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ABSTRACT

According to the concepts of Linguistics and Sociolinguistics and having as a starting point the

myths around linguistic prejudice, the present paper aims to demystify this concept and search for a way to diminish the abyss between the spoken language and the one taught in classrooms. Taking the National Curricular Parameters (Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais – PCNs) and the Common National Curricular Basis (Base Nacional Comum Curricular – BNCC) guidelines as a documentary basis and, as a discussion basis, observations of the empiric reality arising from teaching practice in basic education classrooms of public schools, it seeks to balance the Portuguese language standard norm teaching approach to the linguistic variations present in spoken language, so that all students understand the different possibilities to use the language and can adequate it to the communicational context.

Keywords: Portuguese language, Linguistic prejudice, Sociolinguistics.

1 INTRODUCTION

Linguistics is a science that has as its motto the phenomenon of language in its various aspects, among them the social. The linguistic phenomenon is something sociocultural and heterogeneous. It's constantly changing. Coming from this concept, we have a specific branch of Linguistics that is dedicated to this social aspect of language: Sociolinguistics, which, from the twentieth century, has established itself as an important branch of linguistic studies, focusing on the study of spoken language in its social context.

Sociolinguistics proposes to understand the relationship between language and society in real situations of language use, taking the focus off grammatical rules and placing it on the relationships that manifest themselves through language and all linguistic diversity. Every speech community has its ways of speaking, which characterizes linguistic varieties. And within the same speech community, people of different origins, ages, and gender, for example, speak in different ways. In this way, the language will undoubtedly present variations. From the sociolinguistic point of view, this characteristic is a quality, a rich source of studies and observations of social relations.

The connection between language and society is the basis of the formation of the human being. Social organizations use oral language to communicate. And it is from this social context of

communication that the need to study the linguistic phenomenon from this prism and from the cultural reality in which the language is inserted is born.

Language, culture, and society and their interrelation have become the object of study by many authors from the twentieth century. When we think about the social issue linked to language, we must keep in mind names such as Antoine Meillet, Mikhail Bakhtin, Marcel Cohen, Émile Benveniste, and Roman Jakobson, among others. According to Meillet (apud MUSSALIM; BENTES, 2021, p. 24), language is eminently a social fact. [...] Languages do not exist outside of the subjects who speak them. Jakobson (apud MUSSALIM; BENTES, 2021, p. 25) focuses on the relationship between language and social context and says that every linguistic code is multiform and differs according to the function of the message, the interlocutor to whom it is addressed and the relationship established between the interlocutors of that communicative situation. For Benveniste (apud MUSSALIM; BENTES, 2021, p. 27), the language contains the society, it is and should be the instrument of communication common to all its members. It gives shape to society and allows man to situate himself in it and nature. Each linguist brings their contribution and approach to this discussion. What can be said of all of them is that the relationship between language and society is undeniable. It is a correlation that, although it seems obvious, brings complex discussions and that constitutes a watershed within Linguistics.

Whenever we communicate in different contexts, we learn to adapt socially. This adequacy, whether conscious or unconscious, entails different stylistic variations of the language. These linguistic varieties coexist, so we can adapt socially through language. There are variations of prestige, which respect the standard norm of the language, and there are less prestigious, informal variations that do not always follow the standard norm. To regard these more informal variations as inferior leads to linguistic prejudice.

2 LINGUISTIC BIAS

Linguistic prejudice occurs when there is a conflict between the concept of language and that of normative grammar. Before this advance in linguistic studies, only the structure of the language was taken into account and not the social aspect of it. The differences in register between speech and writing were not taken into account. However, there are clear differences between these two registers, because the language is not homogeneous. Normative grammar is not essentially the language, it is only a part of it. It is necessary to consider all the linguistic varieties that may exist. When these less prestigious variations are called error or deviation is that the linguistic prejudice and all the mythology that exists around it arises, such as believing that only people of a higher social class or people from Portugal speak Portuguese well. This is the result of a vision that perpetuates the mechanisms of social exclusion. It is myths like these that reinforce everyday linguistic prejudice and keeps away people

who do not follow the so-called cultured norm from communicating effectively with the whole society and having access to all kinds of communication, such as legal texts, government decisions, for example, which, as a rule, make use of the standard norm of the Portuguese language. If the whole society does not have access to this, it becomes another form of segregation of the portion that has fewer resources and, consequently, less formal studies.

To say that Brazilians speak Portuguese occurs only for convenience and historical reasons. The "Brazilian Portuguese" has its own rules of operation, which are increasingly distant from the language spoken in Portugal. However, the teaching of the Portuguese language in Brazil continues to be based on the Lusitanian linguistic norm. The so-called "correct" grammatical rules are the ones that work well for the speech reality there and sometimes even sound strange to us.

From the linguistic point of view, however, the language spoken in Brazil already has a grammar – that is, it has rules of operation – that increasingly differs from the grammar of the language spoken in Portugal. That is why linguists (language scientists) prefer to use the term Brazilian Portuguese because it is clearer and marks this difference well (BAGNO, 2007, p. 23 and 24).

For Bagno, it does not make sense to oblige the teaching of grammatical norms that sound different from what we say. This ends up generating a communication conflict in education. Teaching and learning only happen when there is a good understanding of what is transmitted. This approach, which is limited to teaching grammar rules, does not take into account the social context of the student and not all the influences that our Portuguese has suffered over time. We speak a language suited to our reality. We appropriate the language and, in this way, we can say that today we have our language, because it is alive and changeable.

It is necessary, therefore, that the school and all other institutions focused on education abandon this myth of the "unity" of the Portuguese in Brazil and begin to recognize the true linguistic diversity of our country (...) (BAGNO, 2007, p. 18).

What Bagno highlights is important to combat linguistic bias. It is not possible to abandon the teaching of traditional grammar in schools. This would lead to more prejudice, segregation, and lack of access. It is necessary to learn to read and interpret a denser vocabulary or sentences written within the cultured norm. But we can't get hung up on that. It is necessary to adapt, the dialogue between the linguistic variations. To teach the cultured norm, we need to communicate well with the student, who may have a vocabulary marked by slang, for example. For learning to happen, there must be an exchange. While the student needs to learn the rules and expand their vocabulary for their social insertion, society, and school need to see with less prejudice the variations present in the spoken language. It is of paramount importance to include the experience of this student in the classroom, take

into account the informal records of the language and make him understand that this can be accepted linguistically and socially.

The present study proposes to reflect in search of a reduction of the gulf that exists between the reality of the spoken language and that taught in the school banks while seeking a way for society to guarantee access to the standard norm of the language, without tying us to the plastered teaching of it. How to find this balance in the classroom, having the role of teachers of basic education as agents of this search is the proposal of reflection to which this study aims.

3 ORALITY VS. WRITING: FORMAL AND INFORMAL RECORDS

The biggest difference, regarding the asymmetries between the Portuguese of Portugal and the one spoken in Brazil, is in the spoken language, being, according to Bagno (2007, p. 25), the formal written language "the only level at which it is still possible an almost total understanding between Brazilians and Portuguese", since the orthography is the same, with few differences. However, if read aloud, the same text will sound completely different when read by a Portuguese and a Brazilian, even giving the impression of being different languages.

In addition to the differences between the Portuguese spoken in Portugal and Brazil, there is also a great difference between orality and writing within the Portuguese used by Brazilians. This difference is due not only to the diatopic issues of the language and the rich variety of accents present throughout the national territory but to the glaring difference between the spoken language and the written language. In this regard, it is noteworthy that, in orality, informality is present in a more visible way and, sometimes, this informality ends up being transferred to writing, for example, in more informal texts, such as publications in social networks. It is common that, outside the formality of academic texts or official writings of documents, for example, the same traces of informality of speech are expressed, even though it is the written language. And this is where linguistic prejudice gains ground: we tend to relate this informality "transferred" from orality to writing to error. But it seems quite natural this adequacy, this approximation of the spoken language with the written language, especially in publications on social networks and conversations between friends, for example. This often denotes even an affective trait in communication. Therefore, it is not an error, but an adaptation of the language to situations of informality, giving naturalness to the written discourse.

This reflection on the written language also leads us to the question of reading and the reproduction of patterns in writing. There is a misconception about the concept of reading. It is commonly believed that the habit of reading is restricted only to books or newspapers. However, the concept of reading is much broader: from comic books to conversations on social networks, the act of reading is present. It is very common, even, that children and adolescents reproduce the informal

discourses and abbreviations commonly used on the Internet, in school essays. Would it be the case that Portuguese language teachers correct this "error"? This would be pruning the creativity of students' written production.

When it comes to textual production, the "fuel" is in what one reads, that is, writing feeds on reading. Children and adolescents have become accustomed to having as a source of reading almost exclusively the publications of the internet, in which the informality of the language has great space. Nothing more natural than this informality is transferred to their textual productions. To hinder the creativity of students through the excessive requirement of the application of the standard norm of the language is to reinforce the idea that these students are not able to write, creating in them a barrier, a great resistance to reading and written production, in addition to the false sense that they lack the mastery of the language. The blind requirement of the cultured norm in the students' textual productions may be accompanied by the disregard of aspects of paramount importance in this type of activity: creativity, cohesion, and coherence.

3.1 THE IMPACT OF LINGUISTIC BIAS ON LEARNING

The evaluation of this impact occurs through empirical knowledge, the observation of being in the classroom, and witnessing the silencing of many students when they are invited to make a comment or even express their opinion on some topic. The difficulty in exposing oneself suggests the non-belonging experienced by most students, especially those from classes with lower purchasing power and the consequent lack of access to reading.

It is common to hear, both from the students themselves in the classroom and from the teachers in the teachers' room, that, in general, students do not know Portuguese. Such talk only strengthens the idea that there is only one Portuguese to be learned. All other varieties are minor and therefore not worthy of registration and study.

The absurdity of these statements corroborates the distorted view that language is ready and does not undergo variation. It is worth mentioning that, in theory, language changes are cited by teachers, but that, in practice, students are required to use Portuguese in their cultural norm. This rigidity, it is believed, interferes with learning in a very relevant way, because the student, in his daily life of speech and listening, does not recognize the language he studies at school as being his, or his social group.

3.2 THE BALANCE BETWEEN THE CULTURED NORM AND ORALITY

Although Portuguese was the official language of Brazil-Colony, it was not the language that predominated in social interactions at the time. At the beginning of the colonization, there were three

languages: Portuguese, the general language with which the Jesuits and the colonizer interacted with the colonized, and Latin. Balbi (2016, p. 44) points out that "the coexistence of these three languages, at the beginning of the colonization of Brazil, seems to have collaborated to justify the diversity of the formation of the Brazilian Portuguese."

In the 1750s, with the determination of the Marquis of Pombal that made the use of the Portuguese language mandatory, it began to be used in social interactions and became part of the national curriculum. It is worth mentioning that the schools, at that time, were open only to the privileged class, and the teaching of Portuguese was done traditionally: normative and descriptive.

It is also noteworthy that, in the mid-nineteenth century, there was already talk of a Brazilian Portuguese that, however, was disregarded by schools.

In the 1950s, there was the expansion of public education in Brazil. With this, children of workers from a reality very different from those who already attended school had access to the school banks. Although these two audiences shared the same physical space of the school, it did not receive the new entrants to include them, because it maintained the teaching methodology, the same traditional line, and, with this, maintained the privilege of its previous audience.

The presentation of this path of the language spoken in Brazil aims to show that it was the flexibilization of the use of the language that made possible the interaction between the different groups that resided in Brazil-Colony. This reveals that it is essential to seek a balance between the cultured norm and the oral linguistic variations. Accepting the different speeches and promoting their knowledge should be the goal of all teachers in their teaching. Only in this way will the school be fulfilling its social role which is inclusion.

3.3 THE TEACHING OF THE PORTUGUESE LANGUAGE TODAY

The research on how the teaching of the Portuguese Language (LP) currently has the purpose of verifying if orality has gained some space in academic discussions and teaching practice concerning the teaching of our language. It is worth remembering that, as already stated in a previous topic, the school, in the mid-twentieth century, denied the existence of a Brazilian Portuguese Language, that is, the one spoken by the Brazilian people.

Also having as a source of observation the empirical reality, which observes the predominance of traditional teaching, the prevalence of grammar over the linguistic variations arising from orality, the use of language in communicative interactions in spaces of social conviviality, it is reiterated here the need for change in the view of teachers that it is possible the coexistence of the different Brazilian "languages" and the importance of respecting them and learning to use them according to the communicative situation to introduce yourself to the speaker.

Since the National Curricular Parameters (PCNs – 1998), at the end of the twentieth century, therefore, the traditionality of LP teaching was already criticized. Some points that are the object of criticism of this document will be presented:

- the disregard for reality and the interests of students;
- the excessive schooling of reading activities and text production;
- the use of the text (...) as a pretext for the treatment of grammatical aspects;
- the excessive valorization of normative grammar and the insistence on the rules of exception, with the consequent prejudice against the forms of orality and the non-standard varieties (BRASIL, 1998, p. 18).

On the other hand, this same document cites points aimed at reducing the distance between the language of school and that of life. For this distance to reduce the PCNs (1998) advise that the teaching of LP be all focused on the study of the language in use. Noting that:

- the *raison d'être* of the reading and writing proposals is active comprehension and not decoding and silence;
- the *raison d'être* of the proposals for the use of speech and writing is the effective interlocution, and not the production of texts to be objects of correction;
- the didactic situations aim to lead students to think about language to be able to understand it and use it appropriately, for the situations and purposes defined (BRASIL, 1998, p. 19).

In the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC, 2018), the current guiding document of basic education, there is also guidance for valuing students' previous knowledge, highlighting the importance of expanding "experiences for the development of orality" (p. 58). The document when talking about teaching for the initial grades of basic education still says that:

The experiences of children in their family, social and cultural context, their memories, their belonging to a group, and their interaction with the most diverse information and communication technologies are sources that stimulate their curiosity and the formulation of questions (BNCC, 2018, p. 58).

Regarding the teaching of LP, this document talks about the appropriation of Brazilian Portuguese:

Knowledge about language, other semiosis, and the standard norm should not be taken as a list of contents dissociated from language practices, but as conducive to reflection on the functioning of language in the context of these practices. The selection of skills in the BNCC is related to that fundamental knowledge so that the student can appropriate the linguistic system that organizes Brazilian Portuguese (Idem, p. 139).

And he goes on to advise on the teaching of LP by saying that "It is assumed ... a perspective of progression of knowledge that goes from regularities to irregularities and from the most frequent and simple uses to the less habitual and more complex" (p. 139). By dealing with "more frequent uses", the BNCC opens space for the different speeches, and the linguistic variations, to become part of the

discussions in the classroom promoting a greater approximation between the language of the school and the one used in real life, which aims at a more significant learning. It seems to be a way to ward off linguistic bias.

As can be seen, official documents that guide the directions of Brazilian education endorse the need to start from the student's experience to understand the language and, consequently, to the more effective and appropriate use of the situation of interlocution experienced by the student in his life in society.

4 HOW TO DEMYSTIFY THE TEACHING OF THE CULTURED NORM

As we have discussed before, it is not possible to abandon the teaching of the standard LP norm of our students, as this would further distance them from access to culture and so many other important issues for life in society. The point to be discussed is: how to make our students learn the cultured norm of the language in a way that does not exclude all their baggage? In a way that welcomes their experiences and the linguistic variations they bring? Finally, how can we demystify the teaching of normative grammar in schools and balance this teaching with the linguistic culture that the student brings with him?

The school still perpetuates the plastered and prejudiced model of teaching, not only of the LP but also of other disciplines. This practice makes us unable to break the paradigms and includes the cultural baggage of the student in the classes, which is extremely relevant for him to feel more comfortable and belong to the school space. One can no longer allow the position of the teacher as the "holder of all knowledge", the position of superiority within schools. There needs to be a more open dialogue and greater school/student interaction. The school space, more than any person, belongs to the student. He needs to feel welcomed in all his questions, including language. The informal records that students bring in their vocabulary need to be understood so that there is an exchange.

The recognition of the existence of many different linguistic norms is fundamental for the teaching in our schools to be consistent with the proven fact that the linguistic norm taught in the classroom is, in many situations, a true "foreign language" for the student who arrives at school from social environments where the linguistic norm employed in everyday life is a variety of non-standard Portuguese (BAGNO, 2007, p. 18).

The proposal for a demystification of the teaching of the standard norm of the language is this: dialogue, exchange. Allow students to bring with them their vocabulary, registers, slang, discursive markers, mannerisms and welcome them so that they learn a more formal language and that allows them denser and more understandable readings of the world, that they have more access to all the spaces that belong to them. As exemplified earlier, even the PCNs and the BNCC have recognized linguistic diversity for years.

The linguistic variation needs to be present in the teaching of LP, the school needs to have an inclusive role in all aspects of our experience, including that of language. This is not an easy stance to adopt, as it sets up a paradigm shift. It requires commitment from the entire school community.

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Based on the theories of Linguistics and Sociolinguistics, it can be observed that the existence of linguistic varieties within the LP is undeniable, especially in the case of a country as plural as Brazil and its "Brazilian Portuguese". Sociolinguistics brings us a view that the concepts of language and society are intrinsically connected. And even in such a diverse society and with so many variations of the language, as it is seen in Brazil, especially concerning the teaching of LP in school banks, we can witness linguistic prejudice, which does not accept well informal records of the language, considering them as errors or deviations. Teaching focused only on normative grammar reinforces this thinking. The proposal of the present work is precisely the opposite: the school should be a place of welcome, and not of exclusion. Why distance the language written and taught in classrooms from the language of real life, spoken by real people in everyday life? All the records of the language must be welcomed so that the students can realize that they can appropriate all the records of our Portuguese language, even the most formal ones, which are important for our life in society. Normative grammar is only one part of the language, so we cannot stick to it alone. And above all, it must be understood that, despite the name, our Portuguese differs greatly from European Portuguese, especially in speech. Why insist on grammatically referencing the Portuguese of Portugal? Our language needs to make sense to all Brazilians in their daily lives, it must be practical and current, communicate well, and be interactive. That is the great function of a language. One cannot disregard, for example, the creative effort of a student in an essay, because in it there are grammatical errors. That would undermine that student's creativity and self-esteem. A welcome is necessary to be able to teach the cultured norm, which is indeed necessary. But knowing how to make the language not boil down to that.

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