production of science occurs, broadly speaking, through the scientific method. For example, a researcher observes reality and, based on this observation, identifies an object of study (tied to the objective/physical, social, or subjective world) to investigate, formulating questions about it. From there, a hypothesis is proposed as a preliminary answer to the question, followed by testing/experimentation. If the hypothesis is confirmed, it becomes a theory (scientific knowledge); if not, the scientist/researcher must consider alternative answers. This description broadly represents the traditional/positivist scientific method, grounded in a closed science that ends in itself — that is, in this conception of scientific production, the ultimate goal is the theory itself.

However, grounded in the framework of Sociodiscursive Interactionism (ISD) (Bronckart, 1999) — which posits language as central to understanding human development — and Indisciplinary Applied Linguistics (Moita Lopes, 2006, 2009), we contend that this scientific method lacks sufficient intelligibility in the face of human/social realities. In other words, we argue that the scientific method

must transcend the academic bubble and engage in dialogue with society. This entails both returning scientific results/discoveries to the general public and listening to and engaging the public in debates about such findings, thereby fostering socioscientific responsiveness. In this regard, we advocate for interaction between science and society to be cultivated through multiple channels, such as teaching, scientific dissemination, extension⁶, and other possibilities.

In Libâneo's words (2013, p. 22), "Teaching corresponds to actions, means, and conditions for the realization of instruction", with the latter being defined as "intellectual formation and the development of cognitive capacities through the mastery of a certain level of systematized knowledge." As evident, the concept of teaching as action aligns with the Sociodiscursive Interactionism (ISD) perspective, which posits that human interactions occur through linguistic action (Bronckart, 1999) — actions imbued with the socio-historical-cultural and subjective preconstructions of the agents. This parallels Libâneo's (2013) emphasis on instruction as intellectual formation. Teaching, therefore, is a linguistic action tied to knowledge mediation, wherein the teacher acts as an agent in the school context, without disregarding the student's active role in this process.

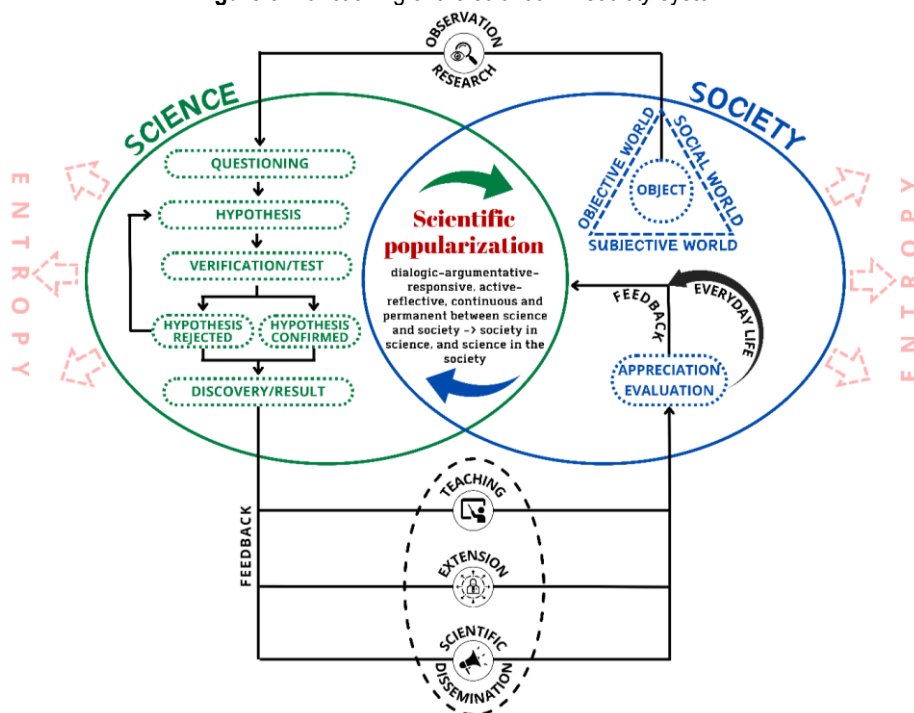
Regarding knowledge mediation, Bueno (1984) states that scientific diffusion — i.e., spreading scientific knowledge — can occur in two broad ways: among specialists (scientific dissemination), whether within the same field (intra-peer) or across different fields (inter-peer), or from specialists to non-specialists (scientific popularization). Leibrunder (2011) describes scientific popularization as an intralingual translation, that is, the transformation of technical language into less specialized language within the same linguistic system. Zamboni (2001) frames scientific popularization not merely as a reformulation of scientific discourse but as the construction of a new discourse, involving active authorship. Grillo (2013) characterizes it as a dialogic relationship between the scientific sphere and other spheres of human activity, such as journalism and literature. For Reis (1964), considered the "father of Brazilian scientific popularization," scientific popularization relates to communicating scientific facts accessibly to the public, fostering discussions around science. He emphasizes a close connection between scientific popularization and teaching:

⁶ Extension (Extensão Universitária): In Brazilian academia, this refers to programs that bridge universities and communities, fostering knowledge exchange and addressing societal needs.

[...] we can assert that scientific popularization fulfills two complementary functions: first, the function of teaching, supplementing or expanding the role of schools themselves; second, the function of fostering education. The latter unfolds into several others, such as awakening public interest in science and thereby compelling — through the pressures by which popular will is typically exercised in democracies — the elevation of schools' didactic standards; awakening and guiding vocations; fostering a spirit of scientific association among youth; and stimulating scientific amateurism where appropriate, as such amateurism can constitute a significant reserve of a nation's scientific workforce. (Reis, 1964, p. 352)

Building on Reis's (1964) reflection, which highlights scientific popularization as a catalyst for education, we can consider the connections that may arise from using scientific popularization texts in the classroom, as well as how Portuguese Language teachers might share and discuss their own scientific studies with students. Broadly, we frame *teaching* as one pathway for the *popularization of scientific knowledge*, in line with the framework defended in Sousa's (2025) doctoral thesis, while *scientific dissemination* constitutes another pathway that can intersect with teaching. For illustration, see Fig. 3 to understand the relationships between *science* \rightarrow *teaching* \rightarrow *scientific dissemination* \rightarrow *scientific popularization*.

Figure 3: Functioning of the *science ↔ society* system.



Source: Sousa (2025).

In this system *science* ↔ *society*, grounded in the principles of Sociodiscursive Interactionism (ISD) and Applied Linguistics, the traditional scientific method is complemented by the feedback that science must provide to society. This feedback occurs through teaching, extension activities, scientific dissemination, or the interplay among these avenues. Following this, society engages with scientific knowledge, incorporating it into daily life and fostering a continuous, agentive-responsive-active-reflective dialogue with science. This intersection between science and society aligns with the concept of scientific popularization advocated by Motta-Roth (2009) and Sousa (2025), which emphasizes the integration of science into social practices as an intrinsic part of people's lives — a process requiring action, such as that enabled through teaching. This system is structured by the relationships between science, society, and the objective, social, and subjective worlds (illustrated in Fig. 3 within the context of defining a research object). Entropy, representing the system's tendency toward disorganization, is linked to factors such as: a lack of scientific education in society; public disinterest in science; and other related challenges.

To identify the profile of Basic Education teachers and their potential role as disseminators/popularizers of linguistic science in schools, we draw on the dimension of agency proposed by Machado and Bronckart (2009). According to this framework, agency can be interpreted through three planes: motivational (why act?), tied to external determinants and individual motives; intentional (what to act for?), related to social purposes and individual goals; resourcial (how to act?), linked to instruments and capacities. These categories were applied to analyze collaborators' responses to selected questionnaire items, forming the corpus of this article.

Having achieved the first specific objective outlined in this section — i) *to characterize education/teaching as a bridge between the construction of scientific knowledge and its dissemination/popularization* —, we now turn to the discussion of Linguistics' place in Basic Education.

4 What is the Place of Linguistics in Basic Education?

In Basic Education, Portuguese Language teachers with degrees in *Letras* typically focus their work on the Final Years of Elementary School (6th to 9th grades) and High School (Ensino Médio), as Early Childhood Education (creche and pré-escola) and the Initial Years of Elementary School (1st

to 5th grades) are usually taught by educators trained in Pedagogy. Since this article and its collaborators are linked to Portuguese Language teachers specifically as language specialists (i.e., with degrees in Letras), the considerations here are tied to the context of Portuguese Language classes in the Final Years of Elementary School and, even more so, in High School.

This does not mean that discussions about Linguistics in Portuguese Language classes should only occur from the 6th grade onward. *Linguistics is also for children*, and Pedagogy professionals can incorporate it into their teaching, potentially in partnership with linguists or specialists. One might object: “That’s too much! Linguistics for children?” To this, we counter: Have you heard of the magazine *Ciência Hoje das Crianças* (Science Today for Children)? Science, including Linguistics, is indeed for children — provided the approach considers the cognitive and learning singularities of each group. As a saying often attributed to the philosopher Pythagoras reminds us: “*Educate the children so that there will be no need to punish the adults*”. Imagine a world where people had access to scientific education from childhood — how different might we be today?

Furthermore, a persistent paradigm holds that *Portuguese Language is not a science* or that Portuguese classes are not a space for discussing linguistic science. On this issue, Teles and Lopes (2019, p. 126) critically ask:

[...] For most educators, this proposal seems implausible, as they argue that Portuguese Language classes should not engage with science. Writing, grammar, and literature — the three pillars into which Portuguese content is traditionally divided in Basic Education — are seen as unsuitable grounds for scientific inquiry. To conceive such a proposal, one must also shed traditional perspectives on Portuguese language instruction. Given the significant advancements in academic studies of language, it is no longer tenable to view Portuguese classes — particularly the segment focused on grammar — as a space that prioritizes only the study of a prestige variety at the expense of others. It is time to approach Portuguese classes scientifically, treating them as a dynamic laboratory where students encounter diverse linguistic data and use it to test hypotheses about their language. From this perspective, Portuguese classes can indeed be reimagined as a fitting space for addressing questions related to teaching science. (Teles; Lopes, 2019, p. 126)

As the authors suggest, the traditional approach in Portuguese Language classes does not align with students’ real-world language use, thereby distancing itself from their realities and often

provoking rejection of the subject. Disseminating/popularizing linguistic science in schools differs from teaching normative grammar — though even grammar can be examined linguistically through a scientific lens. The National Common Curriculum Base (BNCC) (Brasil, 2018) itself advocates for Portuguese Language teachers to adopt socio-interactionist perspectives, grounded in critical thinking, citizenship development, and alignment with students' social contexts and lived experiences. Given this, there is no doubt that integrating Linguistics into Portuguese Language instruction is essential: beyond memorizing rules often incongruent with real language use, students must be *stimulated to curiosity* about linguistic phenomena.

In analyzing the collaborators' responses, the place of Linguistics in schools begins to emerge through their answers to question 4) *What does it mean to disseminate/popularize linguistic science?* For instance, one collaborator argues for Linguistics not as a discipline confined to Language and Literature (Letras) programs but as knowledge vital to all of society, particularly through schooling:

To understand that Linguistics is not merely a discipline confined to Language and Literature programs, but a field of study that permeates all aspects of life — relevant even to students in early grades, elementary, high school, and higher education. Once this awareness is cultivated, Linguistics becomes part of people's daily lives, just like any other science (Afrodite/49/Piauí⁷)

Similar to Afrodite, two other teachers emphasize the necessity of Linguistics reaching students in schools: *"It would involve disseminating diverse linguistic research and making such studies accessible to students and researchers"* (Carolina/27/Paraíba-PB). *"Bringing it into the classroom in a way that is more accessible to the student body of each institution"* (Diadorim/29/PB). Beyond this, another collaborator touches on a critical point regarding the tension between linguistic and grammatical approaches: *"Popularizing linguistic science would allow the general population to understand the object of linguistic study and recognize that language is shaped by social contexts, not just grammatical rules"* (Will/24/Goiás-GO).

⁷ We adopted the following reference standard to identify the contributor associated with each response: (Name / Age / State abbreviation).

In light of this, we advocate for the explicit integration of linguistic scientific content in schools. What does explicit teaching of Linguistics entail? It is not merely using linguistic knowledge developed in universities as a backdrop for Portuguese Language teachers' work — though this is already indispensable. Rather, it requires the systematization and didactic transposition of linguistic theories to foster the civic formation of students who are critical, participatory, and sensitive to the scientific questions inherent in the study of language. No — it is also *not* about promoting a traditional or sanitized approach to Linguistics education, fixated on the simplistic memorization of linguists' names and theories. Instead, it aims to cultivate students' *critical-scientific-investigative awareness* of language-related issues that interest them, grounded in the scientific knowledge Linguistics offers. The goal is not to replicate what was done with Grammar instruction — i.e., teaching students to memorize linguists' names and theories in isolation — but to enable them to understand language through a scientific-investigative lens.

One collaborator emphasizes the need for linguistic scientific knowledge to reach Basic Education teachers themselves, highlighting the urgency of teacher training: *"Promote and disseminate publications accessible to Basic Education teachers. Support and publicize YouTube channels with accessible content about ongoing research"* (Ângela, 48, Paraná). This demand for training is why Sousa's (2025) doctoral research also engaged collaborators from supervised internship groups in undergraduate teaching programs for Portuguese Language/Linguistics in Brazil. These collaborators affirmed the need for *initial teacher education* that considers the dissemination/popularization of Linguistics in schools — though primarily as a resource for teaching practice, not yet as an explicit curricular objective.

In this vein, the event *Abralin em Cena – Popularização da Linguística* (Abralin Onstage: Popularizing Linguistics), held in November 2021, featured a workshop titled *"The Language Teacher as a Scientific Disseminator"*, led by Vitor Hochsprung. The workshop's proposal was as follows:

If we imagine a context where an expert in a subject speaks to dozens of laypeople (in the purest sense of the term), it does not take long to envision a Basic Education classroom. Given this, it is reasonable to consider such a space a highly conducive environment for scientific dissemination. The workshop proposes discussions on topics related to teaching, science, and the popularization of Linguistics, alongside practical activities for participants. These aim to foster reflection on scientific

approaches to grammar instruction and to connect teaching practices with the dissemination and popularization of Linguistics — the scientific study of human language. (Abralín, 2021, s/p).

The aforementioned presenter also works as a science communicator on digital social media and is a member of the *Laboratório Linguística na Escola* (LALESC – School Linguistics Laboratory), registered as a research group with Brazil's National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq) under the leadership of Prof. Dr. Sandra Quarezemin from the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC). This group focuses on studies in Linguistic Theory and Analysis in dialogue with Basic Education, emphasizing the benefits of integrating scientific methodologies into school-based language instruction. From this perspective, Quarezemin (2017, p. 88) argues that “Portuguese Language teachers can explore linguistic phenomena in the classroom that encourage students to reflect on language as an object of study”.

At the Federal University of Paraíba (UFPB), the research group *Ateliê de Textos Acadêmicos* (ATA – Academic Texts Workshop)⁸, led by the second author of this work and co-affiliated with the first author, has also prioritized initiatives to integrate Linguistics into Basic Education. Examples of the ATA group's contributions include: The master's thesis by Sousa (2022), which investigated the development of scientific literacy practices among high school students through the production of *popular science articles* based on Linguistics-themed *scientific articles*. In 2024, the first author of this article, in his role as a Portuguese Language teacher in Basic Education, collaborated with the ATA group to design an intervention project with a high school class. Students: Studied foundational concepts in Linguistics (e.g., its status as a science, the scientific method, and key Sociolinguistic principles like *language variation* and *linguistic prejudice*) –, organized into groups to design research projects, create and administer questionnaires for linguistic data collection, analyzed data in a workshop led by the ATA group, and produced social media videos (published online) to disseminate their findings to collaborators and the broader community.

In this direction, we observe a growing interest and awareness among collaborators like Afrodite, Carolina, and Diadorim regarding the need to open classroom spaces for integrating

⁸ Address to access the ATA group's profile on CNPq: <http://dgp.cnpq.br/dgp/espelhogrupo/1192654638114164>. Accessed on: February 22, 2025.

Linguistics into schools. Additionally, as highlighted by collaborator Ângela (48, Paraná-PR), there is urgency for linguistic scientific knowledge to reach Basic Education Portuguese Language teachers. Furthermore, research groups affiliated with Brazilian universities have intensified efforts to promote Linguistics in Basic Education. This movement extends beyond academia: the *Brazilian Linguistics Association (Abralin)*, as of the first quarter of 2025, includes three commissions relevant to this discussion: Linguistics in Basic Education, coordinated by Julio William Curvelo Barbosa (UNESPAR) and Shirlei Marly Alves (UESPI); Linguistics and Olympiads, led by Cleber Ataíde (UFPE) and Bruno L'Astorina (representative of Instituto Vertere – OBL); Popularization of Linguistics, coordinated by Luana De Conto (UFPR) and Lou-Ann Kleppa (UNIR). We highlight the second commission, particularly the *Brazilian Linguistics Olympiad (OBL)* — launched in Brazil in 2011 — which has gained momentum despite the discontinuation of the *Portuguese Language Olympiad* (focused on text production in schools, last held in 2021). However, challenges persist, such as teachers' lack of training or reluctance to encourage student participation due to unfamiliarity with Linguistics.

Broadly, the presence of Linguistics in Basic Education remains modest. Yet, based on the analyzed data, there are teachers aware of the urgency to position schools as spaces for scientific dissemination of Linguistics, alongside institutional efforts to overcome resistance to its integration.

Having addressed our second specific objective, *ii) to discuss the integration of Linguistics in schools, particularly in Portuguese Language classes*, we now turn to the following section, which explores the potential of teachers as disseminators/popularizers of linguistic science in educational contexts.

5 The Power of the Portuguese Language Teacher as an Agent of Dissemination/Popularization of Linguistics in Schools

What is the profile of a teacher capable of acting as an agent for disseminating/popularizing Linguistics in schools? To answer this question, we analyzed responses from 30 Portuguese Language teachers working in Basic Education who participated in the research, examined through the lens of the categories from the *Semantics of Action* (Machado; Bronckart, 2009). The focus was on: what motivations are tied to teachers' actions as disseminators/popularizers of Linguistics in Portuguese

Language classes?; ii) what are their intentionalities?; iii) what resources do they have at their disposal to act?

When asked about 5) *As a linguist, what are your research directions, i.e., what have you been researching/practicing?*, one (01) respondent answered, *“At the moment, nothing”* (Ana/48/PB), two (02) linked their work more to the field of literature: *“I focus on the literary field”* (Cabral/32/Pernambuco - PE) and *“I am pursuing a doctorate in Literature, examining Black Brazilian writings”* (Diadorim/29/PB), one (01) stated, *“Currently, I only teach classes”* (Fênix/42/GO), and another (01) said, *“At the moment, only basic functions”* (Polly/32/PB). In other words, these teachers seem not to identify with the practice of research in Linguistics. This raises the question: to what extent does the identity of the Basic Education Portuguese Language teacher align with or diverge from that of a scientist/linguist, and what are the implications of this?

On the other hand, one teacher states: *“Lately, I’ve only researched better ways to make reading and writing appealing to the students I receive every year, as they arrive with monstrous difficulties”* (A Marrenta/52/PB). In this case, the importance of the teacher-researcher’s stance for improving the teaching-learning process is clear. That is, the teacher’s engagement with scientific knowledge is motivated by a social purpose: to draw students’ attention to reading and writing practices. Another example: *“I study Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), multiliteracies, critical literacy, and apply them in the classroom with students through projects”* (CrisSil/53/Distrito Federal-DF). Here, the teacher affirms that they integrate their research practices with teaching, and the use of projects serves as a resource for their role as a disseminator/popularizer of Linguistics in the classroom.

Regarding question 6) *Have the results of your research reached non-specialist or lay audiences?* among those who stated they conduct research in Linguistics in the previous question (i.e., 25 participants), 8 (32%) responded that the results of their research have not reached the general public. For those who answered affirmatively, we highlight the following remarks: Joy/25/PB, who researches Dialogical Discourse Analysis, said, *“Yes, for example, my students”*; JB/56/Pará-PA, who studies linguistic variation and change, stated that their research outcomes also reach their students: *“Yes. My students”* Conversely, one collaborator, researching language policies, verb inflection, and textbooks, questions: *“No. Would the general public even be interested in that?”* (Lais/28/PB). Indeed, for there to be interest, people need to understand Linguistics and know its purpose — but to what

extent does society in their daily lives (re)cognize Linguistics? How has Linguistics benefited society? While it is true that Linguistics has many social applications — from linguists contributing to conversational-based artificial intelligence to forensic linguistics aiding criminal investigations through linguistic evidence — does undergraduate training in Language and Literature, for instance, even theoretically address the diverse fields of linguistic practice?

Concerning question 7) *Are scientific Linguistics studies (re)cognized by society at large? Why?*, 23 teachers (approximately 77%) stated no, 4 were ambivalent, and 3 said yes. Among the reasons for “no,” excerpts highlight the link between the lack of social recognition for linguistic research and the undervaluation of teachers and education: “*They are not recognized, largely because teachers’ work is still heavily criticized and undervalued*” (A Marrenta/52/PB); “*I believe not. Because education is not valued by the government, and this reflects on society as a whole*” (Maria/46/Minas Gerais - MG). These aspects of devaluing both teachers and education tie into the (de)motivational plane of action, demanding public policies and investment to reverse this scenario.

We emphasize that the axis of Teaching is reinforced as a pathway for the scientific dissemination/popularization of Linguistics in schools, as one collaborator highlights the lack of university involvement in schools to share academic-scientific knowledge: “*No. University professors, in general, do not visit schools, and the State Department of Education (SEED) does not promote connections between educational levels*” (Ângela/48/PR).

When responding that such research *has* been recognized, one collaborator notes:

I believe there is recognition. Today, as a teacher, I’ve noticed that Portuguese Language classes address phenomena already studied in Linguistics: understanding textual genres, typology, variation, morphosyntax, among other topics that students (re)cognize in class without much impact (Oliveira/33/PB).

Fair enough. The lingering question is: To what extent do students in the Final Years of Elementary School and High School understand the socio-historical context tied to the construction of these notions central to linguistic studies? Do students realize that these concepts are scientific, just like concepts such as cells, atoms, velocity, and others fundamental to biology, chemistry, or physics? Do high school students know who the scholars are — those who often dedicated their entire lives to

research — that contributed to scientific development and, consequently, provided society with knowledge essential to understanding human interactions mediated by language? But why emphasize researchers' names? It is about valuing the qualified and rigorous work of those who aim to contribute to humanity's development by helping people better understand linguistic practices and social interactions.

Linguistics is also deemed socially unrecognized due to its perceived lack of utility: *"I think not. Linguistics isn't seen as a science but as an ivory tower or academic pursuit. Unfortunately. In conversations with friends, I always hear: What's the point of that?"* (Cláudia/56/MG). This aspect, previously raised by collaborator Laís/28/PB in Question 6, ties to the (de)motivational plane (Machado; Bronckart, 2009). How would learning Linguistics change the life of a non-specialist?

Regarding question 8) *As a Portuguese Language teacher, do you address scientific knowledge in your classroom? If yes, provide examples.*, all collaborators responded affirmatively. Ten referenced themes from fields outside Linguistics: *"Yes, especially now with COVID, discussing vaccines"* (A Marrenta/52/PB); *"[...] the science behind arm-swinging while walking, the myth that rats love cheese, advances in insulin pill research, among others"* (Gótica Suave/32/PB). Twenty (20) collaborators used Linguistics-related themes/content as examples, with some framing these as pedagogical foundations and others as teaching objects: *"Yes. When teaching textual production, I base my activities on Lea and Street's teaching approaches"* (Afrodite/49/PI); *"Often. Theory is necessary to ground our classroom discourse; I reference Saussure, Geraldi, Travaglia, Solé, Rojo..."* (Laura Souza/42/PB); *"Yes. Linguistic variation, for example"* (Ane/48/PE); *"Yes, frequently, such as when discussing linguistic prejudice"* (Fênix/42/GO). Afrodite's response reveals the integration of intentionality into pedagogical practice, using theory to underpin action — a point echoed by Laura Souza's answer.

Notably, some collaborators stressed the need for students to recognize teachers as scientific agents: *"Yes. For instance, language acquisition studies. It's important for students to know my field is a science. When I ask them to name sciences, they cite Biology first"* (Cláudia/56/MG). Importantly, Cláudia was pursuing a doctorate during data collection, prompting reflection on the teacher-researcher identity as a potential premise for Basic Education Portuguese teachers to act as Linguistics popularizers.

For question 9) *Do you address Linguistics content in your classroom practices? If no, why? If yes, how?*, one collaborator stated: *“I don’t present it as Science. I just exemplify and study linguistic diversity”* (JB/56/PA), reinforcing the resistance Teles and Lopes (2019) discuss regarding integrating Linguistics into Portuguese classes. Another, reflecting on their answer, acknowledged a need to incorporate such content: *“Usually not. I need to include it”* (Cabral/32/PB), signaling motivational awareness. A third collaborator explained: *“Rarely. Applying linguistic science methodologies is time-consuming; I do more through projects. I’d like to base all teaching on this, but there’s pressure from ‘clients’ [parents/students]”* (Fulana/35/São Paulo - SP), highlighting classroom time as a motivational constraint. Teaching Linguistics as science competes with normative grammar and literary history — not inherently unnecessary but insufficient, given the socio-interactionist and discursive frameworks emphasized by Brazil’s National Curriculum (BNCC/Brasil, 2018).

Another collaborator states: *“In a way, yes, but without terminological rigor”* (Bidu/37/RJ). But why without terminological rigor? Terminological discussions are crucial, as they reflect the systematized knowledge of a scholarly community. In Biology: cell, gene, chromosome, DNA. In Geography: landscape, climate, weather, erosion. In Chemistry: matter, substance, hydrocarbons. Why should Linguistics be any different? Terminology is tied to the linguistic-cultural-scientific identity of a discipline that claims scientific status. In Bidu’s case, the lack of terminological focus seems tied to the intentional plane — prioritizing content relevance over scientific systematization, which occasionally reverberates in terminology.

Some collaborators emphasized Linguistics as a theoretical-methodological framework supporting teaching practice:

As argued by Geraldi (1999) in The Text in the Classroom, every teacher’s practice is informed by a theoretical-practical approach, consciously or not. For me, it is no different: the conception of language as interaction — heterogeneous and requiring the presence of the ‘other’ — shapes my practice. (Oliveira/33/PB)

Indeed, teaching practices are shaped by socio-historical constructs that inform educators’ pre-existing frameworks. However, we argue that beyond abstract guidance, Linguistics should be taught explicitly, as one collaborator exemplifies: *“Yes. Since I teach teens, I prefer dialogic approaches.*

Through conversation, I discuss my own research to spark interest. Videos could help, but there's a lack of scientific dissemination content in our field" (Cláudia/56/MG).

Explicit instruction of Linguistics in schools could promote self-development among Portuguese language teachers in Basic Education. While the initial steps may be challenging, the practice resembles the polishing of a precious stone. This approach does not replace initial or continuing education, but rather complements an ongoing process of refinement.

Finally, when asked question 10) *Do you consider yourself a disseminator/popularizer of scientific knowledge of Linguistics in the classroom? Why?*, five participants answered no, while twenty-five answered yes. Among those who answered no, the awareness of needing further training appears to influence Ane/48/PE, constituting an important element in the motivational framework of her practice: *"Not completely. I still need to study more"*. It is also interesting to note how this research prompted the emergence of an awareness of the Basic Education Portuguese language teacher's identity as a potential scientific disseminator/popularizer of Linguistics. Collaborator Fênix/42/GO further underscores the social purpose in the intentionality of her practice: *"It's funny — I had never stopped to consider this perspective, but yes. Continuously, the discipline leads us to encourage students to discuss and reflect on linguistic knowledge"*. Uncertainty regarding the teacher's identity as a disseminator/popularizer is illustrated in Fulana/35/SP: *"No. That's a good question; the why is still vague to me, but perhaps I view scientific dissemination as something more closely related to the media, social networks... an audience far larger than the thirty students in one classroom"*. Yet we might ask: what are thirty students in a classroom when compared to thousands — or even millions — reached by the media?

We also infer an apparent relationship between the teacher–researcher identity (Bortoni-Ricardo, 2008) and a heightened agentive potential for disseminating/popularizing Linguistics in schools: *"Yes. Because my teaching practice is deeply informed by my scientific work."* (Carol/37/PB); *"Yes, because I strive to share research from my field that may be relevant and spark my students' interest."* (Cláudia/56/MG). Regarding this topic, it is important to recognize its connection to the motivational domain: the teacher–researcher appears more motivated to disseminate/popularize Linguistics, both because they see themselves as active co-constructors of scientific knowledge and

because they can advance social goals in the realm of intentionality, given the social responsibility inherent in this teacher-disseminator-popularizer identity.

Another facet of the teacher's profile as a potential disseminator/popularizer of Linguistics is the need for depth in addressing content, moving beyond superficial approaches that fail to explain linguistic phenomena. This is tied to the social purpose central to the identity of the disseminator/popularizer: *"Yes. Because I have adopted this stance and made a personal commitment to show students what language truly is. I refuse to let it remain a discipline devoid of depth"* (Laís/28/PB).

We understand that, in Portuguese Language classes concerning linguistic variation, teachers could move beyond the mere clarification that words like *macaxeira* and *mandioca* vary according to geographic region. But you might ask: if we can hardly carve out space in the face of the dominance of normative grammar, how is it possible to go further? Wouldn't that be, as the saying goes, 'putting the cart before the horse'? No one said it would be easy. This is a process that demands, first and foremost, initial and continuing education that fosters the development of professionals capable of spearheading an abrupt shift in the classroom approach to language. And moreover: if we wait "with our arms crossed" for these trainings and all these changes, the mill will scarcely turn." Action is imperative!

Before we conclude, let us consider what collaborator Will/24/GO said about whether he sees himself as a disseminator/popularizer of Linguistics: *"No, because I have never taught a lesson expressly designed for the purpose of scientific dissemination"*. We maintain that it is not a question of delivering a lesson solely for scientific outreach, but rather of allowing scientific dissemination to permeate all — or at least most — lessons. Linguistic studies are scientific; therefore, should the teaching of Portuguese Language not be grounded in the principles of Linguistics? I pose this to you, Portuguese Language teacher: what do you teach in your classroom? Do you teach something akin to Astrology — namely, how the positions of the stars affect people's financial, romantic, and other aspects of life — or do you teach scientific knowledge validated within a socio-historical-cultural framework of specialized, rigorous scholarship, capable of contributing to human, social, economic, scientific, and technological development?

In light of these reflections and having achieved the third specific objective we set out to address in this work — iii) *to investigate the agentive dimension of teachers in relation to actions for the scientific dissemination/popularization of Linguistics in Portuguese Language classes* — we now proceed to the concluding remarks.

6 Final considerations

In this study, we examined the role of Portuguese Language teachers as potential agents for the dissemination/popularization of Linguistics in schools. One striking result from Sousa's (2025) doctoral research was the recurring emphasis on schools as spaces for disseminating Linguistics in Brazil, even as digital social networks are increasingly used by linguists to share scientific knowledge with the public. Against this backdrop, this work sought to position schools as fertile ground for the dissemination/popularization of Linguistics, with Portuguese Language teachers playing a pivotal role.

Regarding the overarching goal of evaluating the social role of Basic Education Portuguese Language teachers as agents in linguistic practices of scientific dissemination/popularization of Linguistics in schools, we confirmed their potential to transform Basic Education classrooms into productive spaces for discussing/reflecting on linguistic science. This, in turn, fosters critically engaged, reflective, and participatory citizens in addressing language-related issues embedded in social life. Thus, teachers' social role lies in inspiring students toward socioscientific citizenship through a linguistic lens, encouraging critical and scientific thinking about language not only in classrooms but in everyday social interactions.

Given this, the scientific dissemination/popularization of Linguistics in schools must be recognized as an integral part of Portuguese Language teachers' professional identity and social role, necessitating both initial and continuing teacher education and curricular reform. While some advocate for introducing a standalone Linguistics course in schools, this risks overburdening curriculum frameworks already strained by Brazil's New High School⁹ reform and could further entrench traditionalist/normativist approaches to Portuguese Language instruction that ignore social

⁹ Brazil's *New High School reform* (implemented in 2021) restructured secondary education to prioritize flexible, vocational pathways, often at the expense of foundational disciplines like Linguistics.

and interactional realities. Instead, Linguistics should permeate the curriculum through the dual lenses of socio-scientific citizenship and the development of students' critical-investigative awareness of language-related issues in their daily lives.

We argue that all teachers working with language — Portuguese and foreign language instructors, as well as those in Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics, History, Geography, etc. — should adopt this perspective, given the inter/trans/undisciplinary nature (Moita Lopes, 2006, 2009) of linguistic science.

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Contribuições dos autores:

Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal Analysis, Funding acquisition, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Resources, Supervision, Validation, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing: MOÉS, Guilherme.

Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal Analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Resources, Supervision, Validation, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing: PEREIRA, Regina Celi Mendes.

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