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Portuguese teacher training under the Didactic Transposition: how linguistic knowledge meets the school /

A formação dos professores de língua portuguesa sob a ótica da Transposição Didática: o conhecimento linguístico agregado à Educação Básica

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ABSTRACT

The significant distance between the spoken and the written language impacts Portuguese speakers in a way that they do note recognize their mother language once they start school, as students face rules and prescriptions that do not match the language they already know. As a matter of fact, schools still value traditional grammar over other variants of Brazilian Portuguese (BP), despite what linguistic research says. Basic education can only meet the advances linguistic research has achieved as teachers become aware of the problems and debates behind BP teaching in schools and perform the Didactic Transposition of this knowledge properly. This work aims to analyze the path a linguistic object of knowledge walks from academia, where it emerges, to school classrooms and to identify where along this path teachers may act in order to combine the knowledge present in students' I-Language to that already taught in BP classes. To meet that aim, we have selected two phenomena from BP: unaccusative and unergative constructions and synthetic passive voice, so that we are able to enrich reflections on the structure of the I-Language from students and teachers and understand how they interact in the classroom. Through those phenomena, we were also able to analyze the contradictions present in BP speakers' I-Language as a result of acquiring and learning spoken and written grammars and present an activity that will introduce those topics in school, promoting a critical and scientific reflection on their mother tongue.

KEYWORDS: Didactic Transposition; internalized grammar; Portuguese teaching; core grammar; peripheral grammar.

RESUMO

A grande distância existente entre a língua falada e a língua escrita faz com que falantes de português brasileiro (PB) não reconheçam a sua língua materna quando iniciam sua escolarização, pois se encontram diante de regras e prescrições que não se assemelham à língua que já conhecem. De fato, a escola ainda valoriza a tradição gramatical em detrimento de outras variantes do PB, apesar dos avanços realizados pela pesquisa linguística. Para que tais avanços cheguem à Educação Básica, cabe aos professores estarem cientes dos problemas e debates em torno do ensino de língua materna na escola e realizarem a Transposição Didática desse conhecimento de forma eficiente. O presente trabalho tem como objetivo analisar o caminho do objeto de conhecimento linguístico desde a academia, quando surge, até a sala de aula, observando em quais etapas da Transposição Didática o professor pode atuar buscando agregar os conhecimentos presentes na Língua-I dos alunos aos objetos alvo da aula de português. Para tanto, selecionamos dois fenômenos do PB: as estruturas com verbos inacusativos e inergativos e a voz passiva sintética, buscando enriquecer as reflexões quanto à estrutura da Língua-I de alunos e professores e como elas interagem na sala de aula. Nos valemos, ainda, desses dois fenômenos para analisar as contradições presentes na Língua-I dos falantes do PB, resultantes das diferenças existentes entre as línguas falada e escrita, e apresentar uma proposta de introdução dessas questões à sala de aula, buscando promover uma reflexão crítica e científica sobre a língua materna.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Transposição Didática; gramática internalizada; ensino de português; gramática nuclear; gramática periférica.

1 Introduction

When we analyze the teaching of Portuguese as a mother tongue, we observe that grammar teaching has emerged as one of the main sources of problems and has been widely debated in search of viable solutions (Pires de Oliveira; Quarezemin, 2016; Pilati, 2017, among others). We understand

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that the root cause of this problem is what Borges Neto (2013) calls the naturalization of normative grammar, that is, taking a single facet of language as the object of analysis in schools. This language does not correspond to the linguistic reality of Brazilian Portuguese (BP) and does not constitute an open space for exploration and analysis. In fact, when we look at official documents, such as the BNCC, the structure of spoken language is not covered in depth by the field of linguistic and semiotic analysis, with grammatical analysis itself being camouflaged and presented indirectly.

Ignoring the different nuances that make up language when talking about teaching grammar is a big mistake, because during the process of acquiring their mother tongue, children are like little scientists, intuitively constructing a theory of how language works, their internalized grammar (cf. Chomsky, 1998). This process could be revived by schools, seeking to introduce other rules of language use in a way that is more natural to the speaker's internalized grammar, as has already been discussed in several previous works, such as Guerra-Vicente and Pilati (2012), in which the authors seek to show how the notion of linguistic competence in Generative Theory can contribute to the development of new methodologies in grammar teaching. The authors also recover from Lobato (2003 apud Pilati et al, 2015, p. 20) the centrality of the so-called baggage that students bring to the classroom, that is, their internalized knowledge of grammar¹. What we observe in school, however, is that children lose confidence in their own language when faced with a set of rules that differ in many ways from the language they have acquired, and they begin to believe that they have not mastered the grammatical system. Both students and teachers may experience such lack of confidence and limit their performance in the classroom due to the belief that grammar is a set of rules that must be memorized and never questioned (Teles; Tavares, 2021).

The great distance between the grammar of spoken language and the grammar of written language, the latter valued by official documents and schools, in Brazilian Portuguese leads literate speakers to develop two distinct and sometimes conflicting grammars: a core grammar, common to all

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¹ There are a number of previous studies that address the application of Generative Theory in the classroom, considering the importance of taking into account students' prior knowledge of their own language. Lobato's (2003) work is one of the disseminators of this perspective. In this work, the author even mentions the National Curricular Parameters (PCNs). We do not intend to exhaust the vast literature on the subject, nor do we present our proposal as something new when we consider the student's internalized grammar. We have chosen to take the studies referenced here as starting points for the reflection we wish to propose.

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speakers of Brazilian Portuguese, and a peripheral grammar, containing structures restricted to the standard norm of the language, as described by Kato (2005):

The grammar of L1 contains a marked periphery where parametric values opposite to those of the nuclear grammar may be present, with a marked, recessive character, values that may assume a competitive value during schooling in relation to the values defined in the nuclear grammar (Kato, 2005, p. 132).

Despite this distinction, there are still not enough studies specifying how the relationship between core and peripheral grammar is established and its impact on mother tongue classes in basic education. This article is an attempt to begin exploring this path and examine how the contradictions between the core grammar and peripheral grammar of Portuguese language teachers could be mobilized to contribute to more productive grammar teaching.

Linguistic studies have already demonstrated exhaustively that the standard norm found in traditional grammars is not equivalent to the actual language, nevertheless, this academic knowledge has not yet reached the classroom. The path that knowledge takes from its emergence as a scientific object to the classroom is the responsibility of Didactic Transposition, a theory that allows us to analyze the relationship between teachers, students, and knowledge. In this work, the knowledge that is on display is linguistic in nature. Adapting the theory of Didactic Transposition to the teaching of Portuguese, linguistic knowledge is divided into three levels: the linguistic level, which concerns elements that are concretely recognizable as objects of teaching in basic education; the paralinguistic level, which concerns auxiliary knowledge that is mobilized in the classroom; and the protolinguistic level, which is more abstract than the previous two and is related to the objectives of mother tongue teaching in basic education (Melo; Nicolau de Paula, 2022, p. 155 - 156).

In this paper, we will focus on the knowledge mobilized at the paralinguistic level by both students as native speakers and teachers as literate speakers, seeking to understand how teachers can use this knowledge in their teaching practice. Here we will consider grammar as Language-I (internal, individual, and intentional), that is, an object present in the speaker's mind beyond prescriptions, and therefore not dependent on schooling. However, in order to change the focus given to grammar in basic education and start to treat it as a scientific subject, developing discussions based

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on linguistic knowledge developed in academia, teachers working in basic education classrooms need to be able to transform all this theoretical knowledge about language into practical knowledge, something that might be introduced as facts to school students.

Here, then, lies our main objective: to contribute to scientific renewal guided by reflections that directly assist teachers and have an effective impact on their practical work. We seek to outline paths that show teachers how to bring scientific knowledge into the classroom, how to transfer knowledge into teaching, and how to stimulate critical thinking and metalanguage, leading to reflections on the Portuguese language as it is used in everyday life. These objectives are related to a few questions, namely: (i) Are those who take on the pedagogical task of helping students in this more systematic contact with the language aware of the conflicts behind the concept of grammar? (ii) Are they aware of the naturalization of traditional grammar and their role as disseminators of this naturalization? (iii) Do they know how to bring the scientific perspective of language studies into the classroom? Based on these questions, it is therefore necessary to investigate teacher training and the metalinguistic knowledge they possess, given that the success of this scientific approach depends on well-prepared professionals.

This article is organized as follows: In section 2, we present the theory of Didactic Transposition and how it relates to mother tongue teaching. Next, in section 3, the internal structure of the speaker's grammar is presented, since this knowledge is directly related to what we call here the paralinguistic level. Section 4 provides some observations on the treatment of grammar in basic education, considering its main guiding document, the BNCC. In this section, we also introduce two linguistic topics that will be explored in the form of activities in the following section. Finally, the last section provides a brief overview of the situation regarding teacher training, highlighting some of the most obvious problems and proposing some possible solutions.

2 Didactic Transposition in mother tongue teaching

French theorist Yves Chevallard (1989, 1991) presents important reflections on the relationships that occur within a classroom and highlights a fundamental point that is constantly ignored by teaching theories: the role of knowledge in these relationships. The author observes that only the

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teacher-student relationship is highlighted, that is, the didactic equation is seen as if it were only binary. Chevallard problematizes this approach, as the role of knowledge is ignored within this relationship. His proposal, therefore, is that the teaching relationship be considered ternary, resulting from the interaction between the teacher, the student, and knowledge (Chevallard, 1989, p. 54). In the vast majority of cases, this knowledge is not produced for educational purposes, requiring laborious work to adapt it, and it is precisely this transition from a useful object to a teaching object that Chevallard defines as Didactic Transposition (Chevallard, 1989, p. 55).

The path that knowledge travels from academia, where it originates, to the classroom is divided by Chevallard (1991, p. 47) into three stages: (1) theoretical-scientific knowledge, also called scholarly knowledge, which begins the process; (2) knowledge present in pedagogical texts, the knowledge to be taught; and (3) knowledge present in pedagogical practice, the knowledge taught. The object explored in the classroom must therefore be transformed from reference knowledge, or scholarly knowledge, and undergo adaptations that turn it into knowledge that may effectively be the subject of the school curriculum.

The author further divides knowledge into smaller elements that are interconnected, the "objects of knowledge" (Chevallard, 1991, p. 57), which, in mathematics, the author's field of origin, are identified as mathematical notions, paramathematical notions, and protomathematical notions. This paper, however, focuses on teaching Portuguese as a mother tongue; therefore, it is necessary to consider the objects of knowledge according to the adaptation proposed by Melo and Nicolau de Paula (2022), namely: linguistic notions, paralinguistic notions, and protolinguistic notions.

Linguistic concepts are similar to mathematical concepts, as they encompass objects that are physically present in the classroom, i.e., objects that will be directly manipulated and named in class. In Portuguese class, objects of knowledge at the linguistic level include word classes, syntactic functions, types of verbs, etc. (Melo; Nicolau de Paula, 2022, p. 155). Paralinguistic notions are auxiliary knowledge, therefore they are not concretely present in the classroom and are often not perceived by students. These concepts, like paramathematical concepts, encompass the documents that guide teaching practice and the knowledge that forms part of professional training and lesson preparation. However, they differ from paramathematical notions, as they are divided into two: knowledge that is the responsibility of the teacher and knowledge that is the responsibility of the

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student. To consider the knowledge that is articulated at the paralinguistic level, we consider the concept of individual grammar, as formulated by Chomsky (2006, p. 77), as the laws that govern the functioning of an individual language, acquired by the speaker naturally and unconsciously from Universal Grammar (UG). Thus, students, as Portuguese speakers, arrive at school with unconscious knowledge that they manipulate when using the language, and this knowledge is also one of the auxiliary skills that are present in the classroom and, therefore, must be considered by Didactic Transposition. Like students, teachers also have knowledge of the language beyond the other skills listed above. Therefore, the individual grammar of the teacher in interaction with the individual grammar of each student present in the classroom must be considered at the paralinguistic level (Melo; Nicolau de Paula, 2022, p. 156).

The most abstract concepts, and therefore those furthest removed from what is actually handled in the classroom, are protolinguistic concepts. These concepts relate to the objectives of mother tongue teaching in basic education, that is, the development of skills, as set out in official documents. Knowledge manifests itself at the protolinguistic level when learners manipulate the concepts presented in class by interpreting statements and producing and understanding texts, that is, when they achieve a good level of literacy.

The protolinguistic level may involve interdisciplinary knowledge and the mobilization and articulation of knowledge from different areas of learning which, together, can equip students for practical communication in situations inside and outside the classroom (Melo; Nicolau de Paula, 2022, p. 156).

The teaching of the mother tongue therefore involves not only the process of learning the written language, but also a broader understanding of communicative situations, including speech contexts. Therefore, it is essential to seek to understand how the speaker's internalized grammar is structured and how it articulates with the linguistic knowledge to be worked on in the classroom.

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3 The structure of the speaker's internalized grammar

To understand the structure of the speaker's internalized grammar, it is important to first determine the differences between universal grammar and core grammar. Universal grammar (UG) is a biological competence, an innate knowledge that humans possess to acquire a natural language solely through exposure to it (Chomsky, 2006). Nuclear grammar, however, is a system derived from GU, in that it represents the result of the fixation of GU parameters after exposure to a given natural language (Chomsky, 1981). In establishing the concept of nuclear grammar, Chomsky also determines that there are individual aspects that will shape this system, called Language-I, so that no speaker has an internalized structure that is completely identical to that of another speaker. In other words, what a speaker has within their internalized grammar is the result of the combination of these idiosyncratic factors with factors shared among a speech community. The non-uniform structure of internalized grammar is thus justified by the heterogeneity of linguistic experiences within a speech community, which led Chomsky to coin the notion of core grammar to represent the parameters shared by speakers of a given language that allow them to be included within the same speech community, that is, a common element, and a peripheral grammar, or peripheral grammar, which is related to nuclear grammar but encompasses the idiosyncrasies of each speaker's linguistic experience. According to Chomsky (1981), the grammatical periphery can harbor phenomena such as linguistic borrowings, neologisms, and remnants of change, thus individuals from the same community may or may not exhibit these phenomena outside the core of Language-I (Kato, 2005, p. 2).

Kato (2005) explores these heterogeneous structures of Language-I in greater detail, considering the specificities of BP and its influence on the determination of nuclear grammar and peripheral grammar. "In Brazil, unlike in Portugal, spoken and written grammar differ so greatly that children's acquisition of written grammar can be likened to learning a second language" (Kato, 2005, p. 1). Due to this difference between the grammar of written language and the grammar of spoken language, the process of schooling will determine the learning of another grammar, which will then become part of the speaker's Language-I. The author takes as an example of a literate speaker, i.e., someone who has completed the schooling process, a Portuguese language teacher, and compares them to students in basic education, an example of non-literate speakers, to discuss how the difference



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between the first language of teachers and students has an impact on Portuguese language teaching in Brazil. Thus, there is a core grammar, resulting from the child's spontaneous acquisition process, which is common to all speakers of a given language, and a peripheral grammar, resulting from the learning process and with characteristics of L2.

The first language of adults is more diverse than that of children, not only because of dialectal differences, but also because of different levels of literacy (Kato, 2013, p. 150). Considering the literate speaker, Language-I may contain, alongside the core grammar, a peripheral system of rules derived from a second grammar, the grammar of the written language, learned throughout the schooling process, as explained in Table 1. All Brazilian adults share the same core grammar, however, literate adults have an extensive periphery that encompasses what they have learned through formal education (Kato, 2013, p. 153).

Table 1: Comparison between nuclear grammar and peripheral grammar according to Kato (2013)

Core grammar (L1) Peripheral grammar (L	
 The acquisition is due to the biological capacity of the child More consistent among speakers Unconscious acquisition Deductive process based on positive data, with no instructions or corrections 	 Learning is culturally determined There are further individual differences Essentially conscious Both deductive and inductive process based on positive and negative data

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Linguistic non-uniformity, whether in the external manifestation of language, which is heterogeneous due to dialectal differences and the natural variation and change of living languages, or in linguistic competence, which we refer to here as Language-I, has been recognized and studied for many years by the scientific community. However, the transposition of this knowledge for educational purposes has not yet been completed, and what we see is a valorization of written language over spoken language and the teaching of a uniform norm, contrary to the nature of language. In order to understand at what stage of Didactic Transposition linguistic knowledge is found, we will now analyze its relationship with the classroom.

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4 Linguistic knowledge in the classroom: a look at how grammar is taught in schools

Advances in linguistic sciences have demonstrated that language has a regular character and, at the same time, presents heterogeneity as an inseparable part of this system. The realization that language is not simply a set of rules with uniform behavior is taken for granted when we are at the level of scholarly knowledge. However, when the language needs to be transposed into the curriculum, it seems that this assumption is abandoned, making way for the standard norm, prescribed by traditional grammars, to be taken as the main object of grammar lessons in school.

Starting in the 1980s, official teaching documents began to take a view that grammar must be linked to text and reading, otherwise its teaching loses meaning. This new place that grammatical knowledge now occupies places grammar as a mere backdrop for other types of activities to be developed in school. Obviously, academic knowledge must be well-integrated, and writing and reading are essential skills in a student's education, but treating grammar as a mere supporting role is precisely what opens the door to questions and debates about its relevance in curricula.

In some sections of the National Common Core Curriculum (BNCC), it is clear how reflection on language is conditioned by working with text. The document does not delve into aspects related to linguistic analysis, merely stating that:

[...] reading/listening and oral, written, and multisemiotic text production practices provide opportunities for reflection on language and languages in general, in which these descriptions, concepts, and rules operate and in which the following will be constructed simultaneously: comparisons between definitions that allow for the observation of differences in focus and emphasis in the formulation of concepts and rules; comparisons of different ways of saying "the same thing" and analysis of the effects of meaning that these forms can bring about/arouse; exploration of the modes of meaning of different semiotic systems, etc. (Brasil, 2018, p. 80).

Authors such as Borges Neto (2013, p. 72) point out that the removal of grammar from official documents mistakenly raises the question of whether or not we should teach grammar in school, because, whether explicitly or through textual grammar, students study grammar in school, but they

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study a traditional, naturalized grammar, that is, linguistic prescription alone is taken as real language without any questioning. The lack of openness to other conceptions of grammar causes teachers to ignore the linguistic knowledge that children bring with them, present in their core grammar, which could assist schools in their literacy task, that is, which could be intentionally activated by teachers because it is knowledge that comprises what we call here the paralinguistic level, but has also been presented as prior knowledge or baggage brought by students when they arrive at school by Lobato (2003 apud Pilati et al, 2015, p. 20).

The implementation of knowledge, present in documents such as the National Curricular Parameters (PCN) as well as the BNCC, depends on the interpretation that those involved in the educational process give to official texts, that is, it is also linked to the degree of importance that each group of knowledge receives in the school tradition. The knowledge presented in the documents may be transferred to the teacher's lesson plan. In turn, in such plan, one might find ideas, expectations, and possibilities, which will not necessarily be translated into taught knowledge, that is, the knowledge that is actually constructed within the classroom through the interaction between the teacher and the students and among the students themselves. Scholars such as Tescari Neto and Souza de Paula (2021, p. 94) recognize that grammar in these texts is not seen as an end in itself, but as a means for producing oral and written texts. Therefore, the selection of which parts of this body of knowledge will be effectively taught and which parts will be considered less important depends on the teacher's view of what grammar is and what language is. In this sense, we argue that basic education teachers should have a minimum mastery of some basic theoretical concepts about grammar, language acquisition, and the externalization of linguistic knowledge, since the documents mentioned here fail to present a view of language consistent with what linguistic science has shown.

According to the BNCC, following the same perspective as the PCNs, language is understood as an individual action that permeates the process of dialogue in the countless contexts in which different social interactions can take place. In line with this perspective, the text plays a pivotal role in the Portuguese language unit. The linguistic and semiotic analysis axis, in which knowledge is presented at the linguistic level associated with the grammatical structure of the language, may well approach a more reflective view - as one might clearly note when the BNCC indicates that schools

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should provide experiences that contribute to the expansion of literacy and stimulate critical thinking in social practices that are permeated by language in its most diverse aspects.

This reflective perspective, however, is not applied when we observe the work with grammar content in practice. An approach that is truly reflective must be based on what Travaglia (2009) proposes, stating that "reflective grammar arises from reflection based on intuitive knowledge of the mechanisms of language and will be used for the conscious mastery of a language that the student already masters unconsciously" (Travaglia, 2009, p. 142). We believe that grammar lessons at school should be guided by the desire to bring out knowledge that is already part of the student's internalized repertoire. The idea, in this case, would be to work on linguistic resources that the student has not yet explicitly mastered, in order to lead them to acquire new skills in dealing with the language. It is common to find, in textbooks, activities that clash with the scientific notion of language as a heterogeneous and variable system and require students to, for instance, convert structures from the vernacular to the standard norm. In addition to reinforcing the unscientific notion of right and wrong, activities such as these do not promote any kind of reflection or analysis of the functioning and organization of the linguistic system. With the aim of bringing together the knowledge found in academia and the classroom, we have selected two linguistic topics that allow us to look at the grammatical knowledge present in Language I, realizing how it is made up of two levels: a core level, which coincides with the students' Language I, and a peripheral level, characteristic of literate speakers. These are the monoargumental verbs and synthetic passive voice structures presented in the following sections.

4.1 Unaccusative and unergative verbs

When comparing the knowledge of linguistic structure accumulated in the academic environment with the knowledge present in school grammar books, it is possible to see how what is manipulated at the linguistic level in the classroom is outdated in relation to this scholarly knowledge. In fact, authors such as Lobato (2003 apud Pilati et al, 2015, p.16) recognize the gap between the two levels of knowledge. According to traditional grammar, verbs are classified as transitive, i.e., verbs that require a direct or indirect object, and intransitive verbs, those that do not select objects. Sentences with transitive verbs (1) therefore allow for the presence of at least two DPs, that is, the presence of

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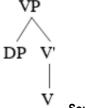
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two arguments selected by the verb. Clauses with intransitive verbs (2) select only one argument, that is, a DP.

- (1) Os alunos fizeram o para casa. (The students have done their homework.)
- (2) A criança cresceu. (The child has grown up.)

Perlmutter (1978) questions the division of traditional grammar and proposes distinguishing two categories within the category of intransitive verbs: unergative verbs and accusative verbs. The two categories are similar in that they have only one argument that, syntactically, occupies the subject position, Spec of IP, but when the deep structure of the sentence is analyzed, it appears in different positions, with distinct semantic roles. As for the deep structure of the sentence, the subject of the unergative verbs appears in the position of external argument of the verbal head, that is, it takes the position of specifier (Fig. 1).

Image 1: Syntactic tree of the subject structure of unergative verbs



Source: Pedroso (2019, p. 4)

Semantically, this subject takes on the role of agent, as shown in the examples below:

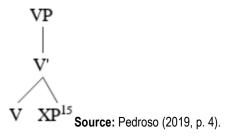
- (3) O cachorro latiu. (The dog barked.)
- (4) A menina corre com frequência. (The girl often runs.)
- (5) Minha amiga dança bem. (My friend dances well.)

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The subject of unaccusative verbs appears in the complement position (Fig. 2), that is, it appears as an internal argument of the verbal head and semantically takes over the role of patient or theme, as shown in sentences 6 to 8.

Image 2: Syntactic tree of the subject structure of unaccusative verbs



- (6) Os livros perdidos apareceram. (The lost books have appeared.)
- (7) O vidro quebrou. (The glass broke.)
- (8) Os alunos chegaram atrasados. (The students arrived late.)

To highlight the distinction between the categories of unergative and unaccusative verbs, there are morphosyntactic tests that can be used. We opted for highlighting two tests here: the formation of past participles and constructions with nominalizations with agentive derivational suffixes (Pedroso, 2019). The first test highlights the patient role assumed by the subject of unaccusative constructions, as evidenced by the acceptability of sentence 10 among speakers of BP:

- (9) O vidro quebrou. (The glass broke.)
- (10) O vidro está quebrado. (The glass is broken.)

In fact, when we make the same change with unergative verbs, we can see that construction 12 will no longer be accepted by speakers of BP.

- (11) O atleta corre. (The athlete runs.)
- (12) *O atleta está corrido. (*The athlete is run.)

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Complementing the past participle test, the nominalization test highlights the agentive role assumed by the subject of sentences with intransitive verbs, as evidenced by 13 and 14.

(13) O atleta corre. (The athlete runs.)

(14) O atleta é corredor. (The athlete is a runner.)

Similarly to the previous test, the same change with unaccusatives verbs would cause strangeness in BP speakers, as seen in 15 and 16.

(15) O vidro quebrou. (The glass broke.)

(16) *O vidro é quebrador. (*The glass is a breaker.)

The above mentioned tests clearly show that traditional grammar groups two structures with distinct behaviors into the same category and prove that assuming the standard norm as the only form of the language is an insufficient approach, as it ignores structures that the speaker's core grammar clearly recognizes as distinct structures. The science behind this phenomenon and its impact on language structure might enrich the knowledge mobilized by teachers at the paralinguistic level and also enable the adoption of the discovery procedure (Lobato, 2003 apud Pilati et al, 2015, p. 16), as it allows students to activate the knowledge they mobilize unconsciously as speakers.

4.2 Synthetic passive voice

The contradictions between the different grammars that are articulated in the speakers' Language-I must also be taken into account by the mother tongue teacher. Structures such as the synthetic passive voice, which manifests itself differently in written and spoken language, highlight the heterogeneity of Language-I and the inefficiency of adopting only one perspective in Portuguese language classrooms.

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Nunes (1990) demonstrates how the standard norm, i.e., written language, differs from the linguistic innovations that have shaped the language currently spoken in Brazil. The diachronic approach to the phenomenon argues that there was a syntactic reanalysis in Old Portuguese "in which the expletive in the subject position of constructions with passivizing particle <u>se</u> was taken as a null referential pronoun" (Nunes, 1990, p. 14). In BP, this linguistic change is in its final stages, with passivizing particle <u>se</u> restricted to writing, while the indeterminate form of <u>se</u> becomes the canonical form in spoken language. Thus, BP speakers produce sentences such as (8), because they do not recognize "houses" as the subject of the sentence, as evidenced by the ungrammaticality of (9) for BP speakers. The standard rule, however, states that only (7) is correct, as it is a structure derived from (10). Non-literate speakers, and possibly some literate speakers, will not yet be able to recognize the relationship between (7) and (10).

- (7) Alugam-se casas. (Houses for rent.)
- (8) Aluga-se casas.
- (9) *Casas alugam-se.
- (10) Casas são alugadas.

The phenomenon of synthetic passive voice, when observed in its entirety and not only from the perspective of written or spoken language, has conflicting rules that restrict the grammar to which such rules belong, and is therefore a good subject for investigating how the different grammars that articulate themselves in the Language-I of BP speakers are organized.

5 A brief look at the issue of teacher training

As we pointed out in the introduction, the scenario we find when analyzing how grammar teaching is being developed in Brazilian schools is worrying, as it is limited to two possibilities, with rare exceptions: (i) strictly traditional teaching based on memorization of nomenclature or (ii) a summary of grammatical topics conditioned by the texts present in the teaching materials. In any case, both possibilities encounter the issue of the naturalization of the standard norm and take prescription as a

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reference, distancing themselves greatly from what would be an effective linguistic analysis. As a result, students leave school without mastering basic notions of grammar or the vast normative nomenclature presented to them. In fact, authors such as Tescari Neto and Souza de Paula (2021) have already reinforced the importance of including linguistic and grammatical analysis not only in basic education, but also in the training of Portuguese language teachers.

Teles and Tavares (2021, p. 12) point out that we are facing a cycle that does not end, since students who leave basic education and decide to pursue degrees in Language Arts usually complete them and return to the initial scenario as teachers who do not undertake significant changes in the teaching of grammar or, when they do, they do so very discreetly. The intention here is not to blame teachers, but to reflect on the cyclical nature of this system, which produces students with limited knowledge of grammar and, consequently, teachers with conceptual problems that could have been clarified in basic education but, in some cases, carry on until the end of their degree.

One of the objectives of this text is, therefore, to consider ways in which the knowledge constructed by linguistic theory, in this case Generative Theory, could contribute to better training for these teachers and significantly alter their practices. Since official documents do not present a scientific view of what language is, it is necessary to clarify what the main object of grammar lessons really is. We understand here that language should be understood as an articulated system that has phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic, and lexical levels and that allows for the creative construction of infinite utterances through recursion, which is unique to the human species. In this sense, it seems to be very far from what is understood as language, a definition found in official documents that present a socio-interactionist view of language as a mere instrument of communication.

Regardless of the theoretical approach adopted, we believe that elementary school teachers should be able to go beyond what is written in textbooks. To do so, they need to have a theoretical repertoire that helps them make decisions. Knowledge of language structure and some understanding of how to treat linguistic data scientifically are necessary to spark students' interest in this type of analysis, demonstrating that it is possible to move beyond the prescription that leads them to memorize extensive and often useless terminology. An excellent discussion on this subject can be found in Lobato (2003 apud Pilati et al, 2015). The author will propose a reflection based on the following question: What does a basic education teacher really need to know about linguistic theories and issues under

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debate within linguistic science? This is an issue that we cannot lose sight of when dealing with the topic of teacher training for a renewed approach to grammar teaching, since, on the one hand, these teachers are not expected to be linguists in the classroom, but on the other hand, we know of the enormous gap between knowledge derived from theoretical descriptions of languages and the related content present in the classroom, and how this harms the treatment of grammar in schools. Lobato (2003 apud Pilati et al, 2015, p. 44) explains how this can be done, stating that linguistics can contribute with: "rigorous analysis of the language in question, which will serve as a basis for teaching, without, however, taking the place of a manual prepared for pedagogical purposes."

Also addressing issues related to teacher training, not only does the work of Guerra-Vicente, Lunguinho, and Gomes (2021) provide a detailed analysis of the official documents that guide teacher education and training in Brazil, but it also relates the notions of competencies and skills present in the documents to the notions of hard skills and soft skills. The authors understand that the competencies listed in the BNCC may be similar to hard skills and, in the context of Portuguese language teacher training, may mean, among other things: mastering different grammars of the language (i.e., denaturalizing the standard norm), knowing aspects of linguistic variation and the theory behind them, and knowing how to perform linguistic and semiotic analysis. At the soft skills level, this would include skills that also permeate official documents and could be understood in the context of language teachers as their creativity and capacity for innovation, techniques for motivating the class, empathy with students, and mastery of procedures for leveraging students' prior knowledge in the classroom (Guerra-Vicente, Lunguinho, and Gomes, 2021, p. 40). It is noteworthy to highlight this last item on the list, since it is the focus of the Generative Theory's major contribution to education, according to the authors: awareness of students' linguistic competence and the certainty that they do not arrive at school as blank slates. This can change the teacher's perspective on students and allow activities to be designed that focus on explaining what they already know in order to achieve what they do not yet know.

Lobato (2003 apud Pilati et al, 2015) also claims that schools do not have the role of teaching grammar to students, a statement with which we fully agree, since we start from the theoretical assumption that our students already arrive at school with a command of the grammatical structure of

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their mother tongue. Based on what the author proposes, mother tongue teaching should follow some essential steps, namely:

- i. Adoption of the discovery procedure: teaching should lead to discovery.
- ii. Adoption of the elicitation methodology: teaching students to draw their own conclusions and develop their language knowledge.
- iii. Adopting a results-based technique: explaining to students that there is a relationship between form and content, i.e., working with structures and emphasizing the fact that different structures imply different semantic results (Lobato, 2003 apud Pilati et al, 2015, p. 20).

Grammar class can be a gateway to sparking students' curiosity about how our language works, what its peculiarities and regularities are, what sets us apart from other animal species, etc. For this type of work to be developed, teachers must first move away from a normative perspective and begin to treat language as an object of analysis. At first glance, language is understood as something ready-made and seems to be a territory that does not allow exploration. From a scientific point of view, language is an open space for investigation, hypothesis testing, questioning, and reflection, just as linguists do. With the help of Lobato (2003 apud Pilati et al, 2015, p. 20), who proposed treating grammar activities as a means of promoting knowledge of linguistic facts, we seek to outline some possible ways of demonstrating how it would be possible to develop linguistic reflection based on knowledge found at the paralinguistic level, that is, the set of information that the individual (teacher and student) already possesses and only needs to be brought to a more conscious level, as in a discovery procedure proposed by Lobato and cited above. This is the knowledge that is no longer being explored in grammar classes, to the detriment of a standardizing norm and a teaching approach that hands students ready-made rules as if they had no grammatical knowledge whatsoever.

5.1 Combining scholarly knowledge with taught knowledge: how can theoretical knowledge be implemented in school practice?

Didactic Transposition allows us to analyze the transformations that scientific knowledge undergoes until it becomes knowledge to be taught, that is, until it is adapted to the context of basic education. Such transformations are fundamental when we consider the contributions that linguistic

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research can bring to the teaching of PB in schools, as it is necessary to consider at which levels this knowledge will be included: at the linguistic level, paralinguistic level, or protolinguistic level (Melo; Nicolau de Paula, 2022). Although they do not relate their work directly to Didactic Transposition, some authors have already been discussing strategies that promote awareness of linguistic knowledge. In this paper, we refer to Pilati's proposal (2017), with the active learning methodology, and that of Pires de Oliveira and Quarezemin (2016), with the construction of grammars. The active learning methodology (Pilati, 2017, p. 101) takes into account the speaker's prior knowledge, that is, it considers knowledge that is articulated at the paralinguistic level as auxiliary knowledge that is ignored by traditional approaches, and seeks to develop deep knowledge about linguistic phenomena, promoting active learning based on metacognitive skills. According to the author, identifying patterns, contexts of use, and mobilizing structures through concrete materials would enable us to achieve this goal. The construction of grammars (Pires de Oliveira; Quarezemin, 2016) is also based on the identification of patterns within the language; however, this approach starts from corpus analysis and even comparison with other languages, allowing the speaker to reflect on the rules that govern the functioning of the language as it is spoken by speakers and not just according to the standard norm. In this case, in addition to articulating the knowledge present in the speaker's Language-I as auxiliary knowledge, the authors consider the incorporation of such knowledge at the linguistic level, being directly manipulated by students in the classroom.

Seeking to explore problematic issues in traditional grammar with students and stimulate critical and scientific thinking in the classroom, we present below a short sequence of activities focusing on structures with unstressed and intransitive verbs. We believe that this proposal applies to any class from the 7th grade onwards, since, according to the BNCC, students will already have been exposed to the concept of the subject, which appears in the 5th grade, and to the basic structure of sentences, a skill expected in the 7th grade. Three different stages are planned: the first stage involves activating students' prior knowledge; the second stage involves analyzing constructions with intransitive verbs; and the third stage involves analyzing past participle and nominalization tests based on these verbs, seeking to demonstrate the differences between unergative and intransitive constructions.

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In the first stage, the teacher will present several verbs in class and ask students to classify them based on the sentences they can construct. Table 2 presents examples of verbs that could be used in this activity.

Table 2: Examples of verbs for classification

correr (run)	esvaziar (empty)	precisar (need)	ler (read)
quebrar (break)	comer (eat)	acreditar (believe)	oferecer (offer)
cantar (sing)	comprar (buy)	construir (build)	pensar (think)

Source: Prepared by the authors.

It is key that the examples include verbs that grammatical tradition classifies as intransitive, direct transitive, and indirect transitive, since it is precisely this classification that we will question below. Students are expected to recognize the three categories among the verbs presented and to group the single-argument verbs together without questioning whether they belong to the same category.

After activating the knowledge that students already have about verbal categories, having been introduced to them in Portuguese classes, the teacher presents sentences that contain at least one unaccusative verb and one intransitive verb, which may also contain transitive verbs, and asks students to analyze their structure, identifying at least the subject and, if present, the object. Some examples of clauses that can be used are presented below.

- (11) A criança quebrou o vidro ontem. (The child broke the glass yesterday.)
- (12) O vidro quebrou ontem. (The glass broke yesterday.)
- (13) Maria correu a maratona no último fim de semana. (Maria ran the marathon last weekend.)
- (14) *A maratona correu no último fim de semana. (*The marathon ran last weekend.)

It should be noted here that the movement observed between sentences 11 and 12 shows that the subject of 12 was not in the subject position at some point. The aim is to highlight the movement

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that occurs from the deep structure to the surface structure of the sentence, without, however, delving deeper into details of generative syntax with students. Excerpts 13 and 14 also demonstrate that the movement observed in 11 and 12 does not apply to verbs such as "correr" (run), since sentence 14 is not accepted by BP speakers.

Finally, a third activity is proposed in which students will analyze constructions derived from unstressed and intransitive verbs. We suggest some possible constructions below.

- (15) A criança cresce. (The child grows up.)
- (16) O vidro quebra. (Glass breaks.)
- (17) O rapaz trabalha. (The boy works.)
- (18) O atleta corre. (The athlete runs.)
- (19) *A criança é crescedora. (*The child is a grower.)
- (20) *O vidro é quebrador. (*The glass is a breaker.)
- (21) O rapaz é trabalhador. (The boy is a hard worker.)
- (22) O atleta é corredor. (The athlete is a runner.)
- (23) A criança está crescida. (The child is grown up.)
- (24) O vidro está quebrado. (The glass is broken.)
- (25) *O rapaz está trabalhado. (*The boy is worked.)
- (26) *O atleta está corrido. (*The athlete is run.)

The examples contain structures with two unaccusative verbs, in constructions 15 and 16, and two unergative verbs, in constructions 17 and 18. When analyzing the sentences, students will notice that the verbs "crescer" ("grow") and "quebrar" ("break") have similar behavior, as evidenced by constructions 19, 20, 23, and 24, and that they function differently from the verbs "trabalhar" ("work") and "correr" ("run"), as evidenced by constructions 21, 22, 25, and 26. The teacher can ask questions that encourage students to reflect on the peculiarities of these structures: (i) if traditional grammar groups the verbs "crescer" ("grow"), "trabalhar" ("work") and "correr" ("run") in the same category, that of intransitive verbs, why do they behave differently? (ii) why does the norm only consider the verb "quebrar" ("break") a direct transitive verb? With this analysis, we have demonstrated that traditional

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grammar classification is insufficient to account for all phenomena present in BP. After analyzing these examples, students can think of similar sentences, listing other verbs that behave similarly to "grow" and "break." They can also construct their own rules for how these structures work.

From the perspective of Didactic Transposition, an activity such as this activates all three levels that comprise the process of didacticization of knowledge. We begin with knowledge derived from linguistic theory about the particularities of monoargumental verbs (unaccusative and unergative), which has been transformed into teaching knowledge, dialoguing in a simplified manner with the linguistic object: verbal transitivity. The speaker's internalized knowledge of the different grammatical categories that make up our lexicon, as well as the internal structure of verbs, is activated as paralinguistic knowledge, since the speaker's intuition is essential during the activity. As a broader objective, or protolinguistic knowledge, the activity aims to present evidence that the analysis found in traditional grammar is insufficient to explain the internal structure of some verbs that are normally treated together.

Another phenomenon that opens up possibilities for interesting analysis is the synthetic passive voice, which highlights two distinct grammars that are present in the Language-I of BP speakers. This activity can be carried out with classes from the 8th grade onwards when, according to the BNCC, the distinction between active and passive voice is taught in the classroom. The teacher can begin by presenting examples such as 27 and 28 to the students and asking if the word "se" has the same meaning in both cases.

- (27) Lembre-se de comprar leite. (Remember to buy milk.)
- (28) Aluga-se este imóvel. (This property is for rent.)

In this initial analysis, the teacher will be able to understand how students interpret this word and whether they recognize the difference between the reflexive construction in 27 and the passive function in 28. It is important that the teacher guides students if they are unable to conclude on their own that "se" has a different meaning in the two constructions, and writes down interesting points raised by them on the board. Next, the analysis is expanded with constructions such as those presented below.

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- (29) Alugam-se estes imóveis. (These properties are for rent.)
- (30) Aluga-se estes imóveis. (These properties are for rent.)
- (31) *Estes imóveis alugam-se.

Students should then say which sentences are possible in BP and which ones they find strange. The acceptability judgment will demonstrate that, in BP, speakers recognize both sentences 29 and 30, but that sentence 31 does not exist in BP speaker's Language I, despite being accepted by EP speakers. Next, the teacher should ask which construction is more common in spoken situations and which is more common in written language. At this point, you can also refer to the textbook and analyze the examples presented there. With this discussion, the teacher makes it clear to students that the standard norm does not include sentences such as 30, even though they are produced in speech. In other words, we are dealing with two different rules, present in two different grammars. To conclude, the teacher can ask what the relationship is between construction 29 and construction 32.

(32) Estes imóveis são alugados. (These properties are rented.)

After the previous analysis, students may already be able to see that there is a meaningful relationship between them, even though they are two distinct syntactic constructions. Together, teachers and students can read the explanation for the synthetic passive voice in the textbook or a grammar book and consider whether what is prescribed by the standard norm matches what they observe in real life. This activity should be guided by naturalization of the existence of other rules that are just as valid as those prescribed in normative grammar.

In the activity that addresses the issue of passive voice, we took the theoretical knowledge that describes the differences in the grammar of BP and EP in relation to these sentences and transposed it in a way that enables this knowledge to be developed in the classroom. Here, paralinguistic notions that revolve around the differences between speech and writing can be activated. These are certainly perceived by students but often ignored by textbooks and therefore end up being left out of classroom

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discussions. The linguistic concept of passive voice opens the door to a conversation about how language changes over time and how the grammar of PB differs from EP in several ways.

The two activities suggested above seem to be very effective in applying true linguistic analysis with students in the classroom. Nevertheless, what we highlight here is how exercises such as these can also play a fundamental role in the scientific training of teachers, stimulating more advanced reflections that may never have been undertaken by teachers before. The lack of contact with this type of analysis means that teachers do not have the necessary confidence to explore grammar topics, as demonstrated by the studies of Teles and Tavares (2021).

As one of our objectives is to promote a renewal in grammar teaching based on teacher training, we advocate that, in the preparation stages of grammar lessons, teachers should aim to construct reasoning similar to that presented in these activities, that the movement of extrapolating what is in the textbook should be constant when working with grammar topics, and that reflections should always be guided by a scientific and descriptive perspective of the language.

The path proposed by Didactic Transposition can help in the development of these materials, provided that the teacher is able to identify the object in question at the linguistic level and the type of knowledge it dialogues with. From this point on, they exercise their agency as one of the main actors in the educational game and select what they deem important to be converted into knowledge to be taught, combining theoretical knowledge with their experiences in the classroom and with specific classes. Next, the plan should map out what can be triggered, even indirectly, at the paralinguistic level. Remember that here we are always considering that students bring to the classroom a vast repertoire of grammatical knowledge in their internalized grammar, just as the teacher, in addition to a core grammar, also has a rich peripheral grammar. This knowledge derived from the linguistic awareness of native speakers is what should be externalized and examined in detail in the classroom. This way, there is no need to resort to complex and elaborate materials to make the work function. The protolinguistic level may be more difficult to achieve due to its breadth, and it is important to make it clear that it does not need to be included in all the proposed activities, as it deals with larger objects that often go beyond the work developed in a single class. They can be set as general objectives and achieved over longer periods, such as a school term, for example.

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Final remarks

The theory of Didactic Transposition (Chevallard, 1991), adapted for mother tongue teaching, seems to us to be a model that can help build practical ways of effectively teaching knowledge derived from linguistic theory and preparing it for application in schools. As a theoretical option in the field of language, we base ourselves on Generative Theory and its assumptions about the internal structure of the speaker's grammar and how the activation of this knowledge can contribute to more productive reflections on the functioning of the linguistic system being constructed in grammar classes. We also seek to analyze one of the central actors in the didactic relationship, grammatical knowledge, and how it relates to the teaching of grammar currently developed, in addition to assessing the place that this knowledge occupies in official documents. Finally, we offer some reflections on the training of Portuguese language teachers and point out possible ways to contribute to improving their practices by transferring scholarly or theoretical knowledge into knowledge that can be taught, or knowledge that will effectively become part of the teacher's lesson plan and reach the classroom.

The triad of actors that underpins Didactic Transposition — teachers, students, and knowledge — can provide us with important guidance, as it considers the main pillars of the didactic relationship and brings into play a central actor that is often overlooked: knowledge. Thinking about how we should articulate knowledge so that it becomes content that can be worked on in practice can help us change the precarious scenario in which grammar teaching in basic education finds itself, as presented in the introduction to this article. Careful selection of theoretical content is required, which must be adapted and made available to teachers, since simply importing fragmented and decontextualized information from linguistic theories into the classroom has often proved insufficient, largely due to a lack of investment in teacher training.

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