

# *Active Methodologies for Teaching Grammar: the Roulette of Social Relations of “nós” and “a gente”*

Bruno Felipe Marques **PINHEIRO\***

Gabriele Cristine **CARVALHO\*\***

Paloma Batista **CARDOSO\*\***

\* Master's student in Linguistic Studies at the Universidade Federal de Sergipe (UFS). Specialization (2020) in Teaching with Emphasis on Basic Education at the Instituto Federal de Minas Gerais (IFMG). Contact: bpinnheiro@hotmail.com.

\*\* PhD (2015) in Linguistic Studies at the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG). Professor at the Instituto Federal de Minas Gerais (IFMG). Contact: gabriele.carvalho@ifmg.edu.br.

\*\*\* Master's student in Linguistic Studies at the Universidade Federal de Sergipe (UFS). Specialization (2020) in Teaching with Emphasis on Basic Education at the Instituto Federal de Minas Gerais (IFMG). Contact: paloma-batistacardoso@hotmail.com.

**Abstract:** In this paper, we expose the relevance of active methodologies for teaching grammar through the application of the game “The roulette of social relations of ‘nós’ and ‘a gente’” in a 9<sup>th</sup> grade class at Jacintho de Figueiredo School (Aracaju/SE) to contribute to the productive teaching of usage patterns of first person plural pronouns. We assume that students must be protagonists of the learning process, considering their personal experiences. The results of the application showed four patterns of use for verbal agreement with the forms “nós” and “a gente”, which highlights the importance of a language teaching model sensitive to sociolinguistic varieties of students against the canonical variety of the language. The game proved to be a plausible alternative to what we proposed because through it the whole class was able to rethink linguistic uses, their conditioning, and impacts on social life.

## **Keywords:**

Active methodologies. Grammar and variation. First person plural.

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# Active Methodologies for Teaching Grammar: the Roulette of Social Relations of “nós” and “a gente”

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Bruno Felipe Marques Pinheiro; Gabriele Cristine Carvalho; Paloma Batista Cardoso

## INTRODUCTION

In his text *Mas o que é mesmo gramática* Carlos Franchi (2006), a linguist, questions “Should grammar still be thought in elementary school?” (p. 11). Many researchers and teachers have been discussing the relevance of grammar teaching, sometimes in favor, sometimes against it. However, in these discussions, a confusion about what grammar teaching means is common.

According to the National Curriculum Parameters (BRASIL, 1998), the grammar teaching is supposed to instrumentalize the student to proficiently read and write different genres. The aim should be gathering resources of textual and linguistic competence so that students use their knowledge in four acting axes (reading, orality, linguistic analysis and text production), and develop the interactive and textual competences in different genres and social contexts.

The Curricular Common National Basis of Portuguese Language of Elementary School, a normative document homologated in 2018, assumes the centrality of the text in Portuguese Language teaching and recommends that “theoretical and metalinguistic studies – about language, literature, standard norm and other language varieties – should not be taken as an end in itself” (BRASIL, 2017, p. 67). In this sense, grammar should be taught not as a set of rules to be memorized, but as an instrument for social demands of reading, writing and oral communication.

Despite the contributions of the sociolinguistic studies in the educational field (BORTONIRICARDO, 2004, 2005, 2008), that kind of practice in which the underlying sense of language is the one of an unchangeable structure which, as a consequence, is not influenced by social particularities of diverse groups of speakers situated in specific socio-historical environments, is still present in school sphere.

There are teachers that conceive grammar as a “systematic set of rules to speak and write well, established by specialists based on the use of language set by good writers” (FRANCHI, 2006, p. 17), which yields a dictatorial teaching, since it ignores the experiences of real speakers and does not enable students to reflect on the complexity of communication and on the factors that influence it. Nevertheless, we understand grammar as a result of speakers’ experiences in various communicative situations. Therefore, it is in an ongoing adaptation for being part of human cognition. In this perspective, grammar would not correspond to the norms of well speaking and writing as many normative grammarians point out, but to a set of rules that the speaker of a language unconsciously activates in order to communicate (BYBEE, HOPPER, 2001; GIVÓN, 2005; BYBEE, 2010).

Sociolinguistics, a branch of linguistics that studies the relations between language and society, points out that variation and change are inherent to natural languages. In social living, these processes are influenced by the judgements that individuals, organized in groups, show in their social relationships (LABOV, 1978, 2001, 2006). That is why some varieties – spoken by socioeconomic privileged people, it is worth noting – are better accepted and have more prestige than the others.

From sociolinguistic studies, the senses of right and wrong have been changed in universities and in many schools, since what we frequently call error is in fact the use of a linguistic form with less social prestige or a stigmatized form, as noted in the following quotation:

Portuguese errors are simply *differences* between varieties of a language. Frequently, these differences are shown between the variety used at home, where an oral culture is predominant in relations permeated by affection and informality, [...] and cultures of literacy, as the one cultivated in school (BORTONI-RICARDO, 2004, p. 37).

We argue that the best approach to grammar teaching at school should be based on students' realities, from a practice that takes into account their experiences as speakers, and, definitely what is socially accepted, aiming to allow their full participation in different spheres of social life. We thus defend that students should be the protagonists of their learning, systematizing rules and uses of language according to different social spaces.

Thus, we need a sort of approach in which the focus is on the student, not on the teacher. In that case, we consider that the active methodologies may be teaching strategies through which students are protagonists of their own learning. Students exchange positions from spectators to protagonists in acquiring knowledge, which promotes a better development of learning and of different competences. Departing from students' realities enables the understanding and the learning of concepts (LAURIA; ZAMBAR; LEMOS, 2019).

The contributions of using active methodologies for the grammar teaching are exposed in this paper through the application of a pedagogical-didactic game entitled "Roulette of social relations of 'nós' and 'a gente'" ("we"), which has the aim to contribute to the productive teaching of grammar, particularly the teaching of first person plural pronouns. This game was applied to one group of 9<sup>th</sup> grade students at State School Jacintho de Figueiredo<sup>1</sup> from Aracaju/SE, in three stages: the application of a collecting instrument; the application of the game; and the systematization of grammatical rules.

In the next section, we will argue in favor of the relevance of active methodologies as a way of an efficient teaching process in order to stimulate reflections on the complexity of social factors that influence linguistic uses. Then, we will make an overview of linguistic studies about the variation of the first person plural in Brazilian Portuguese. Finally, we will describe the application method of the game and present the results and discussions, in addition to considerations on the development of the activity.

## ACTIVE METHODOLOGIES FOR THE TEACHING OF GRAMMAR

In classes of linguistic analysis (grammar), one of the difficulties found is students' engagement. As a goal for motivating participation, active methods may be useful for leaning because it proposes to start from students' curiosity in order to spark the interest for their own learning, motivating research, reflection, analysis of situations and decision making (BERBEL, 2011).

Experience has the main role in active methods since it arises from the relations between the bodies of the self and the other in interaction in the perceptions between the agent and the social situation established by these two bodies (DEWEY, 1978). Knowledge begins to be learned by students since their experiences are built among their colleagues in school. In this kind of approach, the role of the teacher begins to be of a mediator to facilitate the connection between students and the exposed situations, and that enables the construction of knowledge based on three axes: student, situation and content. Through the orientations and tips given by the teacher, students are motivated to build their own learning (2010).

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<sup>1</sup> Jacintho de Figueiredo is a school located in Farolândia neighborhood, which belongs to Augusto Franco Housing Estate, where the biggest private university of the state is placed. In this area, there are innumerable real estate projects which serve many students from this university, some of them of high middle class. However, the school receives students from a neighborhood characterized by socioeconomic vulnerability.

Active methodologies make students abandon the place of mere content receptive bodies and turn into bodies that generate actions of change of their own realities. They move from a receptive position and occupy the center of the process from educational actions. Knowledge is collaboratively built based on the experiences between agents and situations (DIESEL; BALDEZ; MARTINS, 2017; LAURIA; ZAMBAR; LEMOS, 2019).

Among the instruments that may collaborate in the execution of active methodologies, we highlight the game, conceived as a “free activity, consciously taken as ‘not serious’ and exterior to habitual life, but, at the same time, capable of absorbing the player in an intense and total way” (HUIZINGA, 1996, p. 16). It is therefore an alternative to apply the use of active methodologies since it allows the perception and systematization of orders and rules voluntarily.

For creating a game, it is necessary to verify if there are three topics for its operation: presentation, organization and rules. Games may be experimental (created by the teacher, seeking originality in the way of playing the chosen content), adapted (enable the adaptation, in the classroom, of elements that were not included in the original) or traditional (those games whose rules are known and are part of popular tradition). Regardless of the type, “unifying the characteristics of a class to the characteristics of a game through comparison is unifying in the processing of teaching/learning the same criteria of assessment” (ROIPHE, 2017, p. 22).

In this perspective, active methodologies allow students through games to search for knowledge from significant experiences in classroom, besides allowing the teacher to discover their students’ potentials to invent, reinvent, simulate actions and provoke reactions that may be useful to the learning process.

## TEACHING AND LINGUISTIC VARIATION: “NÓS” AND “A GENTE” (“WE”)

Quantitative Variationist Sociolinguistics, proposed by William Labov, emerged last century in the 60’s, and revolutionized what was thought about language and its varieties. Labov (1972) shows that languages present geographical, historical, social and situational variations, and postulates that this heterogeneity is inherent to the linguistic system. This variation is not chaotic nor unpredictable, since the system is organized through categorical and variable rules. For example, the pronoun “a gente” is formed by article “a” + noun “gente”, which could only be used in this order, never as “gente a”. This is a categorical rule, *i.e.*, there is no alteration and it does not vary.

However, speakers of Portuguese may make reference to the first person plural through “nós” and “a gente”. This is a variable rule: there are two forms or variants that may have the same linguistic function, with the same value of truth. In linguistic variation, there is a competition between two or more forms: old forms, or conservative, and new forms, called innovative. Occasionally, a linguistic change may occur in the community, in which the use of a linguistic form is more generalized in relation to the other. For Variationist Sociolinguistics “nós” and “a gente” are considered linguistic variants with the same referential or values of truth (LABOV, 1972): both make reference to the first person plural.

In Brazilian Portuguese, sociolinguistic studies point out that “nós” is the canonical, older form, derived from the Latin pronominal paradigm; “a gente” is the innovative form, formed by the noun “gente” (LOPES, 2002, 2003; 2004). Similar to “nós”, “a gente” assumes mainly the function of subject and direct object in the sentence, as in the examples below:

1. A gente estuda para a prova na biblioteca. (function of subject)  
We study for the test in the library.
2. Minhas amigas encontraram a gente na quadra. (function of object)  
My friends met us in the court.

Studies about the variation between “nós” and “a gente” indicate an increasing tendency to regularization of the innovative form in Brazilian pronominal paradigm in the function of subject (OMENA, 2003). However, the use of “a gente” generates great conflicts between teachers and students in class due to the involvement of verbal agreement forms and subject filling other than those of “nós” (FREITAS; ÁLBAN, 1991; SEARA, 2000; LOPES, 2002, 2004; OMENA, 2003; BORGES, 2004; FERNANDES, 2004; ZILLES, 2005; VIANNA, 2006; SILVA; VITÓRIO, 2018).

In Sergipe, where our educational object was tested, production studies about the variation in the use of 1PP as subject (FREITAG, 2016; MENDONÇA, 2016) point out that “a gente” is predominant among young people (18 to 29 years of age), elementary or higher education students, which suggests that this form is not socially stigmatized. Concerning social evaluation, perception studies (CARDOSO; SOUZA; QUIRINO, 2018; FREITAG; CARDOSO; GÓIS, 2018) suggest that, in speech, this variety is not stigmatized: speakers do not see any problem in its usage in informal contexts. Nevertheless, in school situations, as in written production, high school students evaluate “nós” as the most appropriate form, which is possibly a consequence of the teaching of the pronominal paradigm present in Brazilian Portuguese grammar books. In their speech, however, they use “a gente” as the variant of first person plural (PINHEIRO; SILVA; CARDOSO, 2018).

The form “a gente” keeps characteristics of the noun “gente”, which names a group of people and acquires characteristics of pronouns. From its usage, speakers begin to have four verbal agreement patterns for the 1PP in their grammar (which include those of “nós” variant): “a gente fala”, “a gente falamos”, “nós fala”, “nós falamos” (MARCOTULIO; VIANNA; LOPES, 2013). If, on the one hand, the form “a gente” isolated does not suffer stigmatization, on the other hand, depending on the agreement pattern, it has high levels of awareness and social judgments.

Co-variation studies about the alternation between “nós” and “a gente” indicate a highly negative evaluation for occurrences such as “a gente vamos” and “nós vai”, which are frequently attributed to less educated speakers, evidencing a pattern of salience of the forms that are socially accepted (NARO; GORSKI; FERNANDES, 1999). The social evaluation of the use of phrases with “nós” and “a gente” suffers phonic salience effect (Chart 1) defined from the relation of stress opposition, in other words, of what is more or less noticeable.

**Chart 1 - Hierarchy of phonic salience**

Example	Description
Falava/falávamos	The opposition V/V-mos is unstressed in both forms
Fala/falamos; trouxe/trouxemos	The opposition V/V-mos is stressed in one of the forms
Está/estamos; tem/temos	The opposition V/V-mos is stressed in both forms
Comeu/comemos; partiu/partimos	The opposition V/V-mos is stressed in both forms; there is a diphthong that does not appear in 1PP
Falou/falamos; é/somos	The opposition V/V-mos is stressed in both forms and the stressed vowel changes

**Source:** Adapted from Naro, Gorski and Fernandes (1999).

In Chart 1, a hierarchical relation that starts from the least to the most salient is observed. When the opposition between verbal agreement of third person singular and first person plural is unstressed, the salience is lower; when this same opposition is stressed, the salience is higher, that is why social judgement tends to be negative.

In this context of variation between “nós” and “a gente”, the Portuguese Language teachers have a role of mediator between knowledge and students because they must afford students the reflection about the uses of “nós” and “a gente” in first person plural position in a variety of communicative situations, being careful with the identification of elicited meaning when approaching a context based teaching of language, which will make students know the different linguistic norms present in society, enabling them thus to monitor their style.<sup>2</sup>

## METHOD

In this work, we developed a pedagogical-didactic game entitled “Roulette of social relations of ‘nós’ and ‘a gente’” for the productive teaching of grammar, aiming to stimulate students to be the protagonists of their own learning.

This game was applied to one group of 9th grade students at State School Jacintho de Figueiredo in Aracaju/SE with the participation of 18 students (5 boys and 13 girls)<sup>3</sup> divided into four meetings composed by three states:

- 1) initial diagnosis: the application of a collecting instrument;
- 2) the application of the game “Roulette of Social Relations”;
- 3) final diagnosis: systematization of grammatical rules.

Before the first stage of the execution of the game, we were invited by the Portuguese language teacher of the mentioned group to attend one class in order to establish contact with the students.

### First Stage: initial diagnosis

At this stage, students individually answered a questionnaire (attached) that had 12 sentences whose objective was to assess through the gradience of emojis the use of the first person plural variants in a Portuguese language class.

**Nós assistiremos** ao filme no fim de semana  
(We are going to watch the movie on the weekend)



Source: Prepared by the authors.

**Figure 1** – example of a phrase with emojis

<sup>2</sup> According to Bortoni-Ricardo (2004), we can think about stylistic monitoring in a continuum from complete spontaneous interactions (non-monitored styles) performed with little attention to linguistic forms to monitored styles in which a linguistic planning and high attention to linguistic forms occur.

<sup>3</sup> We stress that the school board and the teacher of the group authorized the researchers to apply the game, as well as the parents and the students, who signed a free and informed consent form.

The elaboration of the sentences took into account morphological (verbal conjugation: first, second and third), syntactic (sentence order, syntactic function of the first person plural variables) and semantic (thematic role exercised by the subject of the sentence) criteria. The specific objectives of this activity were: i) promoting a reflection on the use pattern of the phenomenon highlighted through the game; and ii) describe what was socially acceptable for students in relation to the use of “nós” and “a gente”.

The students individually answered the questionnaire in class under the supervision of the researchers. After the evaluation of the sentences, we collected the questionnaire so that we could initiate the second stage of application of the game.

## **Second Stage: application of the game and the Roulette of Social Relations**

At this stage, we asked students to form four teams for the game. The students organized themselves according to their bonds and created the teams as follow: #OsRolezeiros (The party-hearty), #MeninasMalvadas (Mean girls), #AsCacheadas (The curly-haired), and #AsDebochadas (The mockers). After that, we introduced the rules of the game (Chart 2) and the Roulette of Social Relations (figure 2) which were later attached to the class board:

**Chart 2 – Game rules**

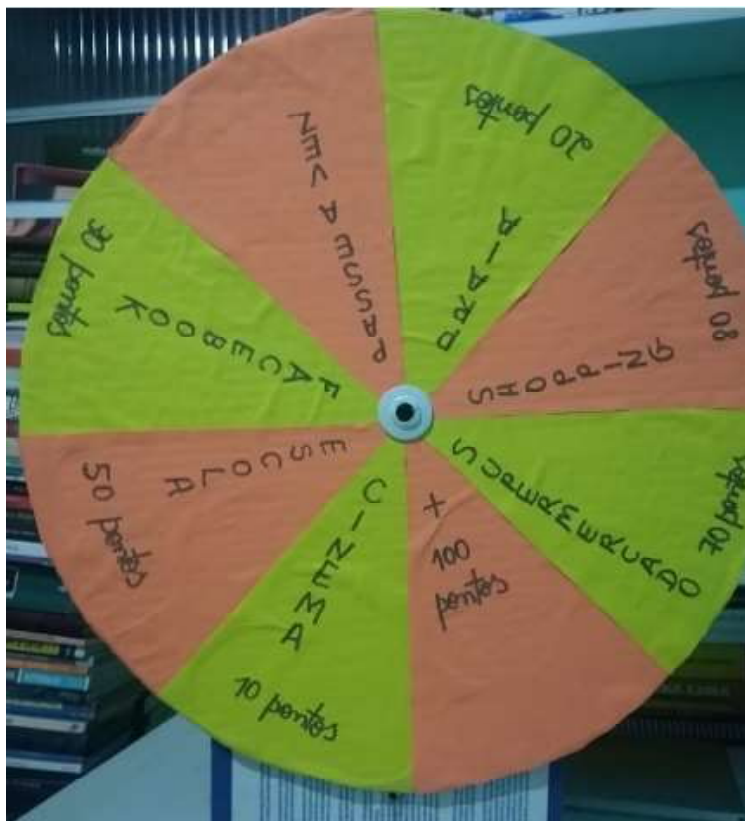
- Game rules**

  - 1- Student must be split into five groups composed by at least four people.**
  - 2- The group must draw lots to know when they can spin the wheel.**
  - 3- The group must choose who is going to spin the wheel.**
  - 4- The representative must choose one of the six cards that has the communicative situation.**
  - 5- The group must create a dialogue.**
  - 6- The representative of the group must show their colleagues the card that was chosen so that everyone can create a dialogue.**

**Source:** Prepared by the authors.

The roulette (Figure 2, next page) has eight compartments numbered in ascending order: six of them correspond to social interaction situations (cinema, school, Facebook, beach, mall, and supermarket) with a corresponding task (Chart 3) and two of them correspond to the progress of the game (pass your turn and +100 points).

In order to enhance students' participation, the activity was divided into two rounds: in each one, a representative of each group was invited to spin the wheel. When the wheel indicated a social situation, a card was given to students, and they were supposed to elaborate a dialogue from it, as exemplified in Chart 3 (also in the next page).



Source: Prepared by the authors.

**Figure 2** – Roulette used in the execution of the game

**Chart 3** – Card with a description of the social situation “Facebook”

*Facebook*  
 The school where you study is on vacation. To see each other, you will schedule a sightseeing through the *Facebook* group. Do any of you have a suggestion of place? How can it be said to the others?

Source: Prepared by the authors.

The rules for the elaboration of the dialogue are displayed in the following chart:

**Chart 4** – Rules for the elaboration of the dialogue

THE DIALOGUE MUST HAVE:

- At least four lines;
- Only first person plural pronouns (*nós* ou *a gente*);
- Only direct speech;
- Reference to the participants of the communicative situation.

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Having their own contexts of interaction, the participants had 10 minutes to elaborate and write the dialogues which were later presented to the whole class, who judged them as adequate or inadequate for the uses of “*nós*” and “*a gente*”, according to the communicative situation indicated in the card.



### Third State: systematization of the content approached

At this last stage, we present the occurrences of “nós” and “a gente” present in the written dialogues by the groups and compare them to the phrases of the instrument of initial diagnosis. Then, we asked students to point out the differences and similarities related to the contexts of interaction and to the dialogues that influenced the uses of “nós” and “a gente”.

## ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

Firstly, it is important to highlight that, overall, the organization of the class in the subgroups #OsRolezeiros, #MeninasMalvadas, #AsCacheadas, and #AsDebochadas was influenced by location and transportation factors. The school where the game was applied is located in an expanding zone in Aracaju and receives students from two different audiences: students who live in Farolândia neighborhood and the ones who live in Santa Maria neighborhood. Students from the groups #MeninasMalvadas, #AsDebochadas, and #OsRolezeiros use public school transportation provided by the state of Sergipe, *i.e.*, they come and go together to school, and these same students remained together in the division of the groups to play the game; while the students from the group #AsCacheadas live in Farolândia neighborhood and do not use the public transportation provided by the state.

School performance was another factor that influenced the division of the students: the girls with the highest grades formed two specific groups: #AsCacheadas and #MeninasMalvadas. According to the teacher of the class, the components of the two mentioned groups use to get the highest grades, while the other two use to get the lowest grades.

### Perception of “Nós” and “A Gente”

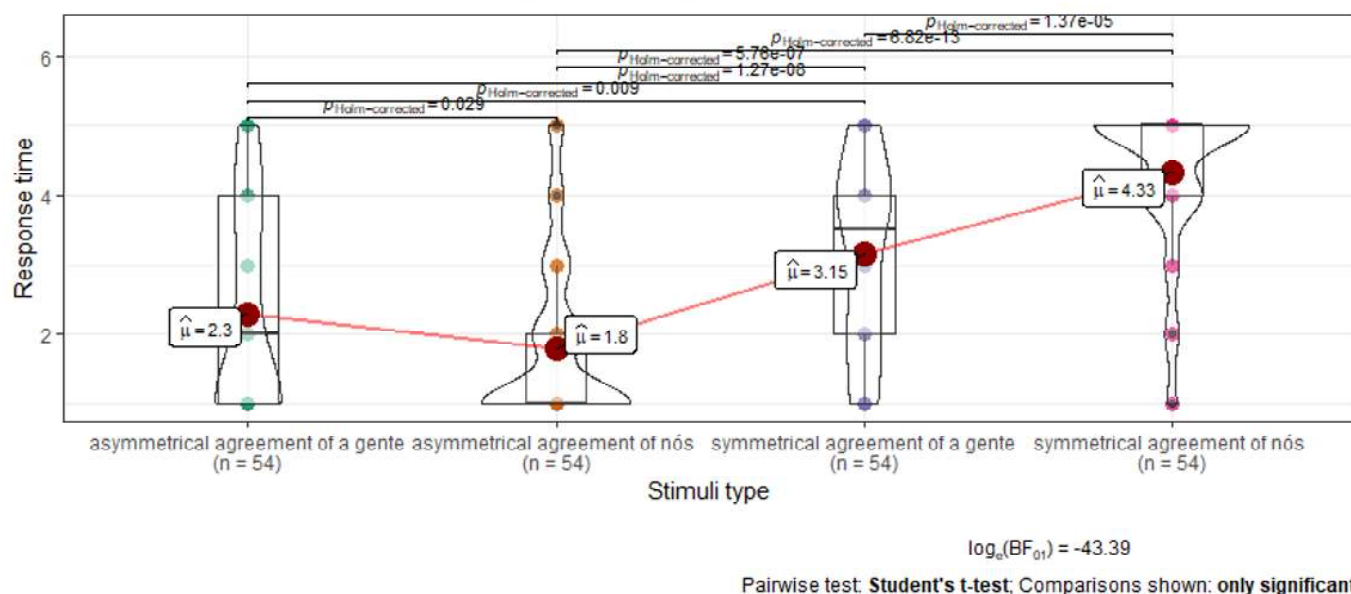
After the application of the collecting instrument (initial diagnosis), the emojis used to describe the judgement of the 12 phrases were transformed into a scale from 1 to 5 so that we could describe students' judgement in relation to the forms “nós” and “a gente” in asymmetry situations (“a gente vamos” and “nós vai”) and symmetry (“nós vamos” and “a gente vai”). In this research, we considered symmetry contexts when the features of number and person between the forms “nós” and “a gente” were harmonized with the verb and asymmetry when the features of number and person were disharmonized with the verb. In order to have a more refined analysis, the data were quantitatively treated (216 occurrences), using a statistical model in a within-subject design with a t-test for repeated measures with Fisher (same students tested under all conditions), considering the variants “nós” and “a gente” with students' judgment to measure the correlation between the grades of judgement with the uses of “nós” and “a gente” in subject position. The visualization of the diagram below (figure 3) was developed with the ggstatsplot (PATIL; POWELL, 2018) package for the R environment (R CORE TEAM, 2019)<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> R is free open source language and environment which enables various types of analysis. R is commonly used for statistical analysis, that is why it has been used in quantitative sociolinguistic studies. Through it, it is possible to use packages such as the ggstatsplot which makes it possible to create graphs and a better visualization of data as consequence. To know more and have access to tutorials, we suggest this website: <http://bit.ly/3oUCVz4>.

## Mean of the judgement of the linguistic stimuli

$$F_{\text{Fisher}}(2.64, 139.78) = 38.70, p = 7.61e-17, \hat{\omega}_p^2 = 0.41, CI_{95\%} [0.29, 0.50], n_{\text{pairs}} = 54$$



Source: Prepared by the authors.

**Figure 3** – Violin diagram with the mean of the judgment grade of “nós” and “a gente” and the contexts of asymmetry and symmetry of subject position.  $\hat{\mu}$  represents the mean of the judgment grade.

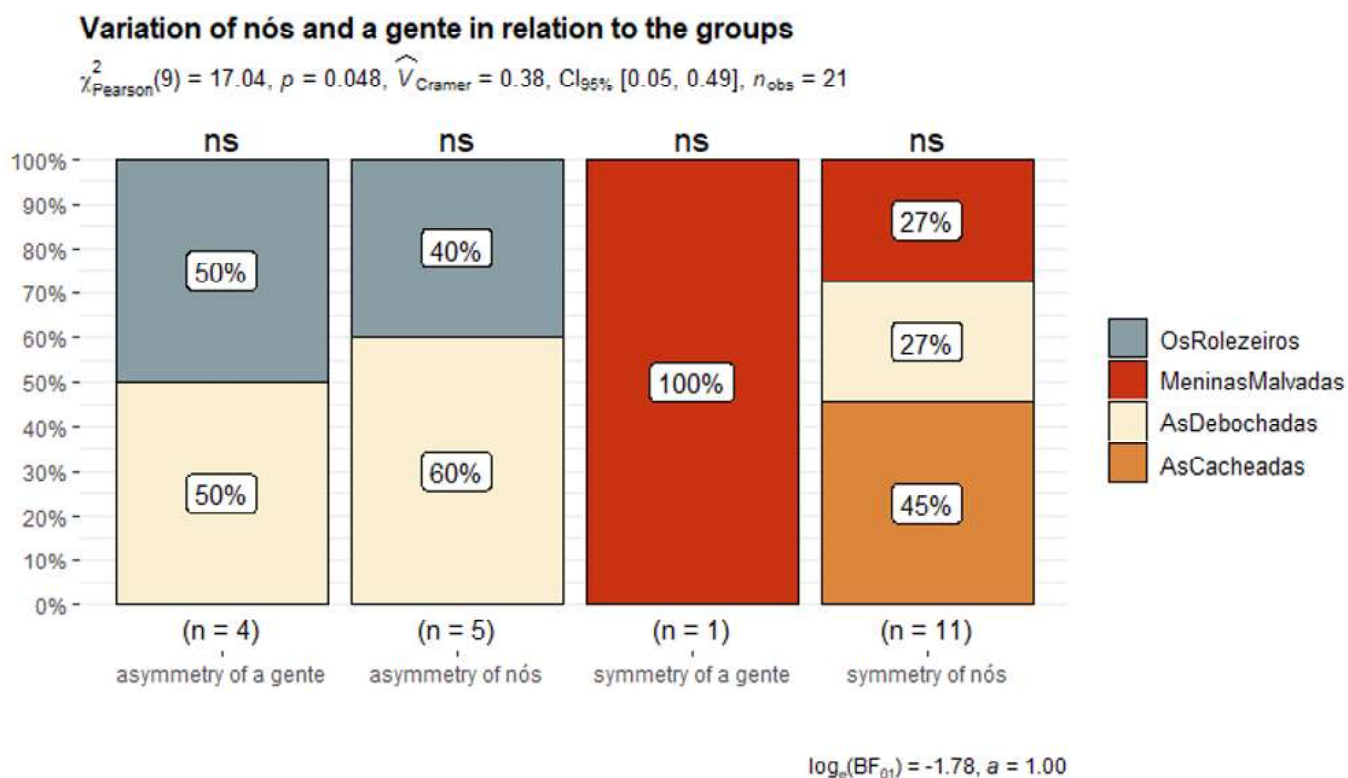
In Figure 3, the medians indicate that students’ judgement concerning the phrases in the instrument used at the first stage of the game. The reading of the graph must be performed from left to right. The red dots represent the medians of the judgement from 1 to 5 for the asymmetrical and symmetrical agreements of “nós” and “a gente”. We observed that the best evaluated (4.33, first violin on the right) was the symmetrical agreement with “nós” (nós vamos), indicating that the canonical form is the best evaluated in school environment. The symmetrical agreement with “a gente” (a gente vai) was the second best evaluated (3.15, second violin on the right). While these two occurrences had positive evaluations with high means, the other two had negative evaluations with low means, as indicated by the lowest dots on the two violins on the left. The asymmetrical agreement of “a gente” (a gente vamos) and of “nós” (nós vai) were negatively evaluated (2.3 and 1.8, violins displayed from the left to right).

The results presented were statistically significant among them ( $f=(2.64, 39) = 38.70, p < 0.001$ ) with a strong association between the variation of the first person ( $\hat{\omega}^2 = 0.41$ ), indicating that there is a social standard concerning the use of “nós” and “a gente” associated with the verbal agreement, *i.e.*, speakers positively judge the constructions “nós falamos” and “a gente fala”, while the constructions “nós fala” and “a gente falamos” are negatively judged (GORSKI; FERNANDES, 1999; FREITAG; CARDOSO; GÓIS, 2018).

## Production of “Nós” and “A Gente”

This section refers to the second stage of the game, when students produced the dialogues. For the statistical analysis and presentation of the results, we extracted the occurrences of the first person plural variants usage from the dialogues and compared them with the social contexts present in the roulette (cinema, school, Facebook, snack bar and supermarket). Then the data were statistically treated through an inferential/descriptive statistical model with Pearson’s chi-squared test in order to compare the effects of the realization of “nós” and “a gente” with the ones of the social contexts in the groups established for the game. The

visualization of the graphs below (figures 4 and 5) was made with ggstatsplot (PATIL; POWELL, 2018) for the R environment (R CORE TEAM, 2019).



Source: Prepared by the authors.

**Figure 4** – Graph of frequency of use of “nós” and “a gente” in subject position in the dialogues in function of the groups

In Figure 4, the data were not statistically significant among them ( $\chi^2(9) = 17.04, p=0.048$ ) with weak association among the groups ( $\hat{v}^2 = 0.38$ ). However, the percentages reveal an interesting result. The graph indicates that the group #AsCacheadas was the only one to realize all the occurrences with symmetry of “nós”, while the groups AsDebochadas, #MeninasMalvadas and #OsRolezeiros mixed the uses of canonical realization (symmetry of “nós”) with the use of the innovative form (symmetry and asymmetry of “a gente”) for the agreement of the two first person plural variants, as the division of the columns displayed in figure 4 shows, which we re-display below:

- #MeninasMalvadas: symmetry of “a gente” (100%) and symmetry of “nós” (27%)
- #AsDebochadas: asymmetry of “a gente” (50%), asymmetry of “nós” (60%) and symmetry of “nós” (27%)
- #OsRolezeiros: asymmetry of a “gente” (50%) and asymmetry de “nós” (40%)

These results suggest that there are four types of norms operating among students in the class: the symmetrical canonical form (*nós vamos*) and the other three norms of use: symmetrical norm of “a gente” (*a gente vai*), asymmetrical norm of “a gente” (*a gente vamos*) and asymmetrical norm of “nós” (*nós vai*). Even though the judgment among students is that there are prestigious and non-prestigious forms, most students transit among the three non-canonical norms, whereas #AsCacheadas group is the only one that conforms speech/writing for the canonical form.

This duality between prestigious and non-prestigious norms is evidenced by students' metacomments when we asked if all of them agreed with the use of "nós" and "a gente":

DOC: *You used the two forms, why?*

#AsDebochadas:

STUDENT 01: *Because it is common for us to speak like that*

STUDENT 02: *Yeah... We don't see the difference between the two forms.*

STUDENT 03: *It is used in the two forms (the group agrees).*

#AsCacheadas:

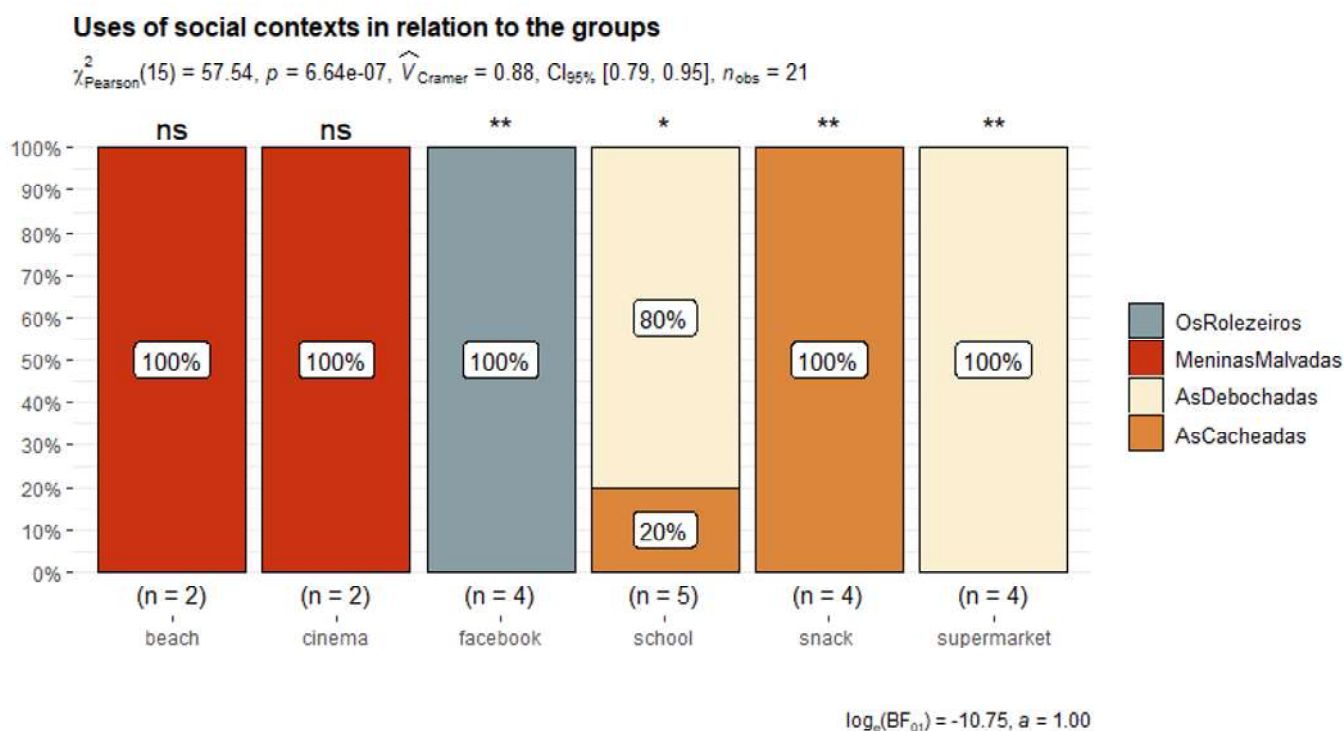
STUDENT 04: *It is wrong "a gente vamos", "nós vivemo", "nós vai".*

#OsRolezeiros

STUDENT 05: *We use all of them. "Nós vai", "nós iremos", "nós vai". When we are corrected under pressure, we speak correctly.*

In the judgements about what is considered "right" or "wrong", STUDENT 05 uses as argument the possible realizations (non-prestigious) of agreement of the verb "go" with the variants "nós" and "a gente". Considering the stress between the third person singular and the first person plural (irá/iremos), it is possible that the high salience has a relation with the negative judgment expressed by the student, considering the hierarchy scale proposed by Naro, Gorski and Fernandes (1999).

Phonic salience may be the reason why the group #AsCacheadas presents higher awareness in relation to the use of the standard norm, due to the fact that there is a higher sensitivity to the uses than the other students, causing the first person plural verbal agreement to be performed according to normative grammar, while #AsDebochadas, #MeninasMalvadas and #OsRolezeiros mix standard and non-standard norms.



Source: Prepared by the authors.

Figure 5 – Graph of frequencies of social contexts in the dialogues in function of the groups

In Figure 5, it is noticed that the social contexts and the groups statistically differ among them ( $\chi^2(15) = 57.54$ ,  $p = 6.64e-07$ ) with strong association between the use of the context for the usage of “nós” and “a gente” and the group ( $\hat{u}^2 = 0.88$ ). The results suggest that the social spaces for the use of “nós” and “a gente” influence the monitoring of the dialogue production in relation to the usage of those forms. We noticed that the group #AsCacheadas used the symmetry of “nós” in environments where the relationships are characteristically hierarchical (school and snack bar); while the group #AsMeninasMalvadas used symmetry of “nós” and “a gente” for less formal environment (cinema and beach), where these usages would be allowed; and the groups #AsDebochadas and #OsRolezeiros used the asymmetrical agreement of “nós” and “a gente” independently of the social situation being more formal (supermarket and school) or informal (Facebook). The influence of the different circles and relationships is reflected on the linguistic behavior, specifically through the judgment and the use of first person plural variants.

After the execution of the last stage, we systematized the content approached throughout the game “Roulette of social relations of ‘nós’ and ‘a gente’”. In order to do so, we discussed with the students the notions of “error”, “correction”, “adequate” and “inadequate” concerning the variation of the first person plural, emphasizing the usage rules that operate in the use of “nós” and “a gente” in verbal agreement.

## FINAL REMARKS

As we defended, in Portuguese language classes, students’ experience as speakers must be taken into account. The 9th grade group for which we applied the game presents a heterogenous environment: in it, speakers living outside the school and inserted in different social circles with higher or lower contact with the prestigious linguistic variety are gathered together.

The application of the game showed that, in this group, there are differences in the use and agreement of the first person plural, but not all of the students were aware of them, what evidences the importance of a language teaching model that is sensitive to students’ sociolinguistic particularities. For that, active methodologies, through games that posits students as the protagonists of the learning and the teacher as a mediator, present themselves as a viable alternative because it was through the experiences of their colleagues and their own that the whole class could reframe linguistic uses and their conditionings and impacts on social life.

## Appendage

### Diagnostic instrument (sentences)

An elementary student wrote a set of phrases to present to their colleagues and to the teacher in a Portuguese class. To perform the following activity, think that you are a judge. Now, your task is to judge the set of phrases from the criteria of adequate or inadequate. You are supposed to mark the emoji you think that suits your evaluation of the phrases.

*Nós assistiremos ao filme no fim de semana*  
(We are going to watch the movie on the weekend)



*Minhas amigas encontraram a gente na quadra*  
(My friends met us in the court)



*Nós estuda* sempre para a prova  
(We always study for the test)



*Nós vende* as verduras na feira  
(We sell vegetables in the fair)



*A gente estuda* para prova na biblioteca  
(We study for the test in the library)



*A gente corre* na quadra no intervalo.  
(We run in the court at break)



*A gente falamos* com a diretora da escola  
(We spoke to the principal of the school)



*A gente aprendemos* o assunto com a professora  
(We learned the subject with the teacher)



As provas da *gente começa* amanhã  
(We start the tests tomorrow)



As atividades *da gente acontece* hoje  
(Our activities happen today)



*Nós brincaremos* na quadra amanhã no intervalo  
(We are going to play on the court at break tomorrow)



As professoras *aborrecem a gente* com as provas  
(The teachers bother us with the tests)



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