SYNTAX IN BRAZIL: HISTORIOGRAPHICAL NOTES AND RESEARCHING THEMATIC AXES

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▪ ABSTRACT: This article sets out some thematic axes, particularly designed for the development of historiographical researches into knowledge, ideas, problems, theories and pedagogical models that involve the syntactic dimension of the grammatical studies in Brazil, between the 19th and 21st centuries. The researching axes and the notes on the history of the syntax, which support them, are based on the grounds of the Historiography of Linguistics, according to Swiggers (2013, 2012, 2009), and Altman (2012, 2009, 2004). We drafted some comprehension lines so as to implement the construction of descriptive, interpretative, and explanatory narratives about the ways how syntactic knowledge has been acquired, formulated, widespread, transformed, preserved, taught or forgotten in the Brazilian intellectual context. For this purpose, we drew up some sort of brief review of syntactic studies, considering, above all, the Greco-Roman scholarship, the grammatization process of Portuguese and the Brazilian pedagogical context. The narrative is closed with the systematization of three possible thematic axes, carried out in the form of research questions for a historiography of syntax in Brazil, involving theoretical, descriptive-normative, and didactic-pedagogical aspects.

▪ KEYWORDS: Linguistic Historiography. Syntax. Grammar.

Introduction

This article sets out some thematic axes that are designed for the development of historiographical research into knowledge, ideas, problems, theories and pedagogical models that involve the syntactic dimensions of the grammatical studies in Brazil, between the 19th and 21st centuries.

The work was developed inside the research group *HGEL – Historiografia, Gramática e Ensino de Línguas* (Historiography, Grammar, and Language Teaching) (UFPB/PROLING/CNPq)[1], and mostly deals with recent reflections on the historical course of *traditional grammar* - understood as a "theory of language" – and its impact on Brazilian contemporary Linguistics and Language Teaching (cf. VIEIRA, 2018; BORGES NETO, 2018).

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Although space and time of production, reception, and circulation of syntactic knowledge being restricted to the Brazilian context from the 1800's until now, considerations of other places and times will be fundamental to the arguments developed here. Recovering some of the historical aspects of Brazilian studies on syntax that have already been mapped or suggested by different historiographers will be also important.

The article is organized in eight different parts besides the introduction. The general theoretical and methodological basis are presented in the next section. Within the following six sections, some sort of a *brief trajectory of syntactic studies* is drawn up, considering, above all, the Greco-Roman scholarship, the grammatization of Portuguese and the Brazilian pedagogical context. The narrative is closed with the systematization of three possible thematic axes, carried out in the form of research questions, in order to found the writing of a historiography of syntax in Brazil, involving theoretical, descriptive-normative, and didactic-pedagogical aspects. A brief conclusive section ensues.

General theoretical and methodological procedures

The notes about the history of syntax in Brazil listed here are inserted in the area called Historiography of Linguistics, according to Swiggers (2013, 2012, 2009), and Altman (2012, 2009, 2004), for instance. Therefore, there is an attempt to describe and understand the products and processes that characterize, and are involved in, the history of Linguistics. This, in turn, is seen in a wide and general way, not necessarily in an institutionalized one. It covers the set of knowledge and reflections related to speech and languages while exceeding the limits of the *stricto sensu* scientific disciplinarity, that is, breaking through the boundaries of what is known as Linguistics only from the 19th century onward.

There is, particularly, an effort to present, in this article, a few lines of understanding that will eventually lead to the development of descriptive, interpretative, and explanatory narratives about how the syntactic knowledge was acquired, formulated, widespread, transformed, preserved, taught or forgotten in the Brazilian intellectual. The reflection advanced here will consequently contribute to the reconstruction of the "the set of syntactic conceptions" and its movements by means of heuristic and hermeneutical analysis of Brazilian textual sources.

Naturally, the focus is not placed only on the *internal dimension* – cognitive, theoretical, practical, conceptual, and terminological aspects – of the knowledge development on syntax in Brazil, but also on the *external dimension* – the political, sociocultural, philosophical, ideological setting inside which such knowledge has been conditioned or determined, according to Asencio, Del Arco and Swiggers (2014). Content and context are correlated dimensions in the Historiography of Linguistics (SWIGGERS, 2012), that is, internal and external aspects not only can but also must be related to historiographical description and interpretation. The selection, reconstruction, classification and interpretation of the syntactic facts are, therefore, carried out in their

theoretical, descriptive-normative, and didactic-pedagogic aspects, articulated to their respective intellectual contexts throughout time.

Establishing an intellectual context implies recovering the "climate of opinion" of the time in question, that is, taking into account the intellectual atmosphere, and the general cultural and epistemological background (cf. KOERNER, 1996). It is generally accepted in historiography that extra linguistic factors can impact the ways how linguistic ideas and theories are developed, accepted or rejected. This relation between contiguous eras is typical of the historiographical tract herein proposed, based on a breadth of time that precedes and succeeds the intellectual atmosphere of the time – respectively, the "horizon of retrospection" and the "horizon of projection" (AUROUX, 1992), as we can read in the following passage:

> [the] knowledge (the instances that make it work) does not destroy its past as it is erroneously often believed; it organizes the past, chooses it, forgets it, imagines it, idealizes it, in the same way that it anticipates its future, dreaming of it while building it. Without memory and without project, there is simply no knowledge. (AUROUX, 1992, p.11-12, our translation).[2]

The horizon of retrospection of the syntactic knowledge in Brazil clearly goes back to the language thought of the western Antiquity, represented by traditional grammar as well as by other theoretical models which are intellectually closer to the epistemology of modern Linguistics. It is true that the term "syntax" in itself does not occur in every source available; nonetheless, the themes and categories associated today to this level of language analysis can already be found, in a way, in Classical Philosophy texts, as presented below.

About Greco-Roman Syntax

Maybe the first embrionary record of a sentence syntax can be found in *The Sophist*, the dialogue written by Plato in the 5th Century BCE (Before Common Era), between the mathematician Theaetetus and the Stranger. The text provides us with a reflection on the *lógos* and its primary constitutive parts: the noun (*ónoma*), which performs an action, and the verb (*rhêma*), which expresses it:

> STR. [Stranger] [...] for we have two kinds of vocal indications of being.
>
> THEAET. [Theaetetus] How so?
>
> STR. One called nouns (ónoma), the other verbs (rhêma).

THEAET. Define each of them.

STR. The indication which relates to action we may call a verb.

THEAET. Yes.

STR. And the vocal sign applied to those who perform the action in question we call a noun.

THEAET. Exactly.

STR. Hence discourse is never composed of nouns alone spoken in a succession, nor of verbs spoken without nouns. [...] For instance, "walks", "runs", "sleeps" and the other verbs which denote actions, even if you utter all there are of them in succession, do not make discourse for all that.

THEAET. No, of course not.

STR. And again, when "lion", "stag", "horse", and all other names of those who perform these actions are uttered, such a succession of words does not yet make discourse; for in neither case do the words uttered indicate action or inaction or existence of anything that exists or does not exist, until the verbs are mingled with the nouns; then the words fit, and their first combination is a sentence, about the first and shortest form of discourse. (PLATO, 2006, p.433-435).

The division of *lógos* proposed by the Stranger actually consists of a way to reflect about the true or false quality of the discourse, and, consequently, of the thought, being the former a vocal expression of the latter. This idea is revisited by Aristotle, now in the 4th Century BCE, in terms of "predicate propositions". In other words, the connection between these two elements, the noun and the verb, somewhat similar to the subject-predicate structure in our time, reflects the facts of the world and allows us to observe how the relation between discourse and ontological reality manifests itself.

The first grammars appeared soon afterwards, more precisely from the 3rd Century BCE onward, with the works of grammarians and philologists from the ancient Alexandria. However, Dionysius Thrax's *Tékhnē Grammatikē* (1th Century BCE) – known as the first grammar of a western language, Classical Greek – includes just of what we know nowadays as phonetics and morphology, quite ignoring syntax.

It is true that Dionysius classifies and analyzes the eight "parts of speech" (*mere lógou*), which is also a reflection of a syntactic character in its essence, as the existence of parts presumes, at a certain point, their articulation in building a whole (in this case, the *lógos*, the speech). Moreover, the classification of the parts draws upon some (morpho)syntactic criteria, besides semantic (or even ontological) and morphological ones (cf. VIEIRA, 2018). The linguist Gisele Chapanski (2003), in a dissertation in which she has translated and commented Dionysius' grammar, reveals that the questions of syntactic nature are also present in the work when he addresses "the vices and virtues of language", that is, when parts of a literary work are presented as an example of proper agreement or as a poetic license that breaches the standards of language correctness.

Nevertheless, syntactic studies as such are only identified in the work of Apollonius Dyscolus from Alexandria, in the 2nd Century CE (Common Era). Authors like Robins (1979), Corrêa (2010), and Fortes (2012), among others, defend that Apollonius developed the first syntactic theory of the Greek language. His work is organized in three treaties, being the last and lengthiest one of them dedicated to syntax. It is based on the philosophical noun-verb dichotomy and on the relations between these elements themselves as well as with other parts of speech, focusing on the agreement relations. One of his merits is the anticipation of the ideas of subject, object and other syntactic notions that came much later (such as regimen/government and even the structuralist idea of immediate constituent).

In the universe of Latin grammaticography, works about syntax were almost non-existent or they were not preserved before the fall of the Roman Empire. The most mourned loss might be that of the third part of the book *De Lingua Latina* (On the Latin Language), by Varro (1st Century CE), who, in thesis, would have addressed the processes for the combination of words in the Latin syntax. Despite the absence of them, it can be said, on Fortes' (2012) path, that most Latin authors recognized the existence of syntax when looking closely into the normative problems of syntactic construction, the so called "solecisms", even though the same authors did not offer an explicit theoretical study about the internal structure of a sentence.

From the first contact with the translation of some Latin grammars and with the studies of commentators on the theme such as Gonçalves and Conto (2010), Valenza (2010), Dezotti (2011), and Fortes himself (2012), among others, I find the *Institutiones Grammaticae* (Institutions of Grammar) by the grammarian Priscian of Caesarea, written in the 6th Century CE, the most comprehensive source and representative study of syntax in the Greco-Roman Antiquity. His last two books, known as *Priscianus minor*, are highlighted from a total of eighteen books. They are dedicated to syntax and based on the idea of a sentence as a "harmonious arrangement possessing a complete sense", the same idea that can be found in other Greek and Latin grammars.

In Priscian's syntax, the "perfect sentence" reveals itself as the object to be understood in its organization. The *essential* categories of the sentence structure of complete sense would be the noun (the substance) and the verb (the accident), which every syntactic phenomena refers to, exactly as the subject and predicate in nowadays traditional syntax, presented as the *essential elements of a sentence* in the Brazilian Grammatical Terminology from 1958, the NGB (Nomenclatura Gramatical Brasileira).

The development of the idea of sentence completeness provided by Priscian's reflections would have originated the notions of *intransitivity* (verbal action complete in itself) and *transitivity* (verbal action that needs to *transit* to another element to complete itself). Both notions are core to the contemporary syntactic models, being them traditional or not. It is also worthwhile to emphasize the possible relation between the perfect sentence approach by the grammarian of Caesarea and the Chomskyan notion of grammaticality (cf. GONÇALVES; CONTO, 2010), creating an opportunity

for the investigation of a possible discontinuity in the history of Linguistics involving the generativism in the 20th Century and the Greco-Roman syntax systematized and expanded by Priscian in the 6th Century.

It is clear that, with Priscian, the approach to syntax finally abandoned the practical and prescriptive sphere of the solecism checklist, and incorporated the theoretical and researching line of study about the organizational mechanism of the "complete sense" and "perfect" sentence. It is true that the notion of *function* was not yet present at this point in the history of syntax, because what mattered was the combinatory movement and the logical relations between the elements of the sentence. However, following Fortes' (2012) arguments, I understand that the movement from the practical sphere to the theoretical one resulted in a greater distance between Priscian's *Institutiones Grammaticae* (*Institutions of Grammar*) and the other Latin grammars, while, at the same time, it brought Greek Apollonius objectives closer, in a blatant case of discontinuity in the history of grammar.

Centuries later, Latin syntax would gain new guidelines (as well as keep so many others), this time from *speculative grammarians* or *modists* (1270-1330). The base of the modist theory is the specular correspondence between the world, the intellect and the language, having the Aristotelian logic as the proper base for that *a priori*. Giving continuity to what had already been consolidated in the Latin grammar, the noun-verb pairing (or the subject-predicate pairing) was considered essential to a well-formed syntactic construction. According to Robins (1979), the speculative grammarians' innovation follows from the fact that their analysis goes beyond the subject-verb and verb-object constructions when configuring syntactic relations based on ideas of a *dependent* clause (clause that can or must demand the presence of another) and *terminant* clause (which satisfies that demand). Among other purposes, this kind of relation was used to identify subordinate clauses, which is a good example of the modists' refinement in syntactic studies within the theoretical and terminological areas.

Syntax in the Portuguese language grammars until the 19th Century

The first centuries of Portuguese grammaticography were also part of the horizon of retrospection of syntactic knowledge in Brazil. It is true that the pioneering work of Fernão de Oliveira (1507-1581), with his *Grammatica da lingoagem portuguesa* (1536) (Grammar of the Portuguese Language), does not offer us an effective syntactic approach. Even though there is mention of the idea of *construction*, understood as the "[…] composition or consonance that the parts or expressions of our language have among themselves." (OLIVEIRA, F., 1871, p.117, our translation)[3], there are no syntactic reflections developed and systematized in the work, because it is only given space to that matter in chapter XLIX – the penultimate one of the grammar, barely larger than a page. In this particular chapter, Oliveira (1871) says that the syntax

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[3]   Original: "[…] *composição ou concerto que as partes ou dições da nossa língua tem entre si.*" (OLIVEIRA, 1536, p.117).

should be dealt with in a later work, already started, but that would never be finished (or maybe it was lost).

The *Gramatica da Lingua Portugueza* (Portuguese Language Grammar)*,* published in 1540, by the historian João de Barros (1496-1570), does nothing different from this. The last of the four parts of the book is dedicated to *Syntax* or *Construction*, understood as the "consonance between the parts of speech"[4]. However, the syntactic questions themselves are restricted to the normative field of *agreement* and *regimen* (government) or *figures* (barbarism). By the way, the normative question is strong in both Barros and Oliveira's works: the latter realizes that variation is constitutive of the language, but equals the Portuguese language to the speech of learned men of his time; the former understands the changes from Latin to Portuguese as absences or losses. Therefore, the few considerations on syntax of the period are marked by the boastful-standardizing bias of those first two Portuguese grammarians.

Generally speaking, until the 18th century, syntactic theory always occupied little significant space in Portuguese grammars, when compared to the extent of the levels of sounds/letters and words. Aligned, for example, with Azeredo (2015) and Beccari and Leal (2015), I think that a change seems to have started only when the grammars of European languages began to receive theoretical influence from the *Grammaire générale et raisonnée de Port-Royal* (Port-Royal General and Rational Grammar), also known as a rational or philosophical grammar. Written by the French monks Antoine Arnauld (1612-1694) and Claude Lancelot (1615-1695), this grammar would thus be a breaking point with the humanistic grammaticographical tradition, on which the first Portuguese grammars were based.

The *Grammaire générale et raisonnée de Port-Royal* (Port-Royal General and Rational Grammar), henceforth GGR, assumed the idea that there is a logical articulation between language and thought, the latter consisting of three operations: conceiving (isolation of something from the world), judgment (affirmation of what a thing is or is not) and reasoning (the use of two judgments in order to make a third one). In this context, grammar would be a set of universal and mental processes, which justifies its "general" and "rational" epithets. And the GGR syntax would be based precisely on the analysis of the "judgment" operation, the proper substance of the sentence, the propositional structure that represents thought.

It is clear that the object of the syntax continues to be the sentence. However, the analysis of this object is developed based on the consideration of two levels of language in the GGR: the level of the *Syntax* itself, that is, its deep, logical, universal and innate level; and the level of *Construction*, that is, the external, specific level, related to its uses, and outstanding counterpart of the first level. Thus, different propositional structures such as *I went to the cinema* and *To the cinema I went* would have different constructions but identical syntax.

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[4]   Original: "*conveniência entre as partes do discurso*" (BARROS, 1971, p.30).

It is at this level, that of Syntax, that every sentence should be formed by three basic elements: the *subject*; its *attribute*; and the *copula*, which establishes the connection between the two. The copula would be the primary, real "substantive verb". The other verbs, called "adjective verbs", would be created from the substantive verb associated with an attribute. Every construction would have to be reduced to that model. Therefore, constructions like *I speak*, *Peter lives* and *Men dream* are equivalent, at the syntactic level (deeper level), to *I am a speaker*, *Peter is living* and *Men are dreamers*, respectively. Beccari and Leal (2015) point out how this distinction between GGR's Syntax and Construction is related to the notion of linguistic innatism, and how much modern Linguistics, in the figure of Noam Chomsky (1928-), for instance, is dependent on rationalist models – a good example of theoretical discontinuity within the history of syntax in the West.

In general, the Portuguese language grammars between the 18th and the 19th centuries anchored their approaches to syntax in this theoretical and explanatory-descriptive direction taken by the authors from the GGR, and from other French authors who developed, at the time, renewed knowledge about language in general. Their works were called "philosophical grammars" and they used to present a chapter entitled *phraseology*, *syntax* or *construction*, in which such rationalist guidelines were assumed. At the same time, the opportunity for the legitimizing of particular syntactic aspects of the Brazilian Portuguese language was denied, especially due to the omission of the issue, even though when those aspects were already made visible.

The first of these Portuguese works that explicitly carried the qualification "philosophical" in its title was the *Grammatica philosophica, e ortographia racional da Lingua Portugueza; Para se pronunciarem, e escreverem com acerto os vocabulos d'este idiôma* (Philosophical grammar and rational orthography of the Portuguese Language; In order to correctly pronounce and write the vocabulary of this language), by Bernardo de Lima e Melo Bacelar (1736-1787), published in Portugal, in 1783. This grammar had little repercussion, unlike the *Grammatica Philosophica da Lingua Portugueza* (Philosophical Grammar of the Portuguese Language), equally written by Portuguese author Jerónimo Soares Barbosa (1737-1816), whose first edition was from 1822 and the last from 1881. Commentators on Soares Barbosa's philosophical grammar (cf. BECCARI; LEAL, 2015; UCHÔA, 2010) usually point out his grammar as the precursor of an analysis system, especially a syntactic one, which would be the basis of what is still used today in the traditional pedagogy of grammar teaching.

Therefore, to be aware of the bonds and breaks that constitute these and other Portuguese grammatical instruments from the 1500's to the 1800's is relevant for us to situated ourselves, as teachers and researchers, in the history and in the present state of linguistic research and pedagogy of syntax (and grammar) in Brazil.

The Brazilian speech in the grammaticographic scenario

Typical syntactic aspects of "Brazilian speech" started to be registered in Portuguese grammars only when they were written by Brazilian authors, especially from the last decades of the 19th century on. The interrogative sentences in direct speech were worth noting, as well as the use of the verb *ter* (to have) instead of *haver* (there to be) to express the existential meaning, the duplication of *não* (the repetition of the negative adverb in the same sentence), the proclisis at the beginning of a sentence, the pronouns *ele* and *lhe* (*he* and *him*) used as direct object[5], the construction *para mim* (for me) + verbal infinitive (*para mim* instead of *para eu* + verbal infinitive)[6], the use of the preposition *em* instead of *a* (which is considered incorrect with verbs of movement), among others.

As an example, the following excerpts taken from the grammars by Júlio Ribeiro (1845-1890), born in Minas Gerais, and by João Ribeiro (1860-1934), born in Sergipe, both entitled *Grammatica Portugueza* (Portuguese Grammar), published, respectively, in 1881 and 1887, can be presented here: "It is important to note that, mainly in Brazil, the use of constructing interrogative sentences in direct order is recognized as correct, leaving its sense of question to be borne only by the inflection of the voice, eg: << Tu queres vir almoçar comigo? (YOU WANT to come to lunch with me? / Do you want to come to lunch with me?) >>." (RIBEIRO, 1881, p.221)[7]; and *haver* (there to be) is substituted by *ter* (to have) when they say: "<< Tem *muita gente na igreja* (HAVE a lot of people in the church / There are a lot of people in the church) – *Agora* tem *muito peixe no tanque* (Now HAVE a lot of fish in the tank / Now there are a lot of fish in the tank) >>. This use has become widespread in Brazil even among the educated people." (RIBEIRO, 1881, p.257)[8]; "In some provinces in Brazil, such as Bahia, Minas, the *negative adverb* is said twice, eg: << Não posso, não (Not I can, not / I cannot). Não dou, não (Not I give, not / I don't give [it to you]) >>" (RIBEIRO, 1881, p 260)[9]; "All philologists usually refer to the use of the personal pronoun elle, ella, elles, ellas (he, she, they masc., they fem.) as the object of the verb: << Eu vi elle (I saw HE / I saw him), Eu deixei elle (I left

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[5]   In Standard Portuguese, the third person objective pronouns have two sets of forms: *o*, *a*, *os*, *as* (for direct object) and *lhe*, *lhes* (for indirect object). In spoken Brazilian Portuguese, it is common the use of *lhe*, *lhes* as direct object. It is this fact that has been traditionally condemned by normative grammarians.

[6]   In Portuguese, the stressed oblique form of the personal pronouns always follows a preposition. In the case mentioned in the text, however, traditional normative grammarians understand that the preposition is governing the sentence as a whole (*eu comer*) and not only the pronoun, which must be, therefore, in the subjective form since it is the subject of the sentence. This is why they condemn forms as *Para mim comer.*

[7]   Original: "*Cumpre notar que, principalmente no Brazil, vai-se estabelecendo o uso de construir as sentenças interrogativas em ordem direta, deixando-se o seu sentido de pergunta a cargo somente da inflexão da voz, ex.: << Tu queres vir almoçar comigo? >>.*" (RIBEIRO, Julio, 1881, p.221).

[8]   Original: "<< Tem *muita gente na igreja – Agora* tem *muito peixe no tanque >>. Este uso vai-se tornando geral no Brazil até mesmo entre as pessôas ilustradas.*" (RIBEIRO, Julio, 1881, p.257).

[9]   Original: "*Em algumas provincias do Brazil, como Bahia, Minas, não duplica-se, ex.: << Não posso, não. Não dou, não >>*" (RIBEIRO, Julio, 1881, p.260).

HE / I left him) >> as Brazilianism (and I have always regarded it as such, until recently)" (RIBEIRO, João, 1920 [1887], p.258)[10].

Historians such as Coelho, Danna and Polachini (2014) mention that there was, from the last decades of the 1800's on, a kind of a *Brazilian "school" of grammatical description of the Portuguese language*, precisely at the moment when our linguistic uses seemed to spread with greater amplitude and stability in the process of socio-historical formation of Brazilian norms. In addition to that, the historical-comparative theoretical orientation that was inspiring the grammaticographic moment in Brazil accepted the constant process of change as something natural to languages, unlike the rationalist orientation whose assumed relationship between perfect thinking and perfect language, in a way, could not deal with difference without depreciating it.

From that time until the beginning of the 20th century, there were also the well-known controversies between separatists and legitimists regarding Brazilian language (cf. ALBUQUERQUE; COX, 1997; PFEIFFER, 2001; SILVA, 2010; among others), marking the period of the constitution of the national language of Brazil – first an Empire and then a Republic. On the one hand, the ideals of freedom of the separatists, who highlighted the linguistic differentiation between Brazil and Portugal, and defended Brazilian speech regarding the lexicon, the morphology and the syntax; on the other hand, the conservatism of the legitimists, who protected classical Portuguese against the invasion of neologisms and popular speech. Among the main controversies, the most heated clashes were between the following separatists and legitimists, respectively: José de Alencar vs. Pinheiros Chagas, in 1870; Carlos de Laet vs. Camilo Castelo Branco, in 1879-1880; Ernesto Carneiro Ribeiro vs. Rui Barbosa, in 1902-1907, in the infamous case surrounding the drafting of the Civil Code; and Carlos de Laet vs. João Ribeiro, in 1913.

As for the conciliatory or separatist position of Brazilian grammarians in this period (late 19th and early 20th centuries), the different ways in which they name the language of Brazil already reveal some value judgment, as recorded by Coelho (2012), in a list that catalogs terms such as *Luso-Brazilian, Brazilian dialect*, *national dialect*, *Brazilian*, *our language*, *Brazilian language*, among others. According to this author, the attitude of these grammarians, in general, tends to be more conservative, either because they restrict Brazilian syntactic particularities to the spoken language and colloquialism, or because they emphasize the unity between Brazilian Portuguese and the language of Portugal, listing Brazilian traits as an exception to the rule.

The following excerpts, taken once again from the work of Júlio Ribeiro (1881) and João Ribeiro (1920 [1887]), satisfactorily exemplify the normative restrictions of grammarians of that time, which disallow syntactic aspects of Brazilian spoken language: "It is a common mistake in Brazil to use the subjective form in such cases; it is said, for example, << *Vĩ* elle *caminhar às pressas* (*I saw HE walk in a hurry / I saw him*

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[10] Original: "*Costumam todos os philologos designar por brasileirismo (e eu em tal conta sempre o tive, até não ha muito) o uso do pronome pessoal elle, ella, elles, ellas, como objecto do verbo: << Eu vi elle, Eu deixei elle. >>*" (RIBEIRO, João, 1920, p.258).

walking in a hurry) – *Deixa* elle *ir* (*Let* HE *go / Let him go*) >>." (RIBEIRO, Julio, 1881, p.228)[11]; "Substantive pronouns in an adverbial form can never serve as subjects, not even in the infinitive phrases that come after a preposition [...], eg: << *Esta laranja é para* eu *comer.* (*This orange is for* I *to eat / This orange is for me to eat*) >>. In Brazil, saying << *Para* mim *comer* (*For* me *to eat*), etc. >> is a sin against this precept" (RIBEIRO, Julio, 1881, p.228)[12]; "Putting the substantive pronoun that serves as the object of a verb in a subjective form is a common mistake in Brazil, even among the learned people: the incorrect phrases are heard at every step << *Eu vi elle (I saw HE / I saw him) – Espere eu (Wait I / Wait for me)* >>." (RIBEIRO, Julio, 1881, p.230)[13]; "The expression *O que é a vida? (What is life?)* with the anteposition of the pronoun *o* is probably a Brazilianism. Classical use does not allow for the anteposition of *o*." (RIBEIRO, João, 1920 [1887], p.169)[14]; "One never starts a phrase or a clause with the oblique pronoun. << Me dê (Me give / Give me) >>, << me faça (me do / do me) >>, etc., are Brazilianisms that should be avoided" (RIBEIRO, João, 1920 [1887, p.231)[15].

Thus, if it is true that Brazilian grammars, from the last decades of the 19th century on, approached spoken Portuguese in Brazil in terms of *syntax* (as well as *pronunciation*, *lexicon* and *morphology*), it is also the case that such approaches used to negatively evaluate the same Portuguese variety, regarding its linguistic traits as *provincialism*, *vices* and *solecisms*. Observing how these and other facts are dealt with in the linguistic instruments that temporarily overlapped Brazilian grammars of the 19th and early 20th centuries is crucial to the apprehension of the aspects that surround the standardization of the language until today and to a necessary political and pedagogical action on the issue.

From the philosophical grammars to the "scientific" grammars: syntactic models

Still in the final decades of the 1800's, Brazilian linguistic scene, headed by historical-comparative thinking, interfered not only in dealing with normative issues involving the syntax of the Portuguese language (in Brazil), but also in the theoretical models selected by grammarians to describe this syntax.

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[11] Original: "*E' erro vulgar no Brazil usar-se em casos taes da relação subjectiva; diz-se, por exemplo, << Vi elle caminhar ás pressas – Deixa elle ir >>.*" (RIBEIRO, Julio, 1881, p.228).

[12] Original: "*Os pronomes substantivos em relação adverbial nunca podem servir de sujeitos, nem mesmo nas phrases infinitivas que vêm depois de uma preposição [...], ex.: << Esta laranja é para eu comer >>. No Brazil pecca-se contra este preceito dizendo-se << Para mim comer, etc. >>.*" (RIBEIRO, Julio, 1881, p.228).

[13] Original: "*Por em relação subjectiva o pronome substantivo que serve de objeto a um verbo é erro comezinho no Brasil, até mesmo entre os doutos: ouvem-se a cada passo as locuções incorretas << Eu vi elle – Espere eu >>.*" ((RIBEIRO, Julio, 1881, p.230).

[14] Original: "*A expressão O que é a vida? com anteposição do pronome o, é provavelmente um brasileirismo. O uso clássico não admitte anteposição do o.*" (RIBEIRO, João, 1887, p.169).

[15] Original: "*Nunca se começa phrase ou período com o pronome oblíquo. <<Me dê>>, <<me faça>>, etc., são brasileirismos que devem ser evitados*"(RIBEIRO, João, 1887, p.231).

The aforementioned *Grammatica Portugueza* (Portuguese Grammar), by Júlio Ribeiro (1881), is usually recognized as the inaugural landmark of this so-called "scientific" approach (cf. CAVALIERE, 2002; LEITE, 2005; VIDAL NETO, 2010; among others). At the time, the scope of philosophical-rationalist grammars had slowed down while the Historical-Comparative Linguistics – concerned with concrete facts and changes in particular languages rather than with their supposedly universal underlying structures – was highly influential.

However, the changes did not occur without losses of meaning, rearticulations, or even resistances. According to Borges Neto (2018), the strong influence of historical-comparative thinking brought some innovations to grammars when dealing with phonology and morphology, but the impact on syntax was smaller. In fact, the first nineteenth-century Brazilian grammars (by authors such as Júlio Ribeiro and Ernesto Carneiro Ribeiro) resumed, to a certain extent, regardless of whether they declared themselves "scientific" or in favor of evolutionary ideas or the comparative and historical methodology of Glottology, the tripartite syntactic arrangement *subject + copula + attribute* and its holistic aspect, that is, the idea of a "perfect proposition", elaborated through the operation of "judgment".

This is the case of Júlio Ribeiro himself. The first edition of his grammar (1881) follows, in practice, the syntactic model of French rationalism, even though it already presents a strong "revolutionary rhetoric" (MURRAY, 1994) against the grammaticographic spirit of the times:

> A sentence is a coordination of words or even a single word forming a perfect meaning, eg: *As abelhas fazem mel* (Bees make honey) – *Os cães ladram* (Dogs bark) – *Morro* (I die). [...] By << making perfect sense >> it is understood as – saying something about something else that gives it full meaning. (RIBEIRO, 1881, p.221, our translation).[16]

> [...] the link that connects the predicate itself to the subject is called copula. In this example << *Rosas são Flores* (Roses are flowers) >> << *Rosas* (Roses) >> is the subject; << *são* (are) >> is the copula; << *flores* (flowers) >> is the predicate. In this other example << *Pedro ama* (Pedro loves) >> << *ama* (loves) >> breaks down into << *é amante* (is a lover) >>, and every example is analyzed as above. In general, it could be said [...] that the grammatical copula consists of the inflection of the verb in every sentence. The act of the mind by which the predicate is linked to the notion expressed by the subject is called *judgment*. The result of a judgment is a thought. The expression of a thought is the sentence. (RIBEIRO, Julio, 1881, p.222-223, our translation).[17]

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[16] Original: "*Sentença é uma coordenação de palavras ou mesmo uma só palavra formando sentido perfeito, ex.: As abelhas fazem mel – Os cães ladram – Morro. [...] Por << formar sentido perfeito >> entende-se – dizer alguma cousa a respeito de outra de modo completo.*" (RIBEIRO, 1881, p.221).

[17] Original: "*[...] o laço que prende o predicado propriamente dito ao sujeito: chama-se copula. Neste exemplo << Rosas são flores >> << Rosas >> é o sujeito; << são >> a copula; << flores >>, o predicado. Neste outro << Pedro*

This apparent contradiction by Julio Ribeiro (1981) confirms what Polachini (2010-2011) says when she suggests that the grammarians rhetorically refused the logical-philosophical model of the Port-Royal General and Rational Grammar at first, so that only later that model could be replaced in the syntactic descriptions actually drawn up.

Ernesto Carneiro Ribeiro (1839-1920) was also another Brazilian grammarian who moved, in the course of his texts, from a syntactic analysis based on logic, whose object is the proposition (which can be judged true or false), to a syntactic analysis that considers the specific grammar structure, based on the English-influenced scientific grammar, whose object is the sentence, the linguistic vehicle of the proposition and other constructs that are not propositions (cf. BORGES NETO, 2018).

According to Bastos, Brito and Hanna (2006), Dias (2008), Polachini (2015), and other authors, the definitive break with the rationalist syntax would only happen with Maximino Maciel (1865-1923) and his *Grammatica Descriptiva, baseada nas doutrinas modernas* (Descriptive Grammar, based on modern doctrines), whose 1st edition is from 1894. In the work in question, Maciel (1920, p.253) divides what he calls *Syntaxology* - "[…] the treatise of words, considered collectively, that is, in their diverse functions or logical relations."[18] – in three parts: *relational syntax*, *phraseological syntax* and *literary* or *stylistic syntax*. In the first two, the grammarian starts to define the proposition based on the subject-predicate bipartite model and to understand the verbal complement as an element formally subordinated to the verb, consistent with what we see in today's traditional syntax. In the perspective of this grammarian, the verb integrates a predicate that projects a term of *objective function*:

> The proposition is a thought expressed by one or more words. Two are the terms of the proposition: subject and predicate, eg: [...]
>
> | SUBJECT | PREDICATE |
> |---|---|
> | Os céos (The heavens) of the Lord) | resoam do Senhor a gloria (resonate the glory |
> | O Douro (The Douro) and sad) | é bem carregado e triste (is very burdened |
>
> The subject is the being about whom something is said, eg: Os céos… (The heavens) The predicate is what is said about the subject, eg: resoam do Senhor a gloria (resonate the glory of the Lord). (MACIEL, 1920, p.324-325, our translation).[19]

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ama >> << ama>> decompõe-se em << é amante >>, e todo o exemplo analysa-se como acima. Em geral, póde-se dizer [...] que a copula grammatical de todas as sentenças consiste na flexão do verbo. O acto da mente, pelo qual o predicado se liga a noção expressa pelo sujeito, chama-ae (sic) juizo. O resultado de um juizo é um pensamento. A expressão do pensamento é a sentença." (RIBEIRO, Julio, 1881, p.222-223).

[18] Original: "*o tratado das palavras, consideradas collectivamente, isto é, nas suas diversas funcções ou relações lógicas*" (MACIEL, 1920, p.253).

[19] Original: "*Proposição é um pensamento expresso por uma ou mais palavras. Dous são os termos da proposição: sujeito e predicado, ex.:* [...]

The objective function is exercised by a word or expression to which the action of the verb of incomplete predication is immediately or mediately transmitted. The word in objective function is called the object, which could be a direct or an indirect one. (MACIEL, 1920, p.258, our translation).[20]

It must be said that the refusal of the Port-Royal syntax would not have practical effects without the theoretical contributions of some German, English and French grammarians and linguists of the 1800's, the main explicit influencers of Luso-Brazilian grammaticography. Linguist Ricardo Cavaliere rummages through these forms in some articles in the book *A gramática no Brasil: ideas, percursos e parâmetros* (Grammar in Brazil: ideas, routes and parameters), published by Lexicon Publications, in 2014. Let us resume briefly some of the main influences pointed out by the author, in regards to syntax.

Alexander Bain (1818-1903), from England, created the model for dividing grammar into two major parts, *lexicology* and *syntax*, which was a model that would be later adopted and popularized in the work of João Ribeiro. In turn, the theory of syntactic relations proposed by Charles Peter Mason (1820-1900), also from England, was based on two thematic levels – that of lexical syntax and that of logical syntax – and it would have been taken by Julio Ribeiro to add a third level, that of syntactic rules, involving agreement, government, and syntactic particularities of parts of the speech. The same Júlio Ribeiro also refers to the studies of the French Michel Bréal (1832-1915) to distinguish the infinitive and the participle as nominal forms of the verb (the first represents the substantive and the second, the adjective) instead of as verbal modes; or to analyze the third person pronoun *se* in active, passive or reflective constructions.

A few years later, it would be the turn of the philologist Manuel Said Ali Ida (1861-1953), from Rio de Janeiro, one of the greatest syntacticists of the Portuguese language, to be inspired by the syntactic theory by Berthold Delbrück (1842-1922), from Germany, in order to sustain, for example, the thesis of the sentence without subject, in the Portuguese language. Said Ali also quotes, among other German linguists, Karl Brugmann (1849-1919), when addressing verbal voices; Friedrich Diez (1794-1876), when he comments on the peculiar character of the Portuguese inflected infinitive; and Hermann Paul (1846-1921), in the famous question of the clitic *se* in "passive" constructions, which, according to Said Ali, would exercise the function of the subject, a thesis not accepted by the Brazilian traditional grammar until today. Cavaliere (2014)

SUJEITO	PREDICADOS
Os céos	resoam do Senhor a gloria
O Douro	é bem carregado e triste

Sujeito é o ser de quem se diz alguma cousa, ex.: Os céos... Predicado é o que se diz a respeito do sujeito, ex.: resoam do Senhor a gloria." (MACIEL, 1920, p.324-325).

[20] Original: "*A funcção objectiva é exercida por uma palavra ou expressão a que se transmite imediata ou mediatamente a acção do verbo de predicação incompleta. A palavra em funcção objectiva diz-se objecto, que pôde ser directo ou indirecto*." (MACIEL, 1920, p.258).

suggests that these influences in Brazilian grammar were cooled down only after the 1940s, especially with the entry of the structuralist model and, later, of the generative model in linguistic academic research, implemented in Brazil from the 1960s.

In short, a historiography of syntactic thinking in Brazil, consisting of elastic continuity processes and rhetorical or concrete rupture movements (MURRAY, 1994), requires the understanding of theoretical twists, networks of influence (SWIGGERS, 2004), intellectual atmospheres (KOERNER, 1996), horizons of retrospection and prospection (AUROUX, 1992), among other internal and external phenomena suggested or already pointed out (but little explored) by other historiographical research on syntax.

The pragmatic turn and the anti-grammar discourse

Circumscribed to the theoretical and normative guidelines previously presented, syntactic knowledge and its incorporation in the school syllabus continued in Brazil in the first half of the 20th century. Literature usually shows that criticisms of traditional grammar and its teaching only broke out in the academic environment in the 1960s, when Linguistics was included in the undergraduate programs in Languages and the first graduate programs in Linguistics were opened.

In the late 1940s, however, even before the rise of Linguistics over Philology in Brazil (cf. ALTMAN, 2004), new voices were already being heard. This is the case of the philologist and grammarian Gladstone Chaves de Melo (1917-2001), a former professor at the Universidade Federal Fluminense (the Federal University of the State of Rio de Janeiro in Niteroi) and author of the texts *Vícios do nosso ensino gramatical* (Flaws of our grammatical teaching) and *Como se deve estudar a língua* (How to study the language), both published in 1949, in the form of chapters, in his book *Introdução à Filologia Portuguêsa* (Introduction to Portuguese Philology). These texts by Chaves de Melo were already contrary to excessive grammar teaching, an approximation between Linguistics and grammar teaching, a relativization of rule and error, as exemplified by the following excerpts:

> [...] In our modest but tenacious fight against this enormousness that we call *gramatiquice* [excessive grammar teaching], [...] we have found consoling resonances in many friends [...] It is, in fact, this generous resonance that explains the appearance of this booklet, whose constant objective is to *denounce the flaws in our grammatical teaching, and to defend rational methods, up to the level of the current linguistic science*. (MELO, 1957, p.343-344, emphasis added, our translation).[21]

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[21] Original: "[...] *No nosso modesto porém tenaz combate contra essa enormidade a que chamamos gramatiquice*, [...] t*emos encontrado consoladoras ressonâncias em muitos amigos* [...] *É, aliás, essa generosa ressonância que explica o aparecimento deste livrinho, cujo objetivo constante é a denúncia dos vícios do nosso ensino gramatical e a propugnação de métodos racionais e à altura da ciência linguística atual.*" (MELO, 1957, p.343-344).

Such grammatical teaching starts, continues and ends, excessively overvaluing the negative side, the error, the imperfections. Writing well would mean to write without errors, which is a very poor concept. [...] Furthermore, *a good number of the errors pointed out to the execration by the said gentlemen are not errors, they are infractions to the rules invented, created and cultivated by themselves*, in an edifying society of mutual aid and praise. (MELO, 1957, p.353, emphasis added, our translation).[22]

It can be said, therefore, that the introduction of Linguistics as a university topic in Brazil, from the 1960s onward, has increased the chorus of discontentment with the descriptive-normative and pedagogical solutions that had been offered in the wake of the Brazilian grammatical tradition, often with little criticism. The rupture, initially restricted to the rhetorical level, would gain more tangible forms from then on, initially led by formalist linguists – first following structuralist Linguistics and afterwards, from the 1970s on, generative Linguistics.

At that time, according to Bastos, Brito and Hanna (2006), and Gomes Júnior (2017), some linguists started to refuse the traditional model of grammatical analysis and adopted the methods provided by structuralism, like Leodegário A. de Azevedo Filho (1927-2011), who, in 1971, published the programmatic book *Para uma gramática estrutural da língua portuguesa* (For a structural grammar of the Portuguese language); and José Rebouças Macambira (1917-1992), from Ceará, who, in 1974, published the well-known work *A estrutura morfossintática do português* (The Portuguese Morphosyntactic Structure). Even the grammarians considered traditional, such as Celso Cunha (1917-1989) and the just quoted Gladstone Chaves de Melo, were influenced by structuralism in the elaboration of their grammars in the late 1960s (cf. MELO, 1970) and early 1970s (cf. CUNHA, 1986, 1970) and, by extension, in addressing the syntax in their work.

Still in that decade and in the 1980s, different theories that took as object the language in use began to take shape in Brazilian Linguistics, which allows talking of a *pragmatic turn in the contexts of linguistic research and reflection on the teaching-learning of languages*. The idea, common to the epistemology of traditional grammar, that the study of the form would result in the good use of the language, became superseded by the point of view that the use of the language should be prior to the study of the form. Thus, Linguistics enlarged its own horizons in Brazil and added complexity to its territory, proposing theoretical formulations elaborated in the dialogue with other disciplines and with extra linguistic factors. Non-formalist linguistic theories, centered on text, discourse, linguistic variation and with wide

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[22] Original: "*Tal ensino gramatical parte, continua e termina, tendo em vista excessivamente o lado negativo, o êrro, os aleijões. Escrever bem seria escrever sem erros, o que é um conceito pobríssimo. [...] Além do mais, bom número dos erros apontados à execração pelos ditos senhores não são erros, são infrações a regras inventadas, criadas e cultivadas por êles próprios, numa edificante sociedade de auxílios e elogios mútuos.*" (MELO, 1957, p.353).

acceptance among Brazilian linguists, began to give support to basic or continuing teacher education, as well as to official documents (guides, national, state and country curricular guidelines and parameters), contributing to the elaboration of texts on language and teaching, to the curricular regulation and to the didactic instruments of the language area in Brazil.

In this context, there have been so many linguistic studies and scientific dissemination texts published mainly since the 1980s, pointing out conceptual and methodological contradictions and insufficiencies in Greco-Roman grammar, that today the criticism of traditional syntactic analysis reaches a consensus among linguists from the most different areas, and among Portuguese language teachers trained at different universities. Many of these publications criticize not only traditional grammar and the idea of a standard norm that it embraces, but also the traditional teaching of the Portuguese language and the belletrist character of the Brazilian school, some of which are already considered classic works on the subject, such as Hauy (1983), Geraldi (1984), Luft (1995), Back (1987), Franchi (2006), Travaglia (2008), Possenti (1996), Perini (1997) and Bagno (1999).

It must also be considered that, at that time, the linguistic theories that supported the turn from the form to the usage of the language had already revealed aspects of the speech and the languages (including the Portuguese language) until then unknown, denied or marginally addressed by traditional grammar and even by Linguistics with a formalist bias. The shift in focus – from sentence to text, from utterance to enunciation – caused by the "hyphenated" approaches of linguistic studies (Sociolinguistics, Text Linguistics, Discourse Analysis, Psycholinguistics etc.) tried to encompass the language phenomenon beyond the verbal aspects, incorporating functional, textual, discursive and interactional aspects in their analysis. This demanded new categories of analysis to study the language, with a greater explanatory scope compared to the age-old categories of the grammatical tradition, restricted to the scope of the sentence.

There are some positions shared by the different agents of the turn which can be highlighted: the need for a critical review of the analytic principles and the standard norm of traditional grammar, or even the elaboration of grammars under new epistemological configurations; the importance of respecting linguistic varieties in general and considering the student's linguistic variety in the pedagogical approach; and the change in the maximum language teaching unit, which leaves behind the syntactic level of a sentence and migrates to the domain of text, gender, and discourse. The impacts of this epistemological redirection would be felt, in different ways, in the pedagogical daily life of the Portuguese teacher in Brazil.

I have no doubt that this movement was necessary and productive for research and language teaching. However, I also understand that it has helped to build and legitimize the radicalism of the *anti-grammar discourse* in the teaching and training of Portuguese teachers, expressed in statements like "grammar is of no use", which I tend to assess as precipitate or even mistaken. In this sense, the words of Oliveira & Quarezemin (2016), transcribed as follows, are quite lucid:

[...] this movement [of the entry of Linguistics in schools] was interpreted as a denial of grammar teaching in schools. It is as if from that moment on, grammar should not be taught in school. [...] In the circles of the holders of knowledge about Portuguese language teaching, grammar teaching was reduced to very little and that little was, in fact, what had been done before. There is a change because we shifted the axis from decorating rules of normative grammar to the production and reading of texts, while maintaining the same grammatical image and the same practice in regards to studying it. *Grammar was officially expelled from the classroom* and continued in an absolutely traditional and stronger way, *because now it is presented as an unimportant instrument*. (OLIVEIRA; QUAREZEMIN, 2016, p.28-29, emphasis added).[23]

At no moment, the official documents drafted in this context of the pragmatic turn – which would officially culminate only in the National Curriculum Parameters (BRAZIL, 1998) – advocate denying the teaching of grammar (and syntax) in Portuguese language classes, although some professionals insist on this rigmarole. What has been proposed is the displacement of grammar as the core, becoming a subsidiary of reading and of written and oral production. The defense of this displacement, which has been named, for more than 30 years, "the practice of linguistic analysis" (cf. GERALDI, 2001; MENDONÇA, 2006; BEZERRA; REINALDO, 2013), was necessary at the time (and it still is), but I believe that this "new" proposal still lacks concrete methodological procedures, in terms of research, public policies, curricular advancement, didactic material etc. After all, it remains unclear to the vast majority of Portuguese language teachers (and the teachers who train Portuguese language teachers).

Due to this methodological lack, many teachers, with some exceptions, prefer to adopt anti-grammar discourse, subtracting any kind of grammatical approach from their pedagogical horizon; others try to apply the theoretical orientations of the practice of linguistic analysis, but only offer the text as a support for the identification of the *subject* or the *linking verb*, for instance (the well-known methodology of the *text as a pretext* for teaching grammar); others still, generally embarrassed because they may be labeled outdated by their peers, ignore the discourse of change and remain in the supposedly safe book of tradition, a space in which syntactic analysis is the flagship.

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23 Original: "[...] *esse movimento [da entrada da Linguística nas escolas] foi interpretado como uma negação do ensino de gramática na escola. É como se, desse momento em diante, não se devesse ensinar gramática na escola.* [...] *Nos círculos dos detentores do saber sobre o ensino de português, ensinar gramática ficou relegado a muito pouco e esse pouco é, na verdade, o que já se fazia antes. Há uma mudança porque deslocamos o eixo do decorar regras da gramática normativa para a produção e leitura de textos, mas mantém-se a mesma imagem de gramática que se tinha e a mesma prática com relação ao seu estudo. A gramática foi oficialmente expulsa da sala de aula e continuou de modo absolutamente tradicional e mais forte, porque agora apresentada como um instrumento sem importância.*" (OLIVEIRA; QUAREZEMIN, 2016, p.28-29, our translation).

The traditional normative syntax in the present pedagogical context

The syntactic analysis of traditional orientation – or "traditional normative syntax", according to Azeredo (2015) – focuses on: the decomposition of the period in sentences; in the identification and labeling of the functions of the constituents of the sentence; and, subsequently, in establishing rules of agreement, government and placement among the labeled constituents. It is, at the same time, a theoretical, analytical, metalinguistic, normative and pedagogical entity, that was the main content of grammar classes in the 20th century and, I dare say, in the first two decades of the 21st century.

A point that contributes to its permanence in the 21st century school, even with the turn to the use of language already consolidated, at least in discourse, is the evident presence of its theoretical-methodological framework in the textbooks, including those that develop reading, writing and oral work based on a socio-interactionist perspective; in school grammars, including those that are said to be reflexive, applied, contextualized etc.; as well as in the intellectual basis of the Portuguese teacher.

Even before the NGB, which in the late 1950s homogenized parts of syntax, its terminology and, consequently, analysis techniques, there was already a certain classificatory, conceptual and analytical uniformity in the grammars that spanned the first half of the century in successive editions, such as those of Eduardo Carlos Pereira (1855-1923) – cf. Pereira (1944, 1926) – and Manuel Said Ali. In the latter work, whose first edition is from 1923, a syntax similar to today's tradition was envisioned, in which the sentence, the basic structure of syntactic analysis, consists of primary parts (subject and predicate), integrant parts (complements) and accessories (determinants, appositive). Incidentally, as Cavaliere (2014) points out, Said Ali's grammatical studies were decisive for the integration between syntax and morphology, in the sense that certain syntactic functions would be linked to certain parts of the sentence. This stance would be accepted under the category "morphosyntax" by structuralists of the 20th century. Such morphosyntactic approach, combining classes, functions and rules of verbal and nominal agreement/government and pronoun placement, is now common practice in traditional grammar classes, although the identification of these classes and their respective functions is not always carried out in a conscious, reflexive and critical way.

Regarding recent grammars developed by some linguists of unquestionable competence (cf. CASTILHO, 2010; BAGNO, 2012; PERINI, 2016; AZEREDO, 2018; MOURA NEVES, 2018; among others), the authors flirt with or even appropriate some theoretical conceptions, categories and concepts of Linguistics, in their current and different epistemologies. However, given the impossibility of adopting a theoretically and methodologically outlined paradigm that would also be sufficient for syntactic description, they draw upon, explicitly or implicitly, analytical procedures, terminologies, categories and conceptual networks typical of traditional normative syntax.

At this point, I refer back to Vieira (2016), a work which focused on these new linguistic instruments, to affirm that these *grammars of linguists*, although recognizing

and criticizing the limitations and problems of traditional normative syntax, do not erase the categorical and conceptual framework inherited from the Greco-Roman syntax, but rearrange it in search of greater descriptive coherence. Often, explicitly or not, they return to pre-NGB or even nineteenth-century descriptive proposals. If there are points of subversion in these works, many of them with evident theoretical quality and freshness, there are also several traits of continuing with tradition. Add to that the existence of a kind of general terminological-conceptual consensus, tacitly shared between traditional grammar and contemporary linguistic studies. These new grammars seem to place the traditional descriptive framework in an aprioristically determined status, operating with theoretical objects disguised as observational objects – a frequent procedure in contemporary linguistic research as Borges Neto (2018) points out.

Contradictorily, the incisive presence of the traditional normative syntax in linguistic research and in the field of grammatical pedagogy is no guarantee that the graduates of basic education will fully develop their syntactic competence at the metalinguistic and epilinguistic levels. In the pedagogical domain, by "incisive" presence, I refer to the fact that, in many schools, students usually undergo at least five years of uninterrupted teaching of syntactic analysis, taking into account that the study of the "simple period" in traditional curricula usually happens from the 8th grade of elementary school onward, either linearly becoming more complex, or operating in circles, repeatedly, until the end of high school.

In the early 1990s, in a text entitled *Nos bastidores da análise sintática tradicional* (Behind the scenes of traditional syntactic analysis), the linguists José Borges Neto and José Luis da Veiga Mercer (1993) had already warned that such difficulty for students to learn syntax might lie in the complexity of the *implicit analyzes* that necessarily underlie the syntactic analysis presented in traditional grammars. Those linguists' thesis remains relevant, given that every syntactic analysis entails: segmentation of the sentence into immediate constituents and phrases; morphological and categorical analysis to identify certain functions; comparison, inference, generalization, identification of criteria and of syntactic and semantic agreement between terms; in addition to other knowledge and cognitive skills almost never explained or exercised, as they are not systematically addressed in school grammars, didactic books and handouts, official documents, training programs or, therefore, in the teacher's pedagogical discourse.

The degree programs in Portuguese Language could also be more incisive regarding the work with this implicit and rarely systematized or clarified knowledge by the different pedagogical agents. In general, the syllabus of the courses that correspond to the syntactic level of language analysis, aim to compare the theoretical models of formal and/or functional Linguistics, taking the traditional normative syntax as a starting point, even if tacitly. The focus on the explanatory potential of these models (or exclusively of the preferred model of the course teacher) often leaves no room for approaching syntactic aspects and analytical procedures that are more relevant to the activities of the Portuguese language teacher in basic education, currently in training. Normative issues are also often overlooked, although the prospective teacher will need to identify

syntactic problems of a prescriptive nature, characterize them, explain to students why they are seen as errors or even relativize and subvert them.

Add to all this the following scenario: sometimes, when the syntax lecturer does not realize that the undergraduates are not able to follow her/him because they do not know what a "subject" or "subordinate structure" is, s/he chooses, initially, to "critically" review the traditional normative syntax, hoping that the students learn in 4 or 5 weeks what they have not learned in half of their school life. The critical component of the review is the deconstruction of the traditional normative syntax, based on the analysis of its gaps and contradictions, which are not few. In short, the student ends up trying to learn criticism even before knowing the object criticized.

In view of this apparatus in which the training and practice of Brazilian Portuguese language teachers takes place at the end of the second decade of the 21st century, I would dare say that an activity of teacher training that invests, in the medium term, in the effective and reflexive learning of the categories, the principles of analysis and the normative regularities of traditional syntax can produce results that are quite relevant to the development of syntactic competence and pedagogical practice of this teacher. This approach could be supported by other productive syntactic ideas and categories in contemporary language studies, stemming from different theoretical affiliations, such as *immediate constituents, binarism, commutation, syntagms (phrases), hierarchical structures, order, ambiguity, (un)grammaticality, agreement, government, argument, predicator, thematic role, valency, ergativity, topicalization*, among others. From the start, this theoretical heterogeneity in the approach of syntax could achieve more productive results for the teacher in training than the specific study of a theoretical model X or Y of contemporary Linguistics, whose explanatory potential, although productive when leading syntactic research, still has little impact, for different reasons, on the key issues of grammar teaching in schools.

My positioning is not peremptory: it is more like a strong hypothesis built from different readings and, above all, from the daily and subjective exercise of teaching Portuguese language and Linguistics at the university. What I am convinced of, I must say, is that studies of syntax (and grammar) cannot be neglected in basic or higher education, nor be relegated to a subsidiary position just to meet the imperative echoes of discourse from the pragmatic turn, when reflecting on Portuguese language teaching. I think that syntactic analysis, which is more reflexive and less mnemonic, is a necessary condition, although not enough, for the development of the capacity to construct and organize sentences and clauses, but also paragraphs, texts, speeches, senses in general.

Thus, researching the emergence, development, consolidation, erasure and permanence of the trajectory of ideas about the teaching of traditional normative syntax in Brazil, in a descriptive and interpretative way, is valid for the historiography of language teaching in a broad sense as well as an understanding of the impacts of these historical processes on contemporary language education.

Thematic axes for a historiography of syntax in Brazil

The constructed narrative and the interpretations woven so far have already announced possible research questions. Now, these questions will be organized in dialog having the three components for the internal examination of historiographic sources, presented in Asencio, Del Arco and Swiggers' work (2014, p.282-283): the *theoretical component*; the *descriptive and normative* or *descriptive-normative component*; and the *practical, applied, didactic component*. Three thematic axes were established, one for each component. Each of the axes contemplates a larger question, called the *central question*, and other specific questions, called *satellite questions*. In formulating the questions, the three components of the aforementioned authors, originally centered in the internal dimension of grammars, have had their scope here amplified and extended to the external dimension and to historiographic sources of varying profiles. Here are the three axes developed in the tables below:

Table 1 – Thematic axis 1

Axis 1 – Theoretical aspects
Central question: From the 19th to the 21st century, in the history of Grammar and Linguistics in Brazil, how did the processes of emergence, development, reception, opposition, erasure and continuity of theories, knowledge and ideas about syntax occur and are still occurring?
Satellite questions:
• What conceptions of syntax and what forms of approach are presented in linguistic research, in grammars, as well as in other texts that are not exactly grammars, but examine syntactic themes?
• What relations of continuity and rupture, on a concrete or just rhetorical level, do these forms of approach present when compared?
• What are they, how were they established and how were the networks of metaterms and definitions used once (and still being used) in the syntactic description proposals?
• How do the networks of metaterms and definitions from different grammars and syntactic theories dialogue with each other, with the categorical and conceptual framework of Greco-Roman grammaticography or with other theoretical model of language studies of then and now?
• How do scientific, political and sociocultural conceptions that characterize the periods when certain grammars or linguistic studies were produced reflect their epistemological guidelines?
• Is it possible to outline something like a "Brazilian identity", regarding the theoretical proposals of syntactic description, in certain periods of our history of Grammar and Linguistics?
• To what extent have processes, either declared or not, of ruptures and revolutions, accumulation and progress, continuity, displacements, recovery, reconstructions, influences woven and been weaving the history of syntax in Brazil?

Source: Author's elaboration.

Table 2 – Thematic axis 2

Axis 2 - Descriptive-normative aspects

Central question: How have been set the ideas regarding the issue of linguistic norms in Brazil, reflecting both the facts of Brazilian oral and written syntax, and the European biased syntactic prescription, in the course of Brazilian grammaticography and Linguistics, from the 19th century to the present day?

Satellite questions:

- What conceptions of "Brazilian Portuguese Language" can be identified and what expressions are used to refer to the idea of "Brazilian Language" throughout the history of Grammar and Linguistics in Brazil?

- Which specificities of the Brazilian syntax were at the forefront when dealing with the issue of language in Brazil and how were they categorized and evaluated regarding the grammatical instruments and the syntactic investigations of philologists, dialectologists and linguists?

- What types of arguments (etymological, literary, logical, aesthetic, pragmatic, sociological, among others) were and are used by Brazilian grammarians and linguists to legitimize certain syntactic variants as being prescribed or possible constructions?

- How do linguistic instruments from different eras consider syntactic variation and change involving the Portuguese language and the Brazilian Portuguese language?

- What relations of continuity and rupture can be identified in the examination of the trajectory of construction of the Brazilian linguistic norm?

Source: Author's elaboration.

Table 3 – Thematic axis 3

Axis 3 – Didactic pedagogical aspects

Central question: How have grammars, textbooks, government documents, curricula, syllabus of courses, teaching material for continuous education, among other past and contemporary texts developed in Brazil since the 19th century, impacted and been impacting the development of our linguistic and pedagogical practices involving syntactic knowledge?

Satellite questions:

- How and through which intellectual and institutional agents has the teaching of syntax (and grammar) been proposed?

- What impacts have certain grammar models and linguistic theories had on teaching syntax (and grammar)?

- Which specialty groups and intellectual leaders were at the forefront at the moments of convincing the academic community about the superiority of one approach to teaching syntax over another?

- How do school grammars and textbooks assimilate and teach syntactic facts of the Brazilian Portuguese language described by linguistic research since the 1960s and, more recently, by the grammars of contemporary Brazilian linguists?

- To what extent do processes of establishment, continuity, rupture, reformulation and erasure manifest themselves in history when different moments of teaching syntax (and grammar) in Brazil are compared?

Source: Author's elaboration.

Concluding Remarks

Evidently, this abundant set of questions is not exhaustive, but it can help to outline investigations that intend to identify and understand the epistemology, not always made explicit, of the works of Brazilian grammarians, philologists, and linguists on the syntax of the (Brazilian) Portuguese language, in addition to understanding the educational impacts reverberated by these works until today. Within the research group *HGEL – Historiografia, Gramática e Ensino de Línguas* (Historiography, Grammar and Language Teaching) (UFPB/PROLING/CNPq), this inventory has been established as a guideline or even a foundation for different doctoral, master's and scientific initiation investigations, aiming at the collective construction of a *historiography of syntax in Brazil.*

It is worth finishing this work – which intended, above all, to point out paths for research within the *historiography of syntax in Brazil* – paraphrasing Professor Cristina Altman (USP), one of the most recognized names in the Historiography of Brazilian Linguistics. In a 2009 text, entitled *Retrospectives and perspectives of the historiography of Linguistics in Brazil* (Retrospectivas e perspectivas da historiografia da linguística no Brasil), Altman argues that the linguist, the grammarian and the Portuguese language teacher cannot ignore the historical dimension of their objects when carrying out their tasks. Theoretical and pedagogical models are historic products, therefore, their effective understanding in the contemporary world requires investigation and interpretation of the past to which it is related.

Therefore, the plunges into the history of syntax, provided by the three thematic directions presented here (axes of *theory*, *norm* and *teaching*), certainly favor the critical recognition of how we have been working so far with this level of language analysis, both in researching as well as pedagogical terms, and they also enable the construction of new theoretical configurations for the linguistic science and for the teaching of *syntax*, *grammar* and *language*, inseparable and constitutive entities.

- *RESUMO: Este artigo estabelece alguns eixos temáticos apropriados à realização de investigações historiográficas sobre saberes, ideias, questões, teorias e modelos pedagógicos que envolvam a dimensão sintática dos estudos gramaticais no Brasil, entre os séculos XIX e XXI. Os eixos de investigação e as notas sobre a história da sintaxe que os fundamentam são desenvolvidos no campo da Historiografia da Linguística, nos termos de Swiggers (2013, 2012, 2009) e Altman (2012, 2009, 1998). Procura-se esboçar algumas linhas de compreensão capazes de conduzir a construção de narrativas descritivas, interpretativas e explicativas sobre como o conhecimento sintático foi adquirido, formulado, difundido, transformado, preservado, ensinado ou esquecido no contexto intelectual brasileiro. Para tanto, elabora-se uma espécie de trajetória concisa dos estudos sintáticos, considerando, sobretudo, o universo greco-latino, a gramatização do português e o cenário pedagógico brasileiro. A narrativa tecida deságua na sistematização, em forma de questões de pesquisa, de três possíveis eixos temáticos para uma historiografia da sintaxe no Brasil, envolvendo aspectos teóricos, descritivo-normativos e didático-pedagógicos.*

- *PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Historiografia da Linguística. Sintaxe. Gramática.*

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