

## Research in Linguistics and the teaching of Portuguese Language in dialogue: the approach of the vocative in Basic Education /

### *As pesquisas em Linguística e o ensino de Língua Portuguesa em diálogo: a abordagem do vocativo no Ensino Básico /*

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#### **ABSTRACT**

This paper presents an action-research study conducted in basic education, focusing on teaching vocatives from an enunciative-discursive perspective (Nascimento, 2000; Guimarães, 2002; Santos, 2004; Moreira, 2013), considering language in use. The proposal aimed to explore the vocative as an essential element for communicative interaction, emphasizing its role in enunciative relations and its semiotic scope. For linguistic/semiotic analysis practice, the interview podcast genre was selected as the basis for didactic action, given the frequency and relevance of the vocative in this multimodal genre. To observe the development of students' knowledge, a diagnostic production and a final production of the genre were conducted. During the didactic action, various genres in which the vocative is commonly present were addressed with the students. The results indicated that students broadened their perception of the

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vocative, moving from a restricted, normative view to a more comprehensive and functional understanding. By connecting theory and practice, the study highlighted the transformative potential of the communicative approach to grammar teaching, promoting contextualized and reflective learning.

**KEYWORDS:** Vocative; Linguistic analysis; Basic education.

#### RESUMO

*Este artigo apresenta uma pesquisa-ação desenvolvida no ensino básico, com foco no ensino do vocativo em perspectiva enunciativo-discursiva (Nascimento, 2000; Guimarães, 2002; Santos, 2004; Moreira, 2013), considerando-se a língua em uso. A proposta buscou explorar o vocativo como elemento essencial para a interação comunicativa, além de enfatizar seu papel nas relações enunciativas e seu escopo semiótico. Para a prática de análise linguística/semiótica, o gênero podcast de entrevista foi selecionado como base para a ação didática, dada a frequência e a relevância do vocativo nesse gênero multimodal. De forma a observar o desenvolvimento de conhecimentos dos estudantes, foram realizadas uma produção diagnóstica e uma produção final do gênero. Durante a ação didática, diversos gêneros, em que a presença do vocativo se revelava comum, foram abordados com os estudantes. Os resultados indicaram que os alunos ampliaram sua percepção do vocativo, passando de uma visão restrita e normativa para uma compreensão mais ampla e funcional. Ao conectar teoria e prática, o estudo destacou o potencial transformador da abordagem comunicativa no ensino de gramática, promovendo uma aprendizagem contextualizada e reflexiva.*

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Vocativo; Análise linguística; Ensino básico.

## 1 Introduction

The teaching of the Portuguese language, especially in the Brazilian context, is marked by challenges that span decades, reflecting tensions between traditional demands and the emerging needs of a society in constant transformation. In a scenario often permeated by prescriptive and decontextualized practices, teachers face the difficult task of aligning the teaching of grammar with contemporary demands for critical reflection and effective use of language (cf. File; Moura; Sousa, 2019; Bartikoski; Guimarães, 2019; Batista-Santos; Santos, 2019; Sigiliano, 2022).

These challenges are amplified by the persistence of a vision of language as a potential system, which privileges the mastery of rules disconnected from the contexts of real use (Antunes, 2004). Such an approach disregards the experiences and effective needs of the students' linguistic development, limiting the role of the school in terms of its function as a space for the formation of critical and active subjects. Consequently, teaching practice is sometimes questioned in academic environments because it is linked to outdated models, which do not dialogue with the social and technological transformations of recent decades.

In this context, teaching documents in Brazil, such as the Base Nacional Comum Curricular (BNCC), by reinforcing the centrality of the text as a unit of work and by proposing the teaching of linguistic and semiotic elements associated with the use of language, point to the relevance of

redirecting the focus of teaching to more reflective and contextualized practices. Despite this guideline, there are still difficulties in transforming such guidelines into concrete practices, either due to the lack of adequate training or the absence of didactic materials that effectively integrate the teaching axes (Abreu-Tardelli, 2021; Malfacini, 2021; Sigiliano, 2021).

With the purpose of seeking ways that can elucidate ways to overcome these barriers, this article assumes the objective of presenting action research carried out in the context of basic education, which aimed to develop and implement didactic action based on the teaching of the vocative in a perspective that is not strictly syntactic, but also enunciative-discursive, motivated by linguistic research on the subject. From a first glance, the treatment and approach of such a specific syntactic element can reverberate in the opposite conception to the one defended here: that is, it can be assumed that the work with the vocative would be "smaller" in the face of the challenges faced in relation to the teaching of the Portuguese language. However, adopting the perspective of language as an instrument of interaction, it is understood that the vocative plays a central role in the delimitation of referents in the discourse (Nascimento, 2000; Guimarães, 2002; Santos, 2004; Moreira, 2013; Santos, 2020) and that the understanding of the role it assumes in interactions goes beyond the exploration of its syntactic function. Thus, the bias of an exploration of the theme pertaining to the perspective of the practice of linguistic/semiotic analysis is adopted (Geraldi, 1984; Mendonça, 2007). It is hoped that reports of practices and research, such as this action research, can help in the development of didactic approaches that value the teaching of the language in use, based on advances already observed in linguistic research.

In this scenario, it is worth noting that the initial motivation for the theme is related to the observation of the research teacher regarding the limited use of vocatives by the students, who were restricted to using lexical elements such as "aunt" and "uncle" to refer to diversified interlocutors in the school environment or outside it. This restricted lexical use in the position of the vocative indicated the need for an exploration of the theme that would lead students to reflect on linguistic uses and on the degree of monitoring of the language. In addition, subsidies from linguistic research related to the vocative and the analysis of elementary school textbooks, used in the school year and approved by the National Textbook Program (PNLD), revealed a distance from the approach to the vocative, with regard to the enunciative-discursive function, in teaching, since the treatment of the theme in the materials is limited, above all, to punctual observations of its syntactic role (Fernandes, 2024).

To propose a new way of approaching this element in the classroom, an action research - which involved a survey of the uses of the vocative by students and linguistic research on the subject - was developed and allowed the elaboration and application of a teaching material that made it possible to link scientific proposals to approach the vocative to classroom practice. In this context, the vocative came to be analyzed not only as a syntactic element that goes beyond the limit of the argumentative chain (as elucidated by traditional grammarians, such as Melo, 1978; Câmara Jr, 1981; Luft, 1983; Brandão, 1983; Cegalla, 1985; Perini, 1995; Bechara, 2001; Rocha Lima, 2012; Wedge; Cintra, 2013), but as an object of reflection on the enunciative-discursive uses of language in the context of basic education (Guimarães 2002, 2011, 2016). As a basis for research and practice, action research started from the survey of theoretical linguistic research related to the role and approach of the vocative, as can be seen in the next section.

## 2 Linguistic research and teaching

Linguistic research has been shown to be fundamental for the understanding and improvement of pedagogical practices in mother tongue teaching. In this sense, articulating approaches that explore structural, enunciative and discursive aspects to linguistic content present in the classroom can lead students to understand, in a broader and more meaningful way, the phenomena of language, by students, allowing students to develop skills that go beyond the memorization of rules, which leads to the promotion of the construction of meanings and effective participation in social literacy practices. Thus, this section discusses the contributions of linguistic research to the resignification of language teaching, focusing on the integration between the theoretical and practical dimensions related to the approach to the vocative.

### 2.1 Practice of Linguistic/Semiotic Analysis

The theoretical basis of the action research to be presented is initially based on the approach to the teaching of grammar in the school context, more specifically the vocative and the search for didactic alternatives that would align the pedagogical practice with the demands of a reflective and contextualized teaching of linguistic elements.

In this sense, it is worth noting that, historically, the teaching of grammar in Brazilian schools has been marked by a predominantly prescriptive approach to the type of teaching, centred on the memorization of rules and the fragmentation of contents. This approach, dissociated from the contexts of effective use of language, has been widely criticized for its impossibility of promoting a meaningful reflection on the linguistic aspects that make up communicative interactions. To overcome this limitation, it is necessary to revisit the role of grammar in teaching, expanding its scope to encompass not only the description of structures, but above all the functionality of linguistic choices in contexts of social interaction (Guimarães; Bartikoski, 2019; File; Shah; Moura, 2019; Batista-Santos; Santos, 2019; Coneglian, 2019; Sigiliano; Ferreira, 2022; Costa-Hübes; Pereira, 2022).

Guimarães and Bartikoski (2019) highlight the need for grammar teaching that goes beyond the mere memorization of rules, proposing an approach that considers the interaction between text and grammar and that leads students to understand the functionality of grammatical elements in textual genres. In a convergent movement, Coneglian (2019) emphasizes the importance of working with language in a contextualized way, integrating form and function. Fernandes and Sigiliano (in press) point out ways for the practice of linguistic/semiotic analysis (PAL/S) to be enhanced, if the teacher starts from a specific linguistic phenomenon, prominent in each textual genre, to observe and analyze it in multimodal texts, indicating perspectives of intertwining, in teaching, between linguistic and semiotic aspects in use in the text.

In this scenario, the practice of linguistic/semiotic analysis emerges as a promising teaching perspective, by proposing the articulation of work with linguistic elements to the effective uses of language. At its core, it promotes the integration between linguistic, epilinguistic and metalinguistic activities, boosting the possibility of students' understanding of the role of linguistic elements in their relationship with the contexts of production. This view is in line with the proposal to approach the language in use and the teaching of grammar in use (cf. Neves, 2000; Myhill; Watson; Newman, 2020) and distances itself from prescriptive teaching practices, valuing the interaction between form and meaning, positioning the teaching of grammatical aspects to the exploration of tools for the construction of meanings in texts.

Thus, in an approach that prioritizes the use of language in real contexts, the text enables critical reflection on linguistic and discursive choices, promoting the development of reading and text-producing competence. Working with grammar in an integrated way with the text, therefore,

contributes to students perceiving the functionality of linguistic elements and developing skills aimed at analysis and production in different genres and communication situations (Neves, 2006, 2011, 2021).

Thus, the perspective that sustains the didactic action promoted in the reported work points to a renewed grammar approach, which seeks to balance the different language activities by intertwining axes of production, reading and linguistic/semiotic analysis. Thus, it seeks to highlight the potentiality of the practice of linguistic analysis and work with the text as a path for the construction of significant and transformative pedagogical practices in the teaching of the Portuguese language.

In a path that starts from the motivation to approach a more specific grammatical item of a textual genre to elucidate didactic choices linked to the methodology proposed by the PAL/S bias (cf. Sigiliano, 2021), the action research started from the observation of the difficulty of using the vocative. The didactic action, as it will be possible to see throughout the text, was proposed in view of the correlation of this item to the prominence of its use in a certain textual genre, that is, the interview podcast. As a way of planning the didactic action, a bibliographic survey of the treatment of the vocative in linguistic research was carried out, a movement that substantially gave rise to the production of the didactic action, as will be observed below.

## 2.2 The vocative in teaching

The vocative, an element often neglected in pedagogical practices, has a significant potential for the reflective and contextualized teaching of the Portuguese language. Commonly associated only with a function of calling or interpellation, it has a broader discursive role, contributing to the construction of meanings and to the interaction between interlocutors. By exploring its possibilities in the classroom, it was possible to transform the vocative into a starting point for reflections on the uses of language and the relationship between form and function in discursive contexts.

Historically, the study of the vocative dates to traditional grammars, in which it is approached in an essentially structural way. These grammars describe the vocative as an isolated term, detached from the syntactic elements of the sentence, with the primary function of establishing direct contact with the interlocutor (Melo, 1978; Câmara Jr., 1981; Luft, 1983; Brandão,

1983; Cegalla, 1985). However, this view disregards the discursive and pragmatic exploration that can be linked to the teaching of the vocative, especially when associated with the approach of textual genres and communicative contexts, which highlight their multiple possibilities of use. From a functional and interactionist perspective, the vocative is understood as an element that goes beyond the simple call, serving as a strategic resource to establish interpersonal relationships, mark social hierarchies, express emotions and shape the profile of the interlocutor (Nascimento, 2000; Guimarães, 2002; Santos, 2004; Moreira, 2013; Santos, 2020). For Guimarães (2011), the vocative

it is not simply a way of establishing a relationship with the interlocutor, it is much more than that, it is the very constitution of this relationship, insofar as it signifies the divisions of the speaker in the enunciative scene [...] the vocative constitutes who he takes as his allocutary and establishes elements of the configuration of the enunciative scene. And in doing so, the vocative utterance is quite decisively establishing the meanings politically (Guimarães, 2011, p. 52).

In the analysis of contemporary linguists, the vocative emerges as an essential discursive element, whose functions go beyond the functions defined in normative grammars, in which it is often treated only as a marker of calling. Thus, researchers such as Guimarães (2002), Santos (2004) and Moreira (2013) bring significant theoretical contributions that reveal the vocative as a strategic resource in discourse, essential for interaction and the construction of communicative relationships.

Guimarães (2002), when developing an enunciative approach to the vocative, based on the Semantics of Enunciation, considers the spaces of enunciation as determinants for the meaning of language. According to the author, the analysis of the vocative must transcend its function of calling or interpellation, recognizing it as a constitutive element of the discursive relations and the enunciative scene. For the researcher, "the vocative constitutes who he takes as his allocutary and also establishes elements of the configuration of the enunciative scene" (Guimarães, 2002, p. 52), conferring political and social dimensions to the discourse that shape the meanings.

In addition, Guimarães (2016) introduces the idea of apostrophe to explore the role of the vocative as a mechanism of discursive transformation, in which a "He" is converted into "You" by vocative enunciation. He argues that "the event of the vocative utterance means a "He" that is taken (agented) in allocutary" (Guimarães, 2016, p. 170). Thus, the vocative not only establishes communication, but also positions the interlocutors within their social places in the discourse. The scholar points out that the vocative acts as a point of discursive articulation, focusing on the text



without depending on it, but integrating itself in order to signify the relationship between speaker and speaker. This relationship is not limited to a direct interaction, but involves the social places of both, evidencing the history and argumentative intentions implicit in the discourse. For Guimarães (2016), "the vocative is not simply the marking of the TU of the enunciative scene; it is the way of constituting someone as the one to whom one speaks" (Guimarães, 2016, p. 179).

In this way, the author reaffirms the role of the vocative as more than a grammatical marker or a form of calling. It is an essential instrument for the construction of the discursive scene, allowing the speaker to create images and establish clear argumentative intentions in the enunciative act. Through the vocative, enunciation gives the discourse the desired intentionality and personality, promoting a rich and meaningful interaction between the interlocutors.

Santos (2004), based on the Semantics of Enunciation of Guimarães (2002), proposes an innovative approach to the vocative, breaking with the traditional view that treats it as an element disconnected from the sentence. For the author, the vocative should be analyzed as a component that acts on two planes, being integrated into the structural organization of the sentence and, simultaneously, maintaining its discursive exteriority (Santos, 2004). This double action highlights the vocative as a multifunctional element, located between the domains of grammar and enunciation.

Santos' (2004) proposal seeks to broaden the concept of vocative and highlight its relevance in speech acts. The author defends its inclusion in syntactic analysis through enunciation theory, aiming to investigate its function in discourse, establish a grammatical model based on enunciation and define parameters for a syntax based on enunciation. In this context, the researcher argues that the vocative, as an enunciative marker, connects the subject to linguistic materiality and reflects the discursive memory of the sentence, transcending the limits of conventional syntactic descriptions.

The author proposes a "translinear grammar", which approaches the vocative from three fundamental dimensions: historical, organic and pedagogical. The historical dimension relates grammar to accumulated linguistic knowledge; the organic comprises grammar as a complete body of knowledge; and the pedagogical reinforces the commitment to language teaching, offering students a comprehensive and integrated view (Santos, 2004).

In addition, the researcher positions the vocative as a central element in the enunciative space, shaping the interaction between "I" and "You" in the discourse. For her, the vocative is an



explicit manifestation of the interlocutor in the speaker's speech, functioning as a support for the utterance and articulating communicative intentions. In this sense, the analysis of the vocative requires a translinear approach, which integrates linguistic structures and discursive elements, highlighting its support function in the level of the utterance and its enunciative relevance.

Santos (2004) concludes that it is essential to reformulate grammar to include a broader and more integrative perspective of the vocative. This repositioning allows us to recognize its function as an essential discursive and enunciative element, promoting a richer and more contextualized understanding of the communicative interaction and the language in use. This approach reaffirms the need for a grammar that articulates structural, discursive and pedagogical dimensions, contributing to a deeper and more reflective analysis of linguistic phenomena.

Moreira (2013) presents an in-depth analysis of the vocative in Portuguese, exploring its function as an invitation to communicative action. According to the author, "[...] the vocative [...] is used as an invitation to the interlocutor to participate in the communicative situation and become a possible recipient" (Moreira, 2013, p. 16). In her research, the author seeks to expand studies on the vocative, proposing to "describe the syntactic behaviour of this constituent in relation to other terms of the sentence, namely, the subject and the object" (Moreira, 2017, p. 322). In this context, she introduces the idea that, although the vocative is apparently external to the syntactic structure, it can establish a co-reference with elements of the sentence, taking up arguments from the utterance.

The scholar also investigates the pragmatic impacts caused by the position of the vocative in the utterance, highlighting that its location reflects the speaker's specific enunciative intentions. For the author, "the vocative does not occur randomly in any position in the sentence, but in specific syntactic environments, such as left, right, or in intermediate positions, depending on its function in the discursive interaction" (Moreira, 2013, p. 13). This strategic placement shows that the speaker uses the vocative to direct the speech to the desired interlocutor, conferring intentionality to the speech act.

The researcher categorizes the vocative into two main functions: call and recipient. In the function of calling, the vocative establishes the initial contact and usually appears to the left of the sentence, accompanied by an emphatic intonation. In the function of addressee, the vocative reinforces or maintains contact, standing to the right of the sentence, directing information to a specific listener in the discursive context (Moreira, 2013). When positioned in the middle of the

sentence, the vocative is often associated with imperative or evaluative functions, revealing the speaker's pragmatic intentions.

In addition, it also analyzes the combinations of vocatives with invocations and interjections, identifying common constructions that follow specific patterns. These constructions, usually located to the left of the vocative, are structured in such a way as to avoid ambiguity and ensure that the recipient is clearly identified. Thus, the vocative, even in contexts of varied use, maintains its central function of interpellating and organizing communicative interaction.

The author's approach significantly broadens the understanding of the vocative, highlighting its syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic functionality. By exploring their positions and combinations in the utterance, the author reveals how the vocative reflects the speaker's intentional choices, constituting an essential element for the discursive organization and enunciative interaction.

Fernandes (2024) points out that this adaptive capacity of the vocative is explored as a direct reflection of the speaker's conscious linguistic choices, shaped by the intentions and demands of the interaction, which, according to the author, are linked to his functionality in textual genres. In its discursive complexity, the vocative is highlighted as a central element in the referencing process.

The author, about referencing, returns to Goffman (1986), who develops the concept of framing, or *frame*, such as the organizational principles that structure social events and the subjective involvement of participants. These frames allow the definition of situations, guiding the positioning of individuals in their interactions. The frames, which include the primary frames and their transformations, are socially constructed and contextually modified, influencing intersubjective behaviour. In this view, Fernandes (2024) draws a parallel between the vocative and Goffman's frames, understanding it as an element that organizes discursive interaction and positions the interlocutors. Just as frames allow us to identify and situate events in the discourse, the vocative functions as a linguistic resource that directs attention to the interlocutor, establishing his position in the enunciative scene. For example, when naming or designating an allocutary, the vocative structures the relationship between speaker and interlocutor, analogous to the alignment of *footings*<sup>1</sup> described by Goffman (1986).

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<sup>1</sup> This concept was introduced by Goffman in *Frame Analysis* (1986), and later published for the first time in 1979 (Mendonça; Simões, 2012).

In addition, the vocative can be understood as a manifestation of *Key* or *Keeling*<sup>2</sup>, by transforming or reinforcing the communicative framework through the choice of specific words, intonation or context of use. Thus, its function goes beyond a mere call: it configures and reconfigures interaction, creating an interpretative framework that organizes communicative intentions and social relations in interlocution.

Thus, the vocative not only acts as an element of discursive organization, but also a dynamic marker that reflects and influences the positioning of social actors. It acts both in the delimitation of the initial framework and in the communicative transformations, continuously adjusting the roles and intentions in the interactional flow.

From a pragmatic perspective, Blanco, Oliveira and Silva (2019) observe that the forms of address used in the vocative are associated with social hierarchies and communicative bonds, playing a role of social deixis. In this sense, the vocative not only delimits the interlocutor, but also reflects communicative intentions, configuring itself as a strategic resource in the discourse.

In this way, the vocative transcends its syntactic dimension and its function of calling, presenting itself as a pragmatic and semantic component that organizes discursive interaction. In Portuguese language teaching, exploring its multiple functions and strategies contributes to a broader and more reflective approach to the language, allowing the development of skills that integrate textual cohesion and communicative intentions.

Therefore, Fernandes (2024) sees the vocative and its referential, enunciative, and discursive function in a broader way, which has not yet shown scope in the didactic materials, since they are limited to activities of recognizing the vocative as a syntactic function. The introduction of the vocative in pedagogical discussions, therefore, requires a perspective that combines history and functionality. Revisiting its historical path in traditional grammars is a fundamental step to understand the limitations of the normative approach. However, it is in reflective practice and contextualized use that the vocative reveals its true potentiality as a grammatical and discursive element. By working on it in the classroom, teachers can encourage students to realize that their linguistic choices are motivated by contextual and interactional factors, promoting learning that connects to everyday communicative practices.

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<sup>2</sup> The key concerns a set of rules and conventions from which one activity is transformed into another, starting from a primary framework and updating it (Goffman, 1986)

This approach, aligned with the assumptions of linguistic/semiotic analysis and the guidelines of the Base Nacional Comum Curricular (BNCC), reinforces the role of the vocative as a pedagogical resource capable of connecting the formal aspects of the language to the real needs of communication. Through this resignification, the approach to more specific linguistic aspects in the teaching of Portuguese Language gains greater potential for relevance, bringing students closer to the possibility of reflecting on the multiple dimensions of language, which promotes a more critical and reflective education. Under this aegis, the action research, to be reported, was constituted. In the next section, it will be possible to learn more about aspects that involved it.

### 3 Conducting action research

The research reported in this article, developed within the scope of the professional master's degree in Letters, was structured under the procedure of action research (Thiollent, 1986), which allows the articulation between pedagogical practice and critical reflection, promoting planned and theoretically based interventions. This procedure is particularly appropriate to the field of education, as it seeks not only to understand the observed phenomena, but also to transform existing practices, building alternatives that dialogue with the specific demands of the school context (Chisté, 2016).

Based on the observed need to work with the vocative and assuming the premise of the existence of genres more conducive to the exploration of a certain linguistic category in the classroom (Sigiliano, 2021) and the importance of literacy projects for didactic effectiveness, the didactic action was developed based on the selection of the interview podcast genre. In the development of this oral genre, it is common to have a multisemiotic manifestation of the vocative.

In this context, the interview podcast, due to its multimodal and dialogical characteristics, provides a rich environment to explore the discursive and interactive functions of the vocative. In it, the vocative manifests itself in diversified ways, allowing us to analyze its use in real contexts of communicative interaction, indicating interpersonal relationships and acting as a pragmatic resource that guides the meanings of the discourse.

To organize the actions - didactic and research - the principles of the didactic sequence were assumed (Dolz, Noverraz and Schneuwly, 2004), using it as a facilitator of the practice of linguistic analysis (Gomes and Souza, 2015). The didactic action intended to promote the students'

reflection on the linguistic choices that involve the vocative in concrete situations of use, based on the analysis of the students' knowledge revealed in the diagnostic production of an interview podcast. To evaluate the development of the students, the research was based on the diagnosis of the students' initial productions, to identify their previous knowledge and practices related to the use of the vocative, comparing them to the final productions.

During the modules of the didactic action, the students were invited to reflect on the interview podcast genre and on the use of the vocative in it and in other textual genres in which the vocative figured as a fundamental element of its constitution (such as letters, theatre, propaganda, prayers and prayers). The activities involved reading and listening to excerpts from the texts, followed by mediated discussions that highlighted the effects of meaning produced by the use of the vocative in texts that involved different communicative situations. Subsequently, students were encouraged to produce their own podcasts, applying the knowledge in a reflective and contextualized way. The didactic action developed was structured in five main stages, divided into 29 classes, with interconnected modules, providing a progressive and reflective learning about the vocative, its functions and its discursive relevance. Each stage sought to address specific aspects of gender and the use of the vocative, integrating practical and reflective activities, being divided as follows:

### **Stage 1: Initial diagnosis**

**Objective:** To present the podcast genre and diagnose students' previous knowledge about vocative.

**Activities:** Screening of selected interviews (videos of different styles) to explore how the vocative is used in the genre. Initial reflections on how we refer to interlocutors in communicative interactions.

**References:** Dolz; Noverraz; Schneuwly (2004) - Principles of Didactic Sequence; Antunes (2005).

### **Step 2: Exploring the Vocative in Different Contexts**

**Objective:** To analyze how different media use the vocative for interaction. Explore intonation and prosody as constitutive elements of the vocative.

**Activities:** Analysis of advertisements with emphasis on linguistic and semiotic forms of reference to the other. Discussions about family videos and skits produced by the students. Reflection on how communicative intention shapes the intonation of the vocative. **References:** Santaella (1983); Antunes (2005); Fávero (2010).

### **Step 3: Lexical Choices and Social Function of the Vocative**

**Objective:** To investigate the use of the vocative in political discourses and social networks. Understand how the vocative can be used to establish social relations or mark discursive positions.

**Activities:** Comparison of vocatives used in different contexts and degrees of formality. Discussion about the communicative impacts of these choices. Analysis of the interview between Sônia Bridi and Fernando Collor as an example of pejorative use of the vocative. **References:** Oliveira; Blanco; Silva (2019).

### **Step 4: Integration Between Orality and Writing**

**Objective:** To reflect on punctuation and the use of vocatives in written texts. Systematize the concepts about the vocative and collectively construct a definition.

**Activities:** Dramatized reading of theatrical texts to highlight the punctuation and function of the vocative. Research and discussion on definitions of vocative in teaching materials and traditional grammars. **References:** Mendonça (2007); Neves (2005); Antunes (2005); Vieira (2017).

### **Step 5: Final Production**

**Objective:** To apply the concepts learned in the creation of podcasts that use the vocative in an appropriate and intentional way.

**Activities:** Production of podcasts with simulated interviews, including analysis and self-evaluation of the final productions.

**Referências:** Halliday; Matthiessen (2004); Myhill; Watson; Newman (2020).

Data collection for the research was carried out through records of the activities developed, with video recordings of the students' oral productions, initial and final, and transcription of interactions that occurred in the classroom, because of discussions arising from the reading activities. These data were analyzed qualitatively, based on pre-defined categories for reading activities, which are: (1) recognition of the function of the vocative in the discourse; (2) conscious use of the vocative in interactive situations; and (3) development of linguistic and discursive skills. Regarding the analysis of the initial and final productions, compositional aspects of the genre were taken as categories, among which the use of the vocative was analyzed in a more detailed way. The categories of analysis of the productions (Chart 1) were:

**Chart 1 - Analysis Categories of interview podcast productions**

**General Gender Parameters - Interview Podcast -**

|   |
|---|
| Was there a previous presentation by the interviewee?                   |
| Did the team name your podcast?   |
| Is there an introduction with the context of the interview?             |
| Are the opening and closing of the interview appropriate?               |
| Is there respect for turns of speech?                                   |
| Is the language used by the interlocutors in the interview appropriate? |
| <b>Parameters - Vocative -</b>  |
| Do the participants demonstrate that they recognize what a vocative is? |
| Is there a use of the vocative in the interlocution?                    |
| Are address pronouns used as vocatives?                                 |
| Are proper nouns used as vocatives?                                     |
| Is the social function of each elected person used as a vocative?       |
| Do generic words occupy the position of vocative?                       |
| Is there the use of multisemiotic forms to refer to the other?          |

**Source:** Fernandes (2024)

In the next section, it will be possible to have a general overview of the correlation of action research, in a more emphatic way, and the treatment given to the vocative, in view of the linguistic research that elucidated the organization of didactic action.

#### 4 Action research: bases and development under theoretical aegis

The action research to which we refer in this article was conducted in the context of basic education, focusing on the teaching of the vocative in perspective focused on its presence, importance and functionality in texts. More specifically, there was an emphasis on the interview podcast genre to encourage the development of situations of use and reflection in relation to the use of the vocative.

In the context of this research, the proposal of didactic activities and the analysis of the results of action research evidenced the relevance of the theoretical foundation for the creation and conduction of didactic and research action. The practice, guided by the assumptions of



linguistic/semiotic analysis and by the functional focus of language, proved to be effective in promoting a contextualized and reflective teaching of grammar, centred on the use and communicative demands of students. In addition, the theoretical framework related to research and linguistic propositions regarding the treatment of the vocative allowed the creation of activities that went beyond those traditionally attributed to the teaching of this syntactic term in the Portuguese language class.

Based on the theoretical principles of Neves (2000) and Antunes (2004), which highlight the relevance of a work based on the interaction between the formal and functional aspects of the language in use, we opted for a vocative approach that started from the text and the communicative situations for language reflection. In addition, genres in which the vocative was frequent were selected (cf. Sigiliano, 2021), as an interview podcast (central genre of the research), oral interviews, letters, prayers, political speeches, theatrical texts and advertising campaigns and reflections that were based on the meanings of the texts and the functionality of the vocative in specific communicative contexts.

To guide the construction of the didactic action and to analyze the development of the students, the production of the interview podcast genre was chosen as the initial and final stage of the didactic action (cf. Gomes; Souza, 2015). The initial productions of the students, analyzed before the proposition of the teaching activities, revealed a limited perception of the vocative, restricted to its normative definition as an element of calling or interpellation. This initial view reflected the prescriptive approach prevalent in teaching materials and traditional pedagogical practices.

In this stage, we sought to observe how the students recognized the vocative in the interactions and how it was used in the interviews analyzed. Subsequently, based on the theoretical apparatus presented in this article, activities aimed at understanding the relationships between vocatives and enunciative contexts were created and applied, exploring aspects such as referencing, lexical choices, intonation and adequacy to the genre. This initial approach made it possible to raise hypotheses about the uses of the vocative and to identify gaps in the students' knowledge, thus guiding the planning of the subsequent stages of the didactic action. Therefore, the work with the vocative was not restricted to its grammatical classification, but sought to integrate it into a broader spectrum, considering its enunciative and discursive dimensions. Throughout the didactic action, it was possible to observe a remarkable progress in the understanding of the use

and analysis of the vocative. The analysis of the final productions showed that the students started to use the vocative in a more strategic way, considering the discursive contexts and the communicative intentions.

Thus, we sought to develop the understanding of the vocative beyond observation as a syntactic element, but also in its enunciative function and its multimodal functioning, through a sequence of activities based on analysis of advertisements and discourses. Initially, the students analyzed videos of interview podcasts to reflect on the multisemiotic forms of reference to the other, recognizing different linguistic and semiotic strategies (cf. Antunes, 2005; Koch; Elias, 2008; Fávero, 2010; Olive tree; Blanco; Silva, 2019; Santaella, 1983). Next, the focus was on prosody and intonation as constituents of the meaning of the vocative (cf. Fávero, 2010), with activities of listening to short comic videos that explored prosody when requesting something or addressing someone, which included reflections on ways of addressing and producing skits to understand the influence of communicative intention.

The next stage addressed lexical choices in the use of the vocative in different contexts, exploring formal and informal political discourses and highlighting the relevance of lexical selection for communicative objectives (Brasil, 2018). The students also investigated how the choices of the vocative vary in family relationships and social contexts, considering their intentionality and functionality (cf. Halliday; Matthiessen, 2004; Myhill; Watson; Newman, 2020). Discursive analysis activities, based on oral political interviews and television advertisements, exemplified the pejorative use of the vocative and its communicative implication (cf. Olive tree; Blanco; Silva, 2019). To integrate orality and writing, the vocative was explored in theatrical texts, highlighting its punctuation and function in textual construction (Brasil, 2018). Based on the activities, the students synthesized concepts learned about the vocative, collectively building a definition that united syntactic, semantic and pragmatic perspectives. This communicative approach to language does not exclude grammar, but integrates it in a reflective way into teaching, promoting the practice of linguistic and semiotic analysis in a contextualized way (cf. Mendonça, 2007; Neves, 2005; Vieira, 2017).

## Final Thoughts

The functional approach to grammar, as proposed by Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) and reinforced by Myhill, Watson and Newman (2020), enabled students to relate linguistic structures to the social and interactive functions of language. This conception was complemented by the enunciative-discursive perspective of the vocative, as proclaimed by Nascimento (2000), Guimarães (2002) and Moreira (2013), whose theoretical contributions directly influenced the design of the didactic action.

The perspective of Guimarães (2002, 2011, 2016) was essential to propose actions that would lead students to understand the vocative as a constituent element of the speaker-speaker relationship in the enunciative scene. This view guided the discussions in the classroom, allowing students to reflect on the role of the vocative in the construction of meanings. In addition, Nascimento's (2000) analyzes of the prosodic and pragmatic aspects of the vocative enriched the analyzes of multimodal texts, especially in the interview podcast, highlighting how the vocative interacts with intonation and rhythm to shape communicative intentions.

Moreira's (2013) contributions, in turn, evidenced the syntactic and pragmatic functions of the vocative, emphasizing its position in the utterance as a reflection of discursive intentions. This influenced the systematization of the activities, which explored the adequacy of the vocative in different contexts and textual genres, expanding the students' understanding of its semantic and functional implications.

The results confirmed that the didactic action, based on these references, allowed the students to move from a normative and limited view to a broader and more functional understanding of the vocative. The analysis of the final productions indicated that the students began to recognize the vocative as a strategic resource to establish interpersonal relationships and enrich the discursive interaction, which was widely evidenced in the productions of the interview podcasts. Such action not only expanded the students' knowledge about the vocative but also contributed to the construction of a more critical and autonomous posture in relation to the use of the language.

By being exposed to the genres worked and their contexts of production, the students were able to recognize, in practice, the interactional and pragmatic functions of the term studied. This understanding was anchored in the theoretical principles of Neves (2000) and Antunes (2004), which highlight the interaction between the formal and functional aspects of language. The students identified, for example, how the vocative is used to mark hierarchical relationships between the interlocutors, reinforcing its importance in the construction of meanings in the discourse.

Thus, by connecting theory and practice, action research reaffirmed the transformative potential of the communicative approach in grammar teaching, promoting meaningful, contextualized and reflective learning. The integration between theoretical references and pedagogical practices demonstrated that the teaching of the vocative can go beyond prescriptivism, contributing to form critical subjects, capable of understanding and manipulating the multiple dimensions of the language in use.

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