
GRAMMAR FROM THE BOTTOM: A 'CANDID' LOOK AT AN
ELEMENTARY GRAMMAR (OF PORTUGUESE)

A Gramática de Baixo para Cima: uma Olhada 'Ingênuo' numa Gramática Elementar (do Português)

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Pierre Swiggers*

Nico Lioce**

Piet Desmet***

ABSTRACT: This paper is intended as a contribution to the theory and historiography of grammaticography. The first part offers methodological and epistemological reflections on the notions of 'grammar' and 'learner's grammar' (also called 'pedagogical/didactic grammar'), with particular attention paid to the issue of their status and their defining characteristics. The second part contains an analysis of a school grammar of Portuguese, for the use of primary school pupils in Portugal, viz. A. Cândido de Figueiredo's *Gramática das crianças*. The analysis bears on the author's general conception of grammar, on the principles underlying his project of an elementary grammar, and on the features that characterise the result of his grammaticographical activity.

KEYWORDS: Historiography of linguistics/grammar. Grammaticography. Language learning. School grammar. Portuguese.

RESUMO: Este artigo é uma contribuição para a teoria e a historiografia da gramaticografia. A primeira parte oferece reflexões metodológicas e epistemológicas sobre as noções de 'gramática' e 'gramática do aprendiz' (ou 'gramática pedagógica/didática'), com especial atenção à questão de seu estatuto e de suas características definidoras. A segunda parte contém uma análise de uma gramática escolar do português, destinada a alunos do ensino fundamental em Portugal, a saber, a *Gramática das crianças*, de A. Cândido de Figueiredo. A análise incide sobre a sua concepção geral de gramática, sobre os princípios que fundamentam o seu projeto de uma gramática elementar e sobre os aspectos que caracterizam o resultado do seu investimento gramaticográfico.

* PhD from KU Leuven. Professor at University of Leuven (KU Leuven). ORCID: 0000-0001-9814-2530. E-mail: pierre.swiggers(AT)kuleuven.be.

** PhD from KU Leuven. Lecturer at University of Leuven (KU Leuven & KU Leuven Kulak). ORCID: 0000-0002-0623-8437. E-mail: nico.lioce(AT)kuleuven.be.

*** PhD from KU Leuven. Professor at University of Leuven (KU Leuven & KU Leuven Kulak). ORCID: 0000-0002-9849-0874. E-mail: piet.desmet(AT)kuleuven.be.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Historiografia da linguística/da gramática. Gramaticografia. Aprendizagem de línguas. Gramática escolar. Português.

1 Introduction: some preliminary remarks

The commonly shared topic of the contributions to this volume is ‘Ibero-American grammaticography’. Apart from highly relevant questions that can be raised about the specificity of Hispanic and Portuguese grammaticography, or its constellation in the so-called ‘New World’, as well as about the links (1) with broader international trends of grammaticography and (2) with long-standing traditions of grammar-writing (as these can be traced through the transmission of formats of description and through terminological continuity), it may seem useful to reflect upon the *nature* of grammaticography.

Reflection on this foundational issue should essentially bear on two crucial questions:

- (i) What can/should be understood by ‘grammar’?
- (ii) What place can/should be assigned to grammar within a larger view on the methodology and epistemology of science (granted, of course, that there is a basic agreement about the scientific status of grammar)?

Attempting to answer these questions constitutes, in our view, an endeavour which, apart from having its proper metascientific relevance, will be helpful not only for practising linguists —and, crucially, for those who label themselves as ‘grammarians’—, but also for language teachers, for historiographers of linguistics (the majority of the contributors to this volume will reckon themselves among this group), for scholars active in the field of language didactics, and for philosophers of science (especially in the field of humanities). More generally, since the activity of grammar-writing (i.e. *grammaticographia*, the learned Latin term)¹ is a culture-historical phenomenon, which has given way to chronologically, geographically and culturally diverse products, the above questions concern issues that also belong to the domain

¹ Or *grammatographia*; the latter term was used in 1529 by Simon de Colines (*Colinaeus*) and Jacques Lefèvre d’Étaples (*Stapulensis*) in the title of their condensed grammar of Latin, in which use is made of tabular exposition: *GRAMMATOGRAPHIA ad prompte citoque descendam grammäticen, tãbulas tum generâles, tum speciâles cõntinens*. In his foreword, Simon de Colines defines *grammatographia* as ‘universal [method of] description of grammar’ (*universalis descriptio grammätices*).

of historians of ideas, historians of book production and all those involved in language documentation and planning.

The two questions concerning the specificity (or, identity) and the status of grammar should therefore be answered on the basis of a methodological and historiographical investigation of the *textual genre* called ‘grammar’, and ideally it would involve a comprehensive (in terms of coverage of time and space) and a comparative investigation. It is important to take into account the latter recommendation in order to appropriately relativise the aims of the present contribution, which has self-imposed restrictions (cf. section 2., ‘Objectives’).

2 Objectives

Restrictions of space, and limitations as to competence in the history of divergent grammatical traditions, resulted in two drastic constraints for the present paper.

- (1) On the one hand, we will offer a condensed reflection on ‘grammar’, addressing mainly three questions:
 - (a) What can be understood by ‘grammar’?
 - (b) Is it possible to list defining characteristics of the genre called ‘grammar’?
 - (c) What is the relation between ‘grammar’ and language learning? This question raises the issue of (properly) defining characteristics of a ‘learner’s grammar’.
- (2) On the other hand, in order to offer confront this first methodological part with an empirical testing-ground, we will examine one particular grammar. Our analysis will bear on a learner’s grammar of Portuguese from the first decades of the 20th century; this case-study offers the advantage of dealing with an elementary grammar for primary school pupils, thus illustrating the views of its author (Cândido de Figueiredo) on teaching grammar *from the bottom*.

The reflections on ‘grammar’ form the object of section 3, whereas section 4 presents the results of our case-study.

3 Defining ‘grammar’ and ‘learner’s grammar’

3.1 The term grammar is a *polysemous* term (cf. Palmer 1971, p. 13-15). It can refer to (at least) three different, though metonymically related realities, viz.

- (1) The organisation (constitution/build-up) of a language (L_x): within this acceptance of the term, one notes a further distinction between a conception that subsumes under ‘grammar’ the levels of phonology (and orthography), morphology, syntax and to some extent even semantics (at least as far as ‘categorical meaning’ is concerned), and one that sees this ‘grammatical constitution’ as including only morphosyntax (or: morphology and syntax). As a general term one can designate this first conception as the *ontological* conception of ‘grammar’; the two subtypes can be designated as involving a ‘maximal’, respectively ‘restricted’ conception (1_{max} and 1_{res}).
- (2) The (interiorised) knowledge of the ‘mechanism’ of a language. Within this conception, the term ‘grammar’ is used to refer to the competence of a (native or non-native) speaker of a language (L_x), and more precisely his mastery of principles and rules that govern the build-up of the language (= the [correct] realisation of units and patterns; the [correct] realisation of higher-order combinations)². This second conception can be called the *psychological* (or cognitive) conception of ‘grammar’.
- (3) Within a down-to-earth view of ‘grammar’, the term refers to a (grammar) book (or book-length study, which nowadays can take various formats), in which the grammar (either in the 1_{max} or in the 1_{res} conception) of a language L_x is laid down, and which can be, or should be, seen as representing the (ideal) knowledge — grammar as to conception (2)— of a (native/non-native) speaker of L_x . This third conception can be called the *materialistic* conception of ‘grammar’.

Whereas (1) and (2) involve the ‘holistic’ or ‘massive’ comprehension of the term *grammar* —we speak of **the** *grammar* within conception (1) or conception (2)— in (3) we find

² The competence attributed to the (native/non-native) speaker implies ‘grammar’ in the 1_{max} ontological conception.

a ‘discrete’ or ‘fractal’ comprehension of the term: here we speak of *a grammar / (various) grammars* of, say, Portuguese, Spanish, English, ...

3.2. Grammaticography, the writing of (a) grammar—in an attempt to ‘catch the language’ (cf. Ameka; Dench; Evans ed. 2006)— can be seen in terms of the *activity* leading to a product (called ‘grammar’) or in terms of the *product*, i.e. the result obtained. The notion ‘grammar’ should be taken as a generic concept, not as an exclusively used label. As a matter of fact, scholars acquainted with the long-term history of linguistics are well aware of the fact that grammars have been published under a variety of titles (containing terms such as ‘method’, ‘rules’, ‘art [of grammar]’, ‘compendium’, ‘introduction [to language x]’, etc.). Basically, this variety of titles can be reduced to three types, according to the focus

- (a) on the core object; in this case ‘grammar’ (or its equivalent in other languages) will normally be the most common title/part of the title;
- (b) on the methodological approach; in this case terms such as ‘method’ or ‘analysis’ (or their equivalents) will occur most frequently;
- (c) on the purpose of instruction, i.e. transmitting knowledge; here terms such as ‘guide’, ‘introduction’, ‘pathway’ will figure most prominently.

In what follows we will be concerned with grammar(s) as *product(s)*. In order to define the concept of ‘grammar [as a product]’, we will proceed along three levels, with an increasingly narrow scope.

- (A) At a first, more general level one deals with the textual-semiotic status: a grammar is a text in a language (Lg_x) about a language (Lg_α), using a metalanguage (MLg_N).

Schematically this can be presented as in Figure 1:

Figure 1 – Textual-semiotic status of a grammar.

	<i>CODE</i>	<i>REFERENT</i>	<i>METALANGUAGE</i>
T(ext)	Lg_x	Lg_α	MLg_N

Source: elaborated by the authors.

Two notes are in order here:

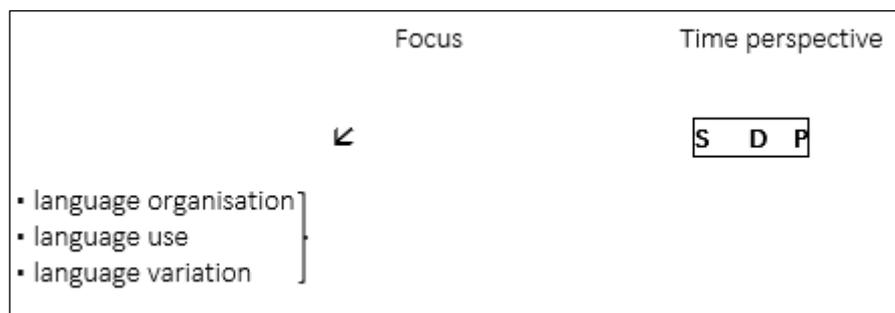
- (i) First, x , α and N may be/may involve the same object-language, but this does not have to be necessarily so.
 - (ii) Also, it is possible that a grammar is written ('encoded') in more than one language, and a grammar can be about various languages (cf. the case of bilingual grammars), and it may involve the use of metalanguages related to distinct object-languages.
- (B) At a second level we must consider the domain-referential specification (i.e. a specification concerning what is meant by 'about a language').

The specification involves two dimensions: focus and time perspective. The latter can be synchronic (**S**), diachronic (**D**), or —rarely— panchronic (**P**).

As to focus we have to distinguish, basically, three possibilities: a focus on language organisation, a focus on language use, or a focus on language variation.

Schematically the domain-referential specification can be summarised as in Figure 2:

Figure 2 – Domain-referential specification of a grammar/grammatical description.



Source: elaborated by the authors.

Grammatical description focuses on language organisation, whereas language use is the object of pragmatics, sociolinguistics (especially in its 'discourse-oriented' applications), stylistics and text linguistics; language variation is focused upon by dialectology, variational linguistics, and sociolinguistics (variation being linked then with social stratification).

- (C) At a third level, we have to define the particular place of grammar, through a specification of the focus on language organisation. The focus can be specified in terms of the incidence on three different layers, as shown in Figure 3:

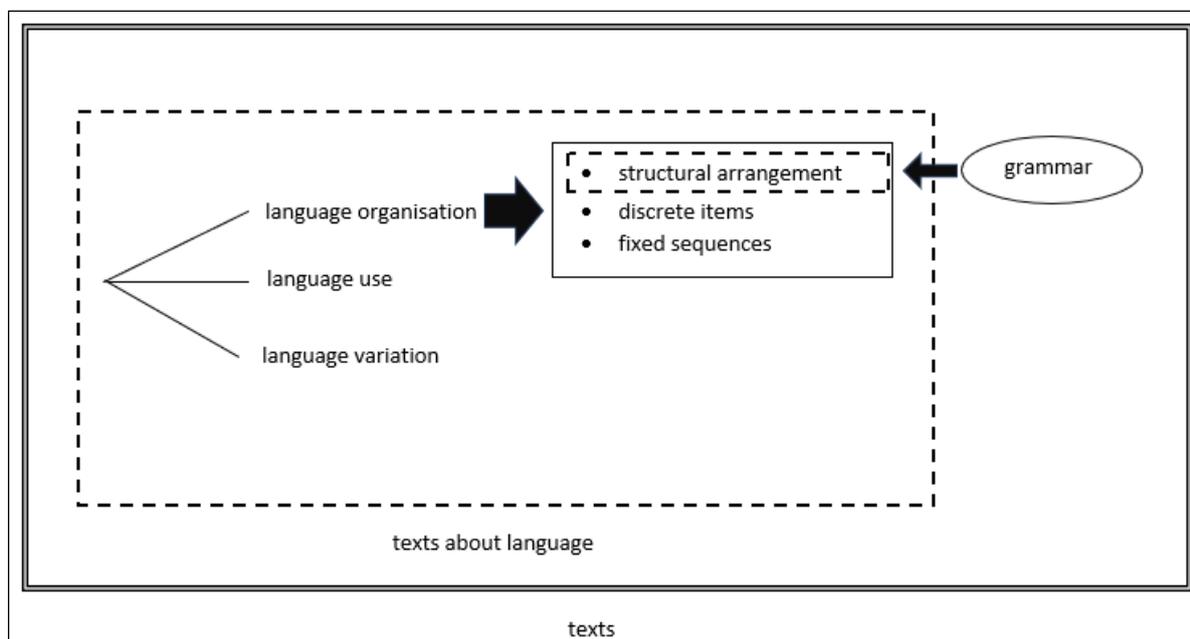
Figure 3 – Focus and layers of a grammar/grammatical description.

▪ structural arrangement	← grammaticography
▪ discrete items	← lexicography
▪ fixed sequences or taxemes	← phraseology (including paremiology)

Source: elaborated by the authors.

The specific object of study of grammaticography can thus be identified as the structural arrangement of a language (/of various languages). Its resulting product, *grammar*, can thus be defined as a textual genre dealing with the domain of language(s), and having a specific focus (on language organisation), from a specific angle (the structural arrangement of this build-up). This is summarised in Figure 4:

Figure 4 – Texts about language: global structure.



Source: elaborated by the authors.

3.3. So far we have *sketched* the place of grammar, but the question arises: can any sort of description of the structural arrangement of the organisation of a language be called a grammar? Here we touch upon the search for *defining characteristics* of grammar.

Basing ourselves on a number of theoretical reflections on the notion of ‘grammar’³, and deriving empirically grounded insights from the examination of a vast corpus of (mostly) Early Modern grammars of several Romance languages⁴, we propose to define a grammar (or ‘grammar text’) in terms of the *conjunction*⁵ of the following properties or characteristics:

- (i) A grammar (text) contains a [more or less successful] *systematic treatment* of the units, classes, patterns and arrangements of/within a language (L_x);
- (ii) The systematic treatment is characterised by the integration of *all the functional levels* that intervene for a correct realisation (in language L_x) of the elements and their (more or less complex) combinations;
- (iii) At each of the functional levels integrated in the treatment, the grammar text offers a *classification* (i.e. a descriptive repartition) and a *categorisation* (i.e. an identification of class-assigning features);
- (iv) Through its systematic treatment, reflecting the distinction between categories (and hence between classes), and the hierarchy/hierarchies between levels, as well as between classes and subclasses, a grammar provides the user with (adequate) insight into the paradigmatic build-up of the language and into the possibilities and constraints of combining units and sequences of units. This insight can (and will normally) be conveyed in the form of (a) rules, (b) principles, or/and (c) admonitions; it can (and will normally) be illustrated with examples.

The textual genre ‘grammar’ can thus be distinguished from other genres that do not display this conjunction of properties, e.g., because of the non-inclusion of all functional levels or because of the lack of systematic treatment. Needless to say, there are works that combine a grammar with some other type of language description; cases in point are grammars containing a vocabulary or various word-lists, and grammars to which sections of dialogues or

³ Cf. Auroux (1992), Sgroi (2005), Swiggers (2012, 2014). In Swiggers (2014) one will find a proposal for a ‘cartography’ of grammatical description.

⁴ See Lioce (2025), a study of ‘emergent grammaticography’ in four Romance language traditions (Occitan, Spanish, Portuguese and French).

⁵ In the sense of logical/mathematical conjunction.

models for letter writing are added. To handle such cases, it is sufficient to make the distinction between the *physical document* (or ‘material copy’) and the *grammar text* contained in it.

3.4. Today, learner’s grammars —also called ‘pedagogical’ or ‘didactic’ grammars⁶— are often considered to be a specific genre, a fact that undoubtedly has to be explained by the increased interest in education policies, by the success of studies on first and second language acquisition, and also by ongoing discussions on the role of grammar in language teaching⁷. Looking at the past, the specificity of ‘learner’s grammars’ seems to be a less relevant issue. Of course, many grammars of the Early Modern and later periods were written with an eye at teaching languages, or improving the mastery of the (normative) language by native speakers (often diglossic speakers of dialects), but it is also a fact that the authors of these grammars hardly, if ever, entered into language-didactic issues. As a compromise between the historiographical assessment and the present-day disciplinary distinctions one can at least attribute to practically all the grammars of the past a pedagogical feature, viz. that of laying down and of teaching the (correct) structural elements and patterns of a language, thus ensuring an adequate competence.

Can we on the basis of what we know today about the requirements for ‘learner’s grammars’ define general properties that are characteristic of such grammars, holding also for those periods in which such a concept was inexistent (or, at least, never made explicit)? Basing ourselves on the methodological literature concerning learner’s grammars⁸, it seems that the following properties can generally be observed in such grammars:

- (a) A first property, also a requirement, is that a learner’s grammar conforms itself to the basic properties of a ‘grammar’ in general: systematic and integrated treatment, containing an accurate description of units, classes, patterns, and combinations of the language in question (cf. *supra*).

⁶ See Oakeshott-Taylor (1985), Newby (2000), Polias; Dare (2006), and Zimmermann (1978).

⁷ For a recent example of these discussions, with reference to the Portuguese schooling situation, see Silva; Pereira; Sebastião (2019).

⁸ For an assessment, see Zimmermann (1978) and Newby (2008).

In addition, a learner's grammar is defined by a number of 'user-adapted' characteristics:

- (b) Accessibility of the metalanguage (more specifically, of the terminology).
- (c) The positing of a well-defined starter's threshold (referring to the competence *and* the needs of the starter) and of a well-defined target-level of (grammatical and lexical) competence.
- (d) The *meaning-form* directionality, directly linked with attention paid to context(s) of language use.

Property (c) should be seen in the light of (more) recently acquired psychological and pedagogical insights concerning cognitive and affective learning, reactions to different types of stimuli, the role of motivation, etc. Property (d) may be seen as the concretisation of a more encompassing characteristic of current learning models in general, viz. their focus on (greater) functionality, on increased directness (or: 'immediacy' and contact with reality), and on creative participation. This broader educational trend accounts for a further characteristic that one can attribute to present-day learner's grammars but which is hardly apparent (and hardly traceable) in older grammars, viz.

- (e) The recourse to visual (and, depending on the medium, auditive) foregrounding.

A learner's grammar therefore is more than a descriptive grammar: it is characterised by some additional properties. We will now take a 'candid' look, devoid of any type of preconceptions or prejudices, at one particular elementary grammar (of Portuguese) of the first decades of the past century.

4 A Portuguese elementary grammar: Cândido de Figueiredo's *Gramática das crianças*

4.1. In order to check the methodological considerations presented in the preceding section against the background of 'data in the (historiographical) field', we will examine grammaticographical conceptions and procedures as these are manifested in a particular grammar, more precisely an elementary grammar of Portuguese, intended for instruction in primary schools. Our case-study will thus be limited, in principle, to a single grammar but we will also include observations on a more advanced grammar of Portuguese, by the same author.

Our analysis bears on the *Gramática das Crianças* of the Portuguese polymath Cândido de Figueiredo. The grammar was first published in 1918, and appeared in a second revised edition in 1925 (we will use this second edition; Cândido de Figueiredo 1925a). The choice of this grammar has three motivations:

- (a) We deal here with an author who not only was well informed in matters grammatical and linguistic but who was also well acquainted with education policy and issues of public instruction.
- (b) Secondly, the author of this teaching grammar explicitly defines the targeted audience, specifying the level of grammatical competence to be attained.
- (c) Thirdly, the same author composed a more advanced grammar, also for school instruction; we will occasionally refer to this more advanced grammar in order to highlight relevant options that distinguish both works.

The author and his grammaticographical production are briefly presented in paragraph 4.2.; the (main) results of our case-study are discussed in paragraph 4.3.

4.2. António Cândido de Figueiredo (Lobão da Beira, 1846 – Lisboa, 1925) was a prominent intellectual figure in Portugal during the second half of the 19th and the first half of the 20th century. He studied law and languages at the University of Coimbra, and already as a young man he was active as a journalist⁹, poet¹⁰ and translator¹¹. By profession a lawyer, established in Lisbon, he soon became a member of various learned societies. In 1875-76 he worked for the Portuguese Ministry of Education, and as a school inspector he visited schools in the district of Coimbra; in 1876 he published a report on the teaching in rural schools (Cândido de Figueiredo, 1876). From that time on, he regularly fulfilled political and

⁹ The list of political, broadly cultural, literary and socio-economic journals and magazines to which Cândido contributed (or of which he was a (co-)founder) is almost endless; it includes, among many others, *O Cenáculo*; *O Instituto*; *A Republica das Letras*; *Revista de Lisboa*; *A Capital*; *Brasil-Portugal*; *O Occidente*; *Diário de Portugal*, etc.

¹⁰ His first publication of poetry appeared in 1867. Between 1867 and 1908, Cândido published more than a dozen of poetry volumes and novels, including an *Anthologia Poetica* (1887) as well as a volume of *Peregrinações* (1908), a collection of poems written between 1868 and 1908.

¹¹ During his lifetime Cândido published numerous translations, not only of Sanskrit texts but also work of René de Chateaubriand and Maurice Maeterlinck. In addition, he translated moralising works of Paolo Mantegazza.

administrative duties. During some time he was secretary and then vice-director of the Ministry of Justice.

Cândido de Figueiredo had a long-standing interest in languages, and in education policy. As a young man he had taught himself classical Sanskrit and he produced translations of some Sanskrit texts. His political-educational engagement and his part-time professorship at the *Liceu Central* of Lisbon resulted in the production of various manuals for use in schools: on civil law (Cândido de Figueiredo, 1883), on universal history (Cândido de Figueiredo, 1885), on geography (Cândido de Figueiredo, 1886) and on the history of Portugal (Cândido de Figueiredo, 1888a). After he was made a member of the *Conselho Superior de Instrução Pública*, in 1887, Cândido dedicated himself to the study and promotion of his *língua pátria*¹², Portuguese, and to the advancement of its teaching in schools. In 1888 he published a collection of vulgarising articles on the history and current state of Portuguese (Cândido de Figueiredo, 1888b), a publication which aroused reactions from philological scholars.

From the last decade of the 19th century on, Cândido de Figueiredo invested much of his energy in scientific as well as vulgarising publications on the Portuguese language. His vulgarising work addresses issues of language correction (both in speech and writing) and purism, as well as observations on loanwords (see e.g., Cândido de Figueiredo, 1902) or specific expressions. His remarks, judgments and observations on language found their way into articles that were conveniently gathered in multi-volume works aiming at a large audience, such as *Problemas da linguagem* (Cândido de Figueiredo, 1905-1913, 3 volumes) and *Falar e escrever* (Cândido de Figueiredo, 1906).

Cândido's scientific work on the Portuguese and Brazilian-Portuguese language covers the areas of orthography, lexicography and grammaticography. His interest in orthography is testified to by his remarks on orthographical reforms in Brazil and in Portugal (see Cândido de Figueiredo, 1908, 1923). In the field of lexicography he directed the *Novo dicionário da língua portuguesa* (first edition in 1899; thoroughly revised edition in 1913)¹³, to which various renowned scholars contributed (e.g., Francisco Adolfo Coelho, Guilherme de Vasconcelos

¹² For a 'patriotic' plea in support of Portuguese see his *Combates sem sangue* (Cândido de Figueiredo, 1925b).

¹³ After 1913, the dictionary had several reeditions/reprints.

Abreu, Aniceto dos Reis Gonçalves Viana). As a self-made grammarian Cândido de Figueiredo acquired a thorough knowledge of the Portuguese and Brazilian-Portuguese grammatical traditions. He made a substantial contribution to the description of the (respective) order of pronouns¹⁴, but his main achievement in the field is constituted by two school grammars, one elementary and the other more advanced, the first editions of which appeared in 1916 and 1918 (see Fig. 5).

Figure 5 – Cândido de Figueiredo's school grammars of Portuguese.

1916. *Gramática sintética da língua portuguesa*. Lisboa: Livraria Clássica Editora. [Numerous reeditions]

1918. *A gramática das crianças*. Lisboa: Livraria Clássica Editora. [Second ed.: 1925]

Source: elaborated by the authors.

A member (and, subsequently, president) of the Portuguese *Academia das Ciências de Lisboa*, Cândido de Figueiredo was also a member of various foreign academies or societies: the *Real Academia Española*, the *Academia Brasileira de Letras*, the *Centro de Ciências, Artes e Letras* of Campinas, and the *Real Academia de Jurisprudencia y Legislación* in Madrid.

Cândido de Figueiredo's grammatical conceptions constitute the subject of the following section (4.3.).

4.3. Cândido de Figueiredo's *Gramática das crianças* is what is commonly called an 'elementary grammar', for use in primary schools. In general, historiographers of linguistics (and of grammaticography) show a limited interest in school grammars, and this holds especially for primary school grammars. However, Cândido's small work (111 pages, including the preface and the table of contents) merits our attention since it stems from an outspoken didactic conviction of the author. The following analysis will focus on the 'program' announced by the author (4.3.1.), on his way of introducing young children to grammar (4.3.2.) and on the overall structuring and execution of the work (4.3.3.). In our analysis we will also refer, by way

¹⁴ Viz. his monograph study *O problema da colocação de pronomes* (first edition in 1909; second edition in 1913; numerous reprints).

of comparison, to Cândido de Figueiredo's advanced school grammar of Portuguese, the *Gramática sintética*.

4.3.1. Cândido presents his elementary grammar as a *modesto ensaio de saneamento escolar* (1925a, p. 9); the expression figures at the end of his preface¹⁵ addressed to the parents and school teachers of the youngsters. The motivation underlying the work stems from dissatisfaction with extant grammars for young children: these contain useless technical terminology, incomprehensible definitions and complicated rules that have to be memorised. The *Gramática das crianças* is a reaction against manuals produced by *homens de ciência, adestrados na técnica da alta Filologia* (1925a, p. 5)¹⁶. As Cândido makes clear from the beginning, the spirit of young children is opposed to everything that is not simple or not clear. The crucial requirement therefore is to write with simplicity and naturalness (*escrever com simplicidade e naturalidade*; 1925a, p.6). For a(n experienced) writer of grammars this is not an easy task, but Cândido de Figueiredo offers the demonstration by his own vital experience: from his preface we learn that as a young child he received instruction in grammar from a modest school teacher, and this without turning to grammatical compendia. Nonetheless he obtained the highest score at the admission exam for secondary school: his own itinerary stands as an indisputable proof of the superfluity of the 'sophistry' (the author speaks of *casuística*) of too much terminology and rule formulation. The key concept underlying the *Gramática das crianças* is thus simplicity.

¹⁵ The text of the 1925 preface is identical with that of the preface of the first edition.

¹⁶ In the case of the *Gramática sintética*, the motivation is a twofold one, as explained by the author in the "Razão do livro" (Cândido de Figueiredo, 1948, p. V-XII; = reproduction of the original preface, signed July 1915): on the one hand, there was the external factor of the Portuguese orthography reform (1911), which urged a revision of (that part of) grammatical doctrine, and, on the other hand, the author marks his dissatisfaction with the extant advanced grammatical descriptions of which he lists the discordant views on a number of issues (1948, p. VIII-X). It should be noted that in his preface Cândido de Figueiredo shows himself to be thoroughly acquainted with the history of Portuguese (and Brazilian-Portuguese) grammaticography: he cites a very long list of authors of grammars. As in his *Gramática das crianças*, Cândido makes a plea for simplicity, efficiency and practicalness, and hopes that school teachers will show openness to experiment with his grammar: "Outro alvo o [= o autor do livro] arrastou: (...) tornar prática e, quanto possível, simples a doutrinação gramatical, omitindo excursos fastidiosos e noções adiaforas, que pouco ou nada importam ao conhecimento da língua pátria; concentrar em pequeno espaço doutrinas que poderiam sugerir volumes, e expô-las em linguagem chã, acessível a mestres e discípulos. [...] E, contudo, é lícito supor que o professorado oficial, primário e secundário, embora ilaqueado pela letra dos programas, não ponha de parte os processos e doutrina da *Gramática Sintética*, e queira experimentar o que ela pode dar na escola, se ao professor aprouverem aqueles processos e doutrina" (1948, p. X-XI).

The *simplicidade* should be understood in a twofold way:

- (a) On the one hand, there is the need for simple terminology: using a common term rather than a (highly) technical term often yields the best result;
- (b) On the other hand, there is the simplicity in dealing with the object matter (viz. the grammar of the language): grammatical phenomena that are too complex to be dealt with in a grammar for young children are to be left out.

The simplicity of the *Gramática das crianças* is a deliberate, audience-adapted decision taken by an author who was familiar with the situation and the needs of primary school pupils.

4.3.2. In Cândido de Figueiredo's view simplicity goes hand in hand with naturalness. Young children should receive grammatical instruction, not *in vacuo*, but in a context of awareness of the function and relevance of grammatical and communicative competence. Before dealing with the grammar of Portuguese the author thus offers to his readership some general considerations ("Primeiras ideias"; 1925a, p. 11-15) on language and speech. These considerations set the general background against which one should understand the place and the role of grammar.

In his preface Cândido had emphasised the practical purpose of grammar, viz. to help young users handle language correctly (1925a, p. 5-9). Subsequently, in the section "Primeiras ideias", he defines language as speech (*fala*), highlighting its function of communicating thoughts, feelings and wishes. The speech common to a nation is the language (*língua*) of that nation (1925a, p. 11). Over time a language can be adopted by other nations, as happened with Portuguese, "que se usa em Portugal, nas suas colónias e no Brasil" (1925a, p. 11); in the course of time language evolves, and in the case of Portuguese this has led, according to Cândido, to increasing opulence and beauty.

Language, both spoken and written, is regulated in its use, and the methodical description of this regularity is called 'grammar' (*gramática*; 1925a, p. 11-12); at the same time 'grammar', as a competence or technique (*arte*), provides speakers with a tool for expressing thoughts and feelings. From a functional-communicative point of view one can applaud the culturally oriented presentation of the language, as well as the ideas that regularity is grounded

in usage, and that ‘grammar’ has both a ‘language-objective’¹⁷ dimension and a ‘competence-subjective’ side.

What does a confrontation of Cândido’s *Gramática das crianças* with the characteristics of a learner’s grammar teach us? We will proceed in a systematic order.

- (I) The grammar reflects an effort at a systematic and integrated treatment of Portuguese, involving a description of sounds (and their written representation by letters), word classes (and their accidents)¹⁸ and their combinations; this confirms characteristic (a) of learner’s grammars.
- (II) Cândido makes a restrictive use of technical terms. His (rather minimalistic) metalanguage is, in general, accessible for a readership of young pupils. The author avoids, among other things, the terminology of articulatory phonetics, and standard terminology of morphological analysis¹⁹. If we take this as a confirmation of characteristic (b) of learner’s grammars, this conclusion should however be qualified: not so much because the author makes use of the (Portuguese) terms designating the various word classes²⁰ —after all, these terms are an integral part of (basic) grammar teaching— but because part of the terminology appealed to by the author could have been dispensed with (in our view)²¹. Also, one may criticise the multiplication of synonyms (4 terms) for *palavra*, or (2 terms) for *substantivos depreciativos*, something which might cause confusion.
- (III) Cândido defines his targeted audience from the start and he explains grammatical concepts in terms adapted to the cognitive level of young children²². Also, his

¹⁷ The overall structure of language (up to the level of words: sounds; syllables; words) is briefly mentioned in the “Primeiras ideias” (1925a, p. 12-13).

¹⁸ The term *acidente* is used in the *Gramática* (1925a, p. 32).

¹⁹ At the end of his life, Cândido published a lexicon of grammatical and philological terminology, which includes next to technical metalanguage also the more common school terminology (Cândido de Figueiredo, 1924).

²⁰ Cândido recognises ten word classes: *substantivos*; *adjectivos*; *numerais*; *pronomes*; *artigos*; *verbos*; *advérbios*; *preposições*; *conjunções*; *interjeições*.

²¹ This holds, e.g., for terms such as *acidente*, (*substantivo*) *epiceno*, (*adjectivo*) *gentílico*; admittedly, none of these terms plays a key role in Cândido’s grammatical description.

²² For a nice example see his explanation of *substantivos abstractos* (1925a, p. 31); also the explanation of the category of number (1925a, p. 35) is a textbook example of *simplicidade*.

statements are illustrated by clear, well-chosen examples. In a few cases the grammatical issues discussed may be above the (expected) level of an elementary grammar. This is, e.g., the case in the third part where (semantico-syntactic) functions are dealt with: here, Cândido discusses the functions of *sujeito*, *predicado*, *predicativo*, *complemento*, *apôsto* and *vocativo*, which for young children are not that easy to grasp. But it must be conceded that the author²³ introduces, explains and illustrates these terms with great clarity²⁴. All in all one can say that the *Gramática das crianças* exhibits characteristic (c) of learner's grammars.

- (IV) The directionality adopted in the *Gramática das crianças* is one from *form* to *meaning*. This contrasts with (contemporary) learner's grammars, which in principle have a 'communicative' orientation and proceed from meaning to form (see *supra*, characteristic (d)). But one should also bear in mind that contemporary learner's grammars are often rather language manuals, and not grammars properly speaking. As is well known, grammars typically²⁵ proceed from form to meaning. Also, in order to relativise our general judgment on Cândido's grammar, one can say that there is a 'meaning (and use) component' that receives due attention; for instance, all the word classes and their accidents are defined, explicated or rephrased in semantic terms, and their (prototypical) meaning is illustrated with one or more examples.
- (V) As to visual foregrounding (= characteristic (e)), this is almost entirely absent in the *Gramática das crianças*, except for the (limited) presentation of verb conjugations in a tabular form (1925a, p. 55-67)²⁶.

²³ It should be noted that the term *função* is not used in the first, more theoretical chapter, of part III, but it is used in chapter 3 ("Colocação e função das palavras") of that part.

²⁴ Occasionally, Cândido refers to the optionality of distributing grammatical information between an elementary school grammar and an advanced school grammar (see 1925a, p. 80, 105).

²⁵ Exceptions are rare. Brunot's extensive work (Brunot 1922) constituted a forceful plea for a meaning-to-form grammar; as a grammar this work hardly had any success. A modern instance of meaning-to-form grammar is the 'grammar of signification/meaning and expression' of Charaudeau (1992).

²⁶ Otherwise, information on inflectional morphology is presented in a linear way.

4.3.3. After having presented the “Primeiras ideias” (1925a, p. 11-15) Cândido de Figueiredo makes a start with the grammatical description of Portuguese²⁷. Contrary to the usual division into phonetics/phonology, morphology, and syntax —a division he uses in his advanced grammar—, he adopts a macro-structure and a terminology that are linked to the substantial reality of language, and hence more transparent for the intended audience. We find a distinction between

- the fundamental sounds of language;
- the ‘forms’ of the language, i.e. the types of words (*palavras*);
- the combinations between words, i.e. word groups and sentences;
- the relations between sentences.

Figure 6 illustrates the difference between Cândido’s two grammars as to their terminology relative to the macro-structure²⁸:

Figure 6 – Macro-structural terminology in Cândido's grammars.

<i>Gramática das crianças</i>	
Primeira parte	<i>Os sons fundamentais da língua</i>
Segunda parte	<i>As formas da linguagem</i>
Terceira parte	<i>Combinações das palavras entre si</i>
Quarta parte	<i>Relações das orações entre si</i>
<i>Gramática sintética</i>	
Primeira parte	<i>Fonologia</i>
Segunda parte	<i>Morfologia</i>
Terceira parte	<i>Sintaxe</i>

Source: elaborated by the authors.

In the *Gramática das crianças* the author thus avoids many technical terms, using instead common nouns, such as *sons*, *formas*, *palavras*, *orações*, *combinações*, *relações*. It is on the basis of these general notions that the increasingly complex structure of the language

²⁷ In the following we will limit our analysis of Cândido’s grammar to issues of methodological relevance, in direct relation to the concepts of ‘grammar’ and ‘learner’s grammar’. Because of space restrictions we will not enter into a discussion of topics of Portuguese descriptive grammar.

²⁸ The four parts of the *Gramática das crianças* occupy, respectively, p. 17-26, p. 27-74, p.75-102 and p. 103-105.

(in fact: of any language) is laid down: from units below the word level, to words (and word classes) and then to sentences²⁹. Cândido offers a linear exposition of Portuguese grammar: after a survey of the sounds of the language and their representation in writing, he discusses the various word classes in part II (1925a, p. 27-74); the second chapter of this part is divided into 10 sections, corresponding to the ten parts of speech distinguished by Cândido. The linear way of presentation is maintained in part III (1925a, p. 75-102), in which Cândido first discusses the structure of the sentence, agreement patterns, and then the collocation of each of the word classes: chapter 3 of this part displays a division into 10 sections (1925a, p. 81-102), parallel to that of the second chapter of the preceding part. In the extremely concise part IV (1925a, p. 103-105) Cândido illustrates, again in a linear narrative, the notions of ‘coordination’ and ‘subordination’, together with their means of expression (conjunctions; relative or interrogative pronouns).

In this way the *Gramática das crianças* can —and should— be read progressively: through a continuous³⁰ reading the user of the grammar explores the build-up of the language, with numerous examples (printed in italics) serving as an aid. The focus of the grammaticographical exposition is thus on the structuring components of the language in their direct link with illustrative language data. Cândido’s approach can be captured through its three key elements, crucially linked to each other: a grammatical notion (designated by a term), its (functional) content within the language’s grammatical structure, its exemplification. In the *Gramática das crianças* we find three strategies³¹ to present this triad:

²⁹ As pointed out above, Cândido, in his description of the various levels, makes a restricted use of technical grammatical vocabulary (for the various types of sounds and accents, for the word classes and their subdivisions, for types of sentences, and for relationships between sentences).

³⁰ The *Gramática* has a straightforward structure, with a division into parts, the first three of which are divided into chapters. Longer chapters are divided into sections and these into subsections, short chapters are not. Within the subsections or within the short chapters (with no subdivision), the information is distributed over paragraphs that are simply marked by consecutive numbering (the numbering starts from 1 within each subsection or within each short chapter).

³¹ We will limit ourselves to only one illustrative example for each of the three strategies.

- (a) The first strategy —the one most frequently used— consists in starting with the introduction of the notion through its terminological designation, which is then clarified (i.e. paraphrased or explained) and subsequently illustrated³².
- (b) The second strategy, less frequently used, consists in describing the content contours of a notion, which is then exemplified and finally identified by its technical term³³.
- (c) The third strategy, also less frequently used, starts from a characterisation of the content, which subsequently receives its technical designation before being illustrated³⁴.

Taking as the reference point the introduction of the technical term, the first strategy can be called ‘proactive’ (or ‘proleptic’), the second ‘retroactive’ (or ‘postponed’), and the third ‘medial’ (or ‘enacting’). Taken together these three strategies generate sufficient variation within the consistently linear narrative of the *Gramática das crianças*.

5 Conclusions

Historiographers of linguistics (and grammaticography) generally accord more attention to theoretically flavoured works which open wide perspectives and propose ambitious, if not daunting views. School grammars do not precisely answer these properties: they have modest aims, often had a (very) local diffusion, and thus exerted little or no influence. But just as the history writing of political and socio-economical evolution should not exclusively focus on ‘landmarks’, ‘summits’ or ‘highlights’, but also on more down-to-earth realities and facts, the historiography of linguistics has to pay attention also to ‘lower-level’ products of linguistic activity.

³² Example: “*Adjectivos* são palavras que se juntam aos substantivos, para os qualificar. Assim, temos *belo, bom, mau, alegre*, etc., que qualificam os substantivos a que se juntam, como em: *dia belo, bom homem, mau escritor, viúva alegre*, etc.” (1925^a, p. 38).

³³ Example: “Quando [os substantivos] significam uma de muitas coisas ou pessoas de certo gênero, —como *livro, criança, escola*, — chamam-se substantivos *comuns* ou *apelativos*” (1925a,p. 31).

³⁴ Example: “Os adjectivos, quando exprimem simplesmente uma qualidade, sem aumento nem diminuição, chamam-se positivos. Tais são: *lindo, puro, doce*” (1925a, p. 40).

In writing his *Gramática das crianças*, an elementary grammar of Portuguese designed for young native speakers in primary school, Cândido de Figueiredo was well aware of the difficulty of his task: “Eu sei que é difícil escrever para crianças, porque difícil é escrever com simplicidade e naturalidade” (1925a, p. 6). His challenge was to write a grammar “from the bottom”, i.e. to introduce young children to the basics of grammar, showing them the proper place and the proper relevance of the discipline (a subject matter in school!). The author’s guiding principles were simplicity and naturalness.

The latter principle accounts for the fact that at the beginning of the *Gramática* we find a number of general statements, or observations, on speech, on (one’s native) language, on grammar (as both a competence and a methodical description). As is clear from the preface, the author viewed these basic ideas also as essential information for the children’s parents and teachers. The principle of naturalness shows up again at the end of the grammar in the short supplementary chapter on ‘good language’ (“Capítulo complementar: A boa linguagem”, 1925a, p. 107-108): there the author recommends the use of words and expressions that are ‘proper’ to Portuguese and he advises to take an example from those who speak and write well. Correct speech has to follow the true nature of the language.

The other guiding principle, simplicity, made the author avoid unnecessary technical vocabulary, replacing this with words from everyday language, adequately used in uncomplicated definitions —or rather circumlocutions— and always illustrated with examples illustrating the proper application of the terminology. Simplicity also meant for Cândido de Figueiredo the use of sober and uniform formulations (at the risk of stereotypy) and the avoidance of ‘catechetical’ rules. What we find instead is some kind of grammatical narrative, distributed over chapters with consecutively numbered paragraphs. We observe the same *modus operandi* in the author’s *Gramática sintética* (in which, however, much more technical metalanguage is used)³⁵.

Since the publication of the two editions (1918, 1925) of the *Gramática das crianças* a century has elapsed, and meanwhile the teaching of Portuguese (as a first *and* second language) —as well as that of other languages— has drastically changed, profiting from

³⁵ The *Gramática sintética* contains an extensive “Índice alfabético” (Cândido de Figueiredo 1948, p. 265-276) which is, essentially, a list of technical terms (with references to the page where they are introduced and explained).

successive generations' insights in didactics, linguistics, psychology, etc., and benefitting from a host of technological innovations; it would be hard to imagine a primary school teacher today using the *Gramática*. At best, the work has become an object of antiquarian value (and ... of historiographical interest!). However, the implementation of the principles of *simplicidade* and *naturalidade* at the base or bottom level of grammatical instruction remains a crucial requirement.

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³⁶ The “Livraria Clássica Editora” is the continuation of the publishing house of A.M. Teixeira, which officially became the property of “A.M. Teixeira & C.^a (Filhos)”.

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