

TEACHING AND LEARNING FROM THE APPLIED LINGUISTICS PERSPECTIVE: A CHALLENGE FOR 21st CENTURY¹

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RESUMO: Este artigo visa a promover a reflexão sobre a importância da capacitação técnico-teórica docente e discente. Focaliza a prática pautada nas novas teorias linguísticas nos processos de ensino e aprendizagem das línguas, em especial da língua materna. Objetivam-se a variação linguística, os gêneros discursivo-textuais e a indispensabilidade de domínio da variedade padrão da língua materna, para a interação social e para a aquisição de conhecimentos das demais disciplinas ministradas na escola. O funcionalismo sistêmico e a semiótica trazem contribuições relevantes para as práticas didáticas e para o desenvolvimento de proficiência linguística.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Ensino e aprendizagem; Linguística Aplicada; Iconicidade; Lexicogramática.

ABSTRACT: The aim of this paper is to promote a reflection on the importance of both teachers and students' technical and theoretical training. It focuses on a practice-oriented approach based on new Linguistic Theories and their feasible propositions in the language teaching and learning, particularly the mother tongue. The goal is to foster awareness of linguistic variation, discursive genres and to acquire mastery of the native language standard variety for social interaction and knowledge acquisition concerning other subjects taught in school. Systemic functionalism and semiotics have brought significant contributions to the improvement of language teaching and the consequent learning.

KEYWORDS: Teaching and learning; Applied Linguistics; Iconicity; Lexicogrammar

0. Building the scenario

In *Como viver em tempo de crise*², Morin and Viveret raise a number of troubling questions. Among them, I highlight:

How to get out of this cycle of Western modernity in a positive way, preserving the best? How to understand, listen and rediscover the best of traditional societies and civilizations while keeping clear in mind the worst that exists in them? How to preserve, for example, emancipation, in the strong sense of the word; freedom of conscience; individuation, which is definitely not reduced to individualism; the rights of men and, embedded, those of women? On the other hand, *how to break with all forms of domination, imperialism, colonialism, reification, in the relations*

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² In English: *How to live in times of crisis?* Original reference : Morin, E., Viveret, P. "Comment vivre en temps de crise ?" Paris, Bayard: 2010.

*among living beings in the relation with nature, in their own inter-human relations?*³ [Free translation; emphasis added.]

Based on the questions above, I start this paper speaking of crisis. In the quote, philosophers mention some crises that are able to help us develop our argument. There is a set of goals that is able to provide social changes: a) to create a new social paradigm, revisiting the tradition and extracting only the positive aspects from its pattern; b) to preserve the freedom of conscience and individuation without neglecting the rights of people and nature; c) to observe, listen, understand oneself and the environment; d) to deconstruct the philosophy of having towards one of being; e) to equip oneself for the fight.

Equipping, as I mean here, is based on the mastery of language. It is in the language and with the language, that man/woman constitutes him/herself as a subject of rights. When they are born, he/she receives a name that distinguishes him/her from the others and it is through this path that property expectations are born. Hence, words not only “baptize” beings and things, but also determine their social roles. “Fighting with words⁴” is not a unique trait of poets: it is a condition of existence itself. Therefore, the command of the language is also required as an essential factor for social inclusion, since it is through language that events are triggered and materialised. It becomes, thus, appropriate to prepare the subjects to become *de facto* social agents. This preparation implies the existence of trained professionals not only to educate individuals, but also and especially to enable them to build their own knowledge. This construct, in turn, requires the efficient practice of language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing, in the broadest sense each of these activities can evoke. Speaking is meant to be the human ability to *speak out*, *express oneself* and *communicate*, in some way acting over one’s peers and changing the socio-cultural setting. Therefore, communication is a major concern in the socio-cultural space and it requires the command of codes and languages.

³ Original text: “Como sair positivamente desse ciclo da modernidade ocidental, preservando o melhor? Como compreender, escutar, reencontrar o melhor das sociedades e civilizações tradicionais, ao mesmo tempo mantendo a lucidez de que nelas existe o pior? Como preservar, por exemplo, a emancipação, no sentido forte da palavra; a liberdade de consciência; a individuação, que não se reduz em absoluto ao individualismo; os direitos dos homens e, nesses direitos, os direitos das mulheres? Em compensação, como romper com todas as formas de dominação, imperialismo, colonialismo, coisificação, nas relações com os seres vivos, nas relações com a natureza, nas próprias relações inter-humanas?”

⁴ Verse of “O Lutador”. ANDRADE, Carlos Drummond de. Reunião – 10 livros de poesia. Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio, 1969.

The creation of a new social paradigm demands work from the subjects. This work is based upon the reflection and analysis of the surroundings, with evaluating capacity and within a historical perspective. I believe the guidelines of philosophy and literature to remain in the agenda. Therefore, after hearing the voice of philosophers, I seek in Italo Calvino's literary talent for the schedule of values we are likely to observe in the third millennium: *lightness, quickness, exactitude, visibility, multiplicity and consistency* (Calvino, 1990:8). Among these, I chose accuracy as the goal of our reflections.

If communication is a practice that integrates human action and requires the mastery of language, the quality of accuracy will be the defining factor of efficient performance. To suit our immediate interests, I rewrite three assumptions that might help us construct a new social paradigm.

1. well-defined and computed objectives;
2. evocation of images and crisp, incisive, memorable data and
3. precise lexical selection to spell out the nuances of thinking and imagination.

The development of a scientific attitude becomes necessary for us to meet these assumptions; such attitude must be based upon linguistic competence, which is precisely the goal of our didactic and pedagogic activities.

Watching, listening, analysing, and drawing conclusions are steps of the scientific thinking. They reiterate the idea that all linguistic work is *special and typically constitutive*, as man/woman is a semiotic animal that completes himself/herself with his/her expression which, in turn, materialises through codes and languages, among which the languages gain prominence.

1. The core point

There are many academic and educational conferences in which teachers, either researchers or not, may discuss issues that underlie the processes of teaching and learning, particularly in the context of languages. This is due to the fact that all human learning depends on the mastery of languages and most of the professionals gathered around the subject of Applied Linguistics, focus their actions on the research and teaching of languages, whether native or not. Hence, our core objective is the importance of technical and theoretical training of both teachers and students to promote the efficiency of the didactic and pedagogic work.

If we aim at contributing to social remodelling, the building of critical mass is essential. Therefore, schooling needs to be discussed as an attempt to rescue a top quality educational standard, which is adjusted to our contemporary time and yet, free from the hypocrisy that disempowers teachers to a point that students do not recognize them as authority. This scenario brings about the need for a hierarchical conduct in order to assure the smooth running of relationships and work. The change in the list of content and teaching strategies does not mean disqualification; however, the graduate teacher, prepared in this defective school, carries the traits of such unpreparedness and seems vulnerable to all sorts of violence that may range from those in the school administration to the students' disrespect and direct aggression in the classroom. Hence, in order to redesign this scenario, we must obtain a degree of expertise that is able to translate the command of the contents with which we operate and it needs to be supported by a consistent theoretical basis. With this support, we can rebuild the teaching authority, the respectful/respectable relation standards with students and school administration in order to train human resources who are capable of launching a process of social renovation. Having the respect, individuation and self-criticism capacity as beacons would help the school recover its strength, not only in the sociocultural construction of subjects, but also in the modelling of a new social paradigm.

It is necessary to remember that only “refining manipulated concepts or placing the discussion in a broad or narrower field, as the case may demand⁵” is not enough (Gerald, 2002: 7); I also propose the rethinking of our practice through more complex reflexions, which may involve not only contents and methods, but also mainly the chosen theoretical guideline.

Let us assume that the linguistic work is *special and typically constitutive* among the challenges of the twenty-first century, it would be necessary to highlight language teaching as a human development propeller — constitutive of the humane — and social structuration mediators — constitutive of the society. In this line of reasoning and following Kleiman (1989:9), reading comprehension skills would be an ability and an

⁵ Original text: “finando conceitos manipulados ou situando a discussão num campo mais amplo ou mais restrito, conforme o caso”

activity that develop multiple cognitive processes, such as a faculty consisting of processes, activities, resources and mental strategies responsible for the act of understanding.

Statements trigger reasoning and understanding. They require much more than the simple knowledge of a language. They require vocabulary and semantic commands to allow the speakers *to unfold, express and communicate themselves*, powered by their ability *to observe, listen, analyse themselves, others and their surroundings*. These actions evoke the qualities proposed by Calvino. The ones from which I have highlighted accuracy. According to the systemic functional vision (Halliday, 2004), this is the quality/factor that demands appropriate vocabulary selection. Statements are semiotic means representing the cognitive and cultural organization of the speaker, the one who is able to contribute to the organization or rupture of the social scenario. How? If the student cannot identify positive and negative values in his/her cultural cosmos, he/she may not be able to draw reasonable conclusions. The non-data-capturing is usually due to vocabulary ineptitude (lexical and grammatical) that prevents the speaker to produce accurate statements. Let us now look into the theory.

3. Theoretical basis

According to Matthiessen, Teruya & Lam (2010, p. 138), the metafunctions take place in the organization of statements. Halliday proposes three metafunctions: ideational, interpersonal and textual. The ideational function can unfold two subtypes: experiential and logical. The authors explain that

Ideational grammar is often treated as semantics outside systemic linguistics, while textual and interpersonal grammars are partly under the heading of pragmatics. In systemic theory, all three metafunctions are found at the level of semantics and grammar: it is not possible to export transitivity from grammar into semantics, because this area of semantics is already occupied by the semantics of transitivity. (cf. *metafunction theoretical*. In MATTHIESSEN; TERUYA; LAM: 2010, p. 138) [Emphasis added]

The systemic-functional perspective, according to the teachings of Matthiessen, Teruya & Lam (2010, p. 232), operates in transitivity systems, it follows a

Model of organization of TRANSITIVITY systems. The transitive model is one of extension or impact: a process is acted out by one participant, the Actor (...) and it may extend (“transcend”) to impact another participant, the Goal (...) and it may be initiated by another participant, the Initiator (...). The fundamental question is whether the process the actor engages

in extends to (impacts) a goal (transitive) or not (intransitive). (cf. *transitive model / descriptive*. In MATTHIESSEN; TERUYA; LAM: 2010, p. 232) [Emphasis added]

Table proposed by Halliday (2004, p. 61) and adapted by me.

METAFUNCTION (TECHNICAL NAME)	DEFINITION (SIGNIFICATION TYPE)	CORRESPONDENT STATUS IN THE SENTENCE	STRUCTURE OF BASIC TYPE
Experiential (Ideational)	Construct an experience model	Phrase as a representation	Segmental. Based on part- whole relation: between a unitary whole and constituent parts.
Interpersonal	Establish social relations	Phrase as an interchange	Prosodic. Indicated by the prosody: the intonation of the sentence.
Textual	Create contextual relevance	Phrase as a message	Culminating. Considers the closing of the idea in the sentence.
Logical	Construct logical relations	- - - -	Iterative. Based on current models.
Table 1 - Metafunctions and its effects on grammar.			

In the systemic-functional — or lexicogrammatical — the texts are analysed in a full form. It is not restricted to lexical selection or grammatical structure only. It goes far beyond that. The analysis ruled by metafunctions allows us to verify that each idea is covered by the sentences, in order to determine the possibility (or not) of efficient communication.

The combination of lexicogrammar and the theory of verbal iconicity is likely to increase the clarification of the text production process. First to the teacher and then to the student. It happens because the traditional teaching methodology and its emphasis on nomenclature did not reach the language class main goals: assimilation of the system, its structural and semantic possibilities, that may be proved by considerable reading skills with clear understanding and production of readable texts. For instance, the collocutor can easily understand and interpret everything. In the normative model, lists and lists of names are supposed to be memorized both at the lexicon level (ordinal, collective etc.) and at the grammar level (classification as the stressed syllable, the number of syllables, the grammatical class etc.) without even developing linguistic structuring skills. The metaphor of the piano lesson is perfect to illustrate this idea.

A piano teacher spent the whole year teaching the names of all parts that compose a piano. The students would be able, I believe, to disassemble a piano and assemble it again. At the evaluation, however, the students are required to perform the first and second movements of a symphony. Result: the whole class fails. Unfortunately, any resemblance to language classes based upon nomenclature is not a coincidence! (Popular narrative)

The lexicogrammatical perspective considers statements as an interactive action, hence, it analyses them as units with three-level-signs: (1) the thematic and lexical choices for the expressions of ideas, ideals and ideologies; (2) the genre choice for interacting; (3) the ordering of signs towards constructing message clarity.

We can more objectively identify these values when we analyse them from the perspective of the verbal iconicity theory. This theory analyses the textual material (regardless of the language or the code used) according to its potential towards meaningfulness. Contents are considered as underlying forms and they are capable of being designed (as a starting point and arrival point) in the mental screen⁶ of the interlocutors, guiding their (or disorienting their) understanding.

The iconic and indexical values overlap the symbols that constitute the verbal system (in the case of listening subjects) providing them with additional information that may increase or decrease the textual clarity and consistency. Those are the signs that not only stimulate emotions, but also mobilize the feelings of the ones involved in the dialogue.

These instructions are not part of the traditional teacher education courses. All the semiotic instruction is very recent in the scholar curricula. The PCN — Brazilian National Curricular Parameters — started in 2000 and the semiotic treatment of contents appears in the chapter named Languages, Codes and its Technologies.

Language is considered here as the human ability to articulate collective meanings in arbitrary systems of representation, which are shared and which vary according to the needs and experiences of life in society. The main reason of any act of language is the production of meaning⁷. (PCN, 2000: 19) [Free translation]

By making the semiotic approach official, the PCN state that languages interrelate in social practices and in history. Therefore, the capture of the information embedded in a

⁶ Calvino, 1995: 99.

⁷ Original text: “A linguagem é considerada aqui como capacidade humana de articular significados coletivos em sistemas arbitrários de representação, que são compartilhados e que variam de acordo com as necessidades e experiências da vida em sociedade. A principal razão de qualquer ato de linguagem é a produção de sentido”.

text exceeds the vocabulary and the structural field of languages. They require special and specific approach strategies that teachers need to know so that they can equip students to read and write texts.

The PCN deal with the circulation of senses through the appropriation of differentiated sensory and cognitive forms of symbolic systems, all this as a cognitive organizing tool of reality towards communication. The PCN point out the need to recognize that the languages (verbal, iconic, body, sound, formal etc.) structure themselves in meaningful relationships that should be well known and understood, to work as a model for the production of new pieces of communication.

Nevertheless, teachers should be warned of the dangers of the mere replacement of a nomenclature for another: in the 1970s, the subject's name *Portuguese* was changed to *Communication and Expression in National Language*. In addition, the focus has also changed: the normative grammar was replaced with the theory of communication. Pietri (2010, p. 74) brings about the words of Magda Soares⁸

Teaching would have taken a pragmatic and utilitarian character, and its goal would be the development of the use of language which would be attained through changes in the subject; these, in turn, would be from then on based upon elements of communication theory. In this new context, the student would be seen as sender-receiver of the most diverse codes, not just the verbal one.

Also according to the author, the concept of language as a system (grammar teaching) and the concept of language as aesthetic expression (rhetoric and poetic education, and, later, studies of texts) were replaced with the concept of language as communication. [Free translation]

Another failure. The metaphor of the inadequate piano lesson is hereby resumed, the naming of piano parts replaced with history of music, biographies of composers and musical ranking, keeping, however, the performance of one or two movements of a

⁸ Original text: "O ensino teria assumido caráter pragmático e utilitarista, e seu objetivo seria o desenvolvimento do uso da língua, o que se conseguiria com alterações na disciplina, que se fundamentaria a partir de então em elementos da teoria da comunicação. Nesse novo contexto, o aluno seria visto como um emissor-receptor de códigos os mais diversos, e não mais apenas do verbal.

Ainda segundo a autora, a concepção de língua como *sistema* (ensino de gramática) e a concepção de língua como *expressão estética* (ensino da retórica e poética, e, posteriormente, estudo de textos) foram substituídas pela concepção de língua como *comunicação*. " (SOARES, Magda. "Português na escola - História de uma disciplina curricular". In BAGNO, Marcos (Org.). *Linguística da norma*. São Paulo: Loyola, 2002. (Conforme referências do artigo assinado por Pietri)

symphony as the final evaluation. These hasty changes bring about severe consequences: (1) teachers do not have the required time, conditions or available training to allow them to know the propositions and assimilate the theories and techniques necessary to their implementation; (2) students drift between theories, classifications and ill-founded activities; (3) the actual teaching and learning processes do not happen, indeed.

Teachers can find a summary of the information on semiotics in *Iconicidade Verbal. Teoria e Prática* (Simões, 2009). It begins by indicating that “the expression of thought in verbal language provides elements for a productive investigation of the relations between signs and users, as well as between marked significant and meanings” (p. 42-43) by its immediate context and by the resulting relationship between context and co-text. It forms a direct dialogue with the Hallidian metafunctions. Through the combination of lexicogrammar and verbal iconicity, it becomes possible to provide teachers and students with strategic possibilities that point out the relationship between the signs, their functions and values, articulated with the dialogue situation at the same time.

4. Praxis

Firstly, it is necessary to establish the class goals, because the teacher must have his/her objectives and expectations in mind, for instance, what students should be able to do upon the didactic explanation of the content.

4.1. Goals:

- To present the relevance of the dictionary in the study of texts.
- To guide the choice of the best meaning for each difficult word or phrase in the text.
- To identify ambiguous forms
- To indicate the relationship between grammatical classes and syntactical functions to represent ideas in the text
- To demonstrate how the syntactical functions dialogue with the mini-story components
- To identify functions and values of the ideas distribution in the paragraphs and the use of verbal tenses and adverbials in the sentence organization

4.2. Analysis and comments based on iconicity

A PAIXÃO DA SUA VIDA

Amava a morte. Mas não era correspondido.

Tomou veneno. Atirou-se de pontes. Aspirou gás. Sempre ela o rejeitava, recusando-lhe o abraço.

Quando finalmente desistiu da paixão entregando-se à vida, a morte, enciumada, estourou-lhe o coração.
COLASANTI, Marina. In *Contos de Amor Rasgados*. Rio de Janeiro: Rocco. 1986.

- **Title**

The title suggests more than one meaning, hence, ambiguous because the word passion has more than one meaning, see the table.

Textual form	Grammatical class	Meanings
Passion [From lat. <i>Passione</i> .]	Feminine Noun	1. Feeling or emotion with a high degree of intensity, overlapping clarity and reason
		10. The martyrdom of Christ and the saints. 11. The part of the Gospel related to Christ's martyrdom.
<i>Sua</i> (<i>her</i>)	Adjective pronoun of third person	No explicit reference to whose.

Table 2 – Ambiguous forms

- Paragraphing and the representation of characters

The mini-story has *three paragraphs*, suggesting the three stages of life: *birth, growth and death*.

The main character of the mini-story is lexicogrammatically represented in the following ways:

§	Passage From Text	Syntactic Function	
1 st	Amava a morte	hidden subject	
2 nd	tomou veneno	hidden subject	
	Atirou-SE de pontes	reflexive subject	
	Aspirou gás	hidden subject	
	Sempre ela O rejeitava	direct object	
	recusando-LHE o abraço	indirect object [LHE = A ELE] adnominal adjunct (LHE = DELE)	Double interpretation
3 rd	Quando finalmente desistiu da paixão	hidden subject	
	entregando-SE à vida	reflecting subject	
	a morte, enciumada, estourou-LHE o coração	adnominal adjunct (LHE = DELE)	

Table 3 – Main character's representations

As it turns out, the main character does not appear as *an expressed* (clear) subject, but as a *hidden, reflexive object or adjunct*. This sequence indicates a *downward process* in which *the main character is overpowered* by the antagonist's actions and choices — death — without any liberating condition. It is possible to interpret that as if the initial passion

(domineering and blind affection, obsession) would fight with passion (martyrdom), and this fight is over with the death of the protagonist.

- Verbal tenses

To make the classification of the verb form values, the actantes were coded as main character (protagonist) = (P); antagonist (A). The relationship between the verbal process and the one who performs the action is indicated in the table below. This table shows how the relationship between actions that actually occur (perfect tenses) and those that do not materialise (imperfect tenses) emphasize not only the theme tale, but also the relationship between the characters.

Index of ambivalence of processes				
Textual Form	Verbal aspect	Verbal aspect	Textual form	Aspect
	Positive for (p)	Negative for (p)	Positive for (a)	
(P) Amava 'loved'	imperfect		(A) <u>ela</u> o rejeitava 'she rejected him'	imperfect
(P) não era Correspondido 'was not reciprocated'	imperfect		(A) <u>recusando-lhe</u> 'refusing him' [e recusava-lhe 'and refused him']	imperfect
(P) <u>Tomou</u> 'took'		perfect	(A) estourou-lhe 'broke his'	perfect
(P) Atirou-se de 'She threw herself'		perfect		
(P) Aspirou 'aspirated'		perfect		
(P) desistiu 'gave up'		perfect		
(P) entregando-se 'handing himself' [= e entregou-se 'and handed himself']		perfect		

Table 4 – Verbal processes and characters

Highlighting the verbs in the text, we have:

“Amava a morte. Mas não *era* correspondido. *Tomou* veneno. *Atirou-se* de pontes. *Aspirou* gás. Sempre ela o rejeitava, recusando-lhe o abraço. Quando finalmente *desistiu* da paixão *entregando-se* à vida, a morte, enciumada, *estourou-lhe* o coração.”

- Gerund values

The initial function of the verb nominal form is adverbial. Hence, the clauses built around the gerund, initially harbour an adverbial value. Example: He says it *singing*. (The italicized form corresponds to the mode the verbal action is performed). However, in addition to other possible adverbial values to the gerund, when in reduced clauses, it may correspond to a parallel construction with another coordinated clause, and its function is that of a coordinated clause. This is what we see in the mini-story under study:

Textual form	Inflected form	Gerund form	Correspondent form
Sempre ela o rejeitava, recusando-lhe o abraço. 'Always she rejected him, refusing his hug.'	Rejeitava 'rejected him'	Recusando-lhe 'refused him'	Recusava-lhe 'and refused him'
Quando finalmente desistiu da paixão entregando-se à vida... 'When finally gave up passion indulging in life ...'	Desistiu 'gave up'	Entregando-se 'handing himself'	Entregou-se 'and handed himself'
Table 5 – Gerund form in coordinated clause			

Note that the attempt to a temporal interpretation of gerunds would pervert the mini-story message.

Textual Form	Inflected Form	Gerund Form	Improper Correspondence
Sempre ela o rejeitava, recusando-lhe o abraço. 'Always she rejected him, refusing his hug.'	Rejeitava 'rejected him'	Recusando-lhe 'refused him'	Quando lhe recusava 'When you refused him'
Quando finalmente desistiu da paixão entregando-se à vida... 'When finally gave up passion indulging in life ...'	Desistiu 'gave up'	Entregando-se 'handing himself'	Quando se entregou 'When handed himself'
Table 6– Verbal interpretation improper to the mini-story			

- The flowing of time

First paragraph — Imperfect tense, reiterative sign; process that starts in the past and projects itself into the present. It is the iconic of obstinacy. Expresses extravagant persistence of the love of death.

Second paragraph — Perfect tense to (P) and imperfect tense to (A), iconically representing the contrast of feelings for the actions: (P) love and search; (A) rejection, refusal.

Third paragraph — the perfect tense significantly represents the outcome of the mini-story: (P) thinks he/she can back down the passion for death and surrender to life, but death — who does not negotiate nor admit defeat — bursts the heart of (P).

- Adverbials are iconic markers

1. (...) Sempre ela o rejeitava, recusando-lhe o abraço.
2. Quando finalmente desistiu da paixão entregando-se à vida (...)

Adverbial Connector	Grammatical class	Tense notion	Processes of (p)	Processes of (a)
Sempre 'Always'	Adverb	Reiterative	Rejeitava 'rejected'	Recusando-lhe 'refused him' (recusava-lhe 'and refused him')
Quando 'When'	Adverb phrase	Punctual	Desistiu 'gave up', entregando-se 'handing himself to' (e entregou-se 'and handed himself to')	Estourou-lhe (o coração) 'broke his (heart)'

Table 7 - Parallelism of verbal actions of (P) and (A)

- Punctuation and the organization of sentences

The full stop indicates the closure of an idea. When the statement delimited by this sign is only organized around one verbal action, we have either the simple period or the absolute clause. However, if more than one process is expressed we have a compound period.

Following these instructions, let us analyse the following table:

Argumentative markers	Clauses	Interlinearized
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	Amava a morte.	‘He loved death’
Mas ‘but’	não era correspondido.	‘he was not reciprocated’
	Tomou veneno.	‘Took poison.’
	Atirou-se de pontes.	‘He threw himself from bridges.’
	Aspirou gás.	‘Aspirated gas.’
Sempre ‘always’	ela o rejeitava, recusando-lhe o abraço.	‘she rejected him, refusing his hug.’
Quando finalmente ‘When, finally,’	desistiu da paixão entregando-se à vida,	‘gave up passion handing himself to life,’
	a morte, enciumada, estourou-lhe o coração.	‘ death, jealous, broke his heart’.
Table 8 – Punctuation in the mini-story		

Sentences 1-5 have a full stop; they are absolute clauses. We can infer that (P) was fighting alone. In sentence 6, it (death) is the subject and the structure changes to a compound period; this is repeated in line 7, this time with the actions performed by (P). This structural change related to (P) is likely to represent a more elaborate attempt by the main character to mimic the motion of (A), opting to the compound period and coordinated actions. In the last sentence, there is an unexpected outcome: death puts on the structural model of simple sentences — as those of (P) in periods 1-5 — which is reiterated by the *enciumada* (jealous) predicative; its single and autonomous action — *estourou-lhe* (burst his/her) — results in the death of (P).

- Complication and outcome

It seems that the narrative complication and climax are also represented by the pattern clause and its correspondent punctuation.

Note that the results are positive for (A) and negative for (P), therefore confirming the outcome of the mini-story.

Conclusion

This study shows a strategic analysis that discusses not only the relationships between forms, functions, values, but also the theme of the text. All iconic signs presented in this study trigger cognitions and mental spaces from images that in some way represent an idea. Meanwhile, the indexical signs map the cognition (understanding and interpretation) processes as if they were compasses to the collocutor.

We do believe that these are the theoretical and methodological bases required to support the teaching practice and teachers should never turn them into content for students.

When it happens, we fall into the same inappropriate and useless classifications of the traditional teaching paradigm: the criticized piano lesson pattern. The 21st Century clamours for efficient schooling and the steps towards it are directly linked to the modernization of methodologies. The universal contents of each subject do remain, however, the theoretical developments of today allow us the possibility to choose the use of different didactic and pedagogic strategies. These strategies are not only able to make the classes more attractive, but also more interesting. Teachers face competition with calls from consumption and the media brings about disadvantage for didactic sections. When we state that classes become more interesting, it is not because classes are “funnier” (they actually tend to be, indeed), but mostly because they can prove their relevance to the lives of individuals. In fact, we usually care much more for what concerns us. We care for everything we can closely relate to our experiences. According to Ausubel’s theory of *meaningful learning* (cf. Moreira & Masini: 2001) “(...) learning means organization and integration of the content with the cognitive structure” (2001, p. 13). Within a sound cognitivist basis, Ausubel’s assumption is “that there is a structure in which both organization and integration are processed”. It is an organized process in which new ideas and information can be learned and stored, since they are linked to relevant concepts available in the cognitive structure of the individual and act as anchor points for new ideas and concepts (2001, p. 14).

Contemporary Applied Linguistics accepts the dialogue between related theories not only because of its more flexible view, but also because of the link with the studies on cognition. It also seeks to take methodological advantage for the perfecting of the teaching and learning processes, turning the classes into moments related to the experiences of students. Within this attitude, it is possible to redeem the interest of the students in the Portuguese language classes, in particular, erasing the worn out image of “boring class”, with “viajandões⁹” teachers who preach extravagant interpretations and are unable to gain the confidence of students. Consequently, the teacher is not able to reach the main goal of these classes: to empower the subjects for efficient and necessary interaction for their realization as language beings and, ultimately, citizens.

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⁹ “Viajandão” slang term. Meaning drugged; under the influence of some hallucinogenic substance.

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