Intro to the Special Issue:
“Research on L1 grammar in schooling: on the crossroads with many paths”
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In this special issue we consider grammar instruction as a fundamental element in Language Education in Language Arts (i.e. the teaching and learning of a first language, or L1), which can be viewed as a territory nurtured with contributions from Linguistics, Psychology, Sociology, Literature, and Pedagogy. First, linguistic models can be underpinned by different psychological theories, which in turn can draw differently on the social dimension of humankind and therefore unequivocally trigger different conceptions of what languages are, how they are acquired, the role a social dimension plays in it, etc. This affects the way language is dealt with in schooling, contributing with different (and at times opposite) pedagogic theories as well as teaching and learning material and criteria to choose the most valuable content. This may also result in different perspectives on how to conduct research on language education.

Indeed, the history of studies on L1 and on language education shows us that diversity of perspectives is the norm. And yet, as language educationalists we need to work towards a sort of a common ground, albeit not so much in the sense of narrowing down the scope to a single and coherent viewpoint. While the state of a permanent debate in L1 language education has been observed at times from the lenses of a “crisis” (which would suggest the idea of “change of state”), Bronckart (2008) suggests the term “self-structuring” crisis, to reflect on the idea that the horizon might not be coherence after turbulence but what we could call a multiplicity of voices in an on-going debate among views in tension permanently under scrutiny and confronted to the enduring complexity of L1 language education.

Grammar, as a part of L1 language education, cannot be withdrawn from such a debate, especially given the prominence of grammar in educational curricula since the early 2000’s (cf. Locke, 2010; Chen and Myhill, 2016; Boivin et al. 2018). Indeed, the educational game always falls around the three poles of the so-called “didactic system”, namely teaching procedures, learning processes and teaching-learning contents. This means that, while L1 grammar in schooling is on the crossroads of many paths and possibilities, these three poles (which can be approached on their own or in connection with one another) serve as an overarching common ground to map not only educational intervention but also research (Fontich and Camps, 2014).

In this special issue we do not have any pretension to overcome differences and tensions (such pretension could lead in fact to eventually cancel the debate; see ). Rather we aspire to draw into the pedagogic system as a framework for adopting different (and sometimes incommensurable) viewpoints to language and language education. The seven papers included in this Special Issue reproduce such aspiration (Table 1).
Some stress the nature of grammar content (Denham, O’Neill & Honda, Costa), albeit not entirely dismissing the teaching procedures that such content may trigger. Some others locate their focus somewhere in the middle, exploring from different perspectives a “content / teaching and learning” two-way street (Elalouf & Roubaud), reflecting on how institutional resources affect assessment procedures (De Pietro & Sánchez-Abchi). Finally, some locate their interest in the interplay between writing and grammar, albeit from different and even opposite approaches: the epistemic role of writing in learning grammar (García-Debanc & Cosse-Manière), the role of sentence-level grammar knowledge in enhancing writing skills (Nadeau & colleagues), and the teaching procedures as mediational devices straddling grammar and writing (Bulea-Bronckart). Some draw on grammar knowledge on its own, as what Hulshof (2013) dubs a “non-instrumental, cultural approach”, without necessarily going into further connections with language use (Denham, O’Neill & Honda, and to some extent De Pietro & Sánchez-Abchi), emphasizing the need for students’ increase of general language awareness. For some others, grammar and language use go hand in hand (Elalouf & Roubaud, Costa, García-Folgado, de Pietro & Sánchez-Abchi, García-Debanc & Cosse-Maniere, Nadeau & colleagues, Bulea-Bronckart). These perspectives on grammar teaching have often been presented as opposites, although in our view, they are far from incompatible (cf. Ribas, Fontich & Guasch, 2014; Van Rijt, De Swart & Coppen, 2018).

The papers in this special issue address different states of affairs, problems, and even styles as they come from different academic traditions, educational jurisdictions and linguistic domains (France, United States, Portugal, Francophone Switzerland, and Québec). They were presented as communications in the “III International Conference on Teaching Grammar” hosted in Barcelona in January 2019. While the seven papers represent different approaches and focus on different issues, there is a common thread that crosses them through, and which we could call reflective or metalinguistic practices. Indeed, they all seem to approach grammar teaching with the aim to expand the apprentices’ resources for reflecting on the language. Without such resources, certain uses (e.g., formal writings), and the possibility for a non-spontaneous and articulated reflection on such a fascinating element of humankind as languages might not be possible. This approach can help us to shape pedagogical practice and research focused on the reflective processes of the learners.

See Table 2 for a possible chronogram and Table 3 for a possible list of reviewers.


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**Table 2. Possible chronogram**

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**Table 3. Possible list of reviewers**

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<td>1. Denham, Kristin</td>
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<td>Edita Gutiérrez-Rodriguez Universidad Complutense de Madrid <a href="mailto:editagutierrez@ucm.es">editagutierrez@ucm.es</a></td>
<td>Pilar Pérez Ocon Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha <a href="mailto:pilar.perez@uclm.es">pilar.perez@uclm.es</a></td>
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<td>2. Honda, Maya &amp; O’Neil, Wayne</td>
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<td>Eulàlia Bonet Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona <a href="mailto:eulalia.bonet@uab.cat">eulalia.bonet@uab.cat</a></td>
<td>Peter-Arno Coppen Radboud University Nijmegen <a href="mailto:p.a.coppen@let.ru.nl">p.a.coppen@let.ru.nl</a></td>
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<td>3. Elalouf, Marie-Laure &amp; Roubaud, Marie-Noëlle</td>
<td>Language teaching and methodological background: the role of variety of languages</td>
<td>Hans Hulshof Leiden University <a href="mailto:h.hulshof@hum.leidenuniv.nl">h.hulshof@hum.leidenuniv.nl</a></td>
<td>Folkert Kuiken University of Amsterdam <a href="mailto:F.Kuiken@uva.nl">F.Kuiken@uva.nl</a></td>
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<td>4. Costa, Ana Luísa</td>
<td>Grammar in the curricula</td>
<td>Batalha, Joana Universidade Nova de Lisboa <a href="mailto:jana.batalha@fcsh.unl.pt">jana.batalha@fcsh.unl.pt</a></td>
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<td>5. Bulea-Bronckart, Ecaterina</td>
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<td>Astrid Wijnands <a href="mailto:a.wijnands@docentenacademie.ru.nl">a.wijnands@docentenacademie.ru.nl</a></td>
<td>Iris Kleinbub <a href="mailto:kleinbub@ph-ludwigsburg.de">kleinbub@ph-ludwigsburg.de</a></td>
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<td>Anna Camps Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona <a href="mailto:anna.camps@uab.cat">anna.camps@uab.cat</a></td>
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<td>8. Nadeau, Marie et al.</td>
<td>Operationalizing the notion of sentence to teach syntax and punctuation: experimenting with innovative devices</td>
<td>Debra Myhill University of Exeter <a href="mailto:D.A.Myhill@exeter.ac.uk">D.A.Myhill@exeter.ac.uk</a></td>
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In this presentation, I offer some strategies, techniques, lessons, and suggestions for integration of English grammar into classrooms, from the primary school to the university level, honed over more than two decades of working with students and teachers. The methods build on speakers’ unconscious knowledge as users of language, and also make use of some of the insights of linguistic theory. I provide examples of lessons that allow students to discover for themselves the rules underlying morphological and syntactic constructions, including synchronic and diachronic variations. When variations are presented simply as data to be analyzed, they are interpreted that way, without the judgment that often accompanies such variants. Students make use of scientific methodology, focusing on analyzing data (from various languages), making hypotheses, testing those hypotheses, and then revising if necessary. The focus on objectivity in scientific methodology removes societally-based judgments from analysis, thereby allowing students to clearly separate linguistic variations from attitudes towards those variations. These investigative methods are also empowering and position the student as the expert. As a user of a language, every individual has command of an intricate and complex grammatical system; students work together to uncover aspects of that unconscious knowledge, revealing the complexity of grammatical patterns and their biological underpinnings, again leveling the field and revealing the human capacity for language. I also discuss how I and other teachers I have worked with - many with little training in linguistics - have integrated grammatical investigation into different levels of instruction (from 8-year-olds to university students to practicing teachers) and also into different aspects of a curriculum, not only as a part of English or language classes, but also as a component of history, social studies, and even science instruction. I provide evidence for the success of these methods; students demonstrate not only a better conscious understanding of grammar, but also a clear understanding of the linguistic discrimination that is inherent in many traditional corrective models of grammatical instruction and a desire to not perpetuate those ideas or methods. Keywords: English grammar, intuitive knowledge, discrimination, scientific methodology, lessons –

References
Pippin, David & Denham, Kristin (2018). Voices of the Pacific Northwest: Language and Life along the Columbia and throughout Cascadia in the Late 18th and Early 19th Centuries. Middle School Social Studies and Linguistics Curriculum, manuscript and website: https://www.voicesofthepnw.net/
The term grammar is ambiguous. Traditional ‘grammar provides a full list of exceptions..., paradigms and examples of regular constructions, and observations at various levels of detail and generality about the form and meaning of expressions’ (Chomsky 1986: 6). With a ‘shift of focus...from the products of behavior to states of mind/brain that enter into behavior’ (Chomsky 1986: 3), mental grammar is a theory of what is internal to a person who knows a language. Grammar in both senses should be part of an education: Long taught in the humanities curriculum, traditional grammar can support discussion of writing, literature, and socio- and historical linguistics by moving from prescription to description. Though seldom taught, linguistic theory should have its natural place in the science curriculum. Like other sciences, it needs no external justification. Rather the goal, for linguistics as well as for science in general, is to explain as deeply as possible fundamental features of the natural world. We argue that an understanding of mental grammar can grow by taking advantage of the ‘science-forming faculty’ of mind (Chomsky 2000: 22ff). Given the ready accessibility of language data, linguistics is well-suited for secondary and late primary-school students, not necessarily ‘to present solutions [to problems] but to illustrate what is involved in arguing for some solution’ (Hale n.d.: 17). Problem sets about diverse languages are an effective instrument for developing the scientific ‘style’ and exploring features of language—see Halle & Clements 1983; Denham & Lobeck 2010. On this approach, linguistic data are elicited or presented with leading questions. Since data often lend themselves to multiple hypotheses, constructing and evaluating competing hypotheses ‘enable[s] students to formulate [linguistic] principles for themselves’ (Hale n.d.: 13). Through cross-linguistic inquiry, students can develop scientific argumentation and uncover universals of grammar—excellent reasons for bringing linguistics into the school curriculum. Key words: mental grammar; cross-linguistic inquiry; problem sets; universals of grammar; scientific argumentation –

References
This communication (that is part of a symposium on state of the art about grammar teaching in Portugal) aims to present an overview of the place of grammar in the official curricula over the past decades. Between 1991, when the first syllabi of the Educational Reform were approved, and 2018, the year of the publication of the Essential Learnings, the movement observed between a more prescriptive conception of grammar and a more descriptive one is far from linear, as it seems to occur in other language curricula in Europe (Fontich & García-Folgado, 2018; Myhill & Watson, 2014; Van Rijt & Coppen, 2017). A comprehensive reading of the Portuguese syllabi will be done taking into account the difference between the intended curriculum and the implemented curriculum (Van Rijt & Coppen, ibid). This dichotomy is critical establishing the limits of the analysis of the curricular texts. The official syllabi and guidelines reflect ideas from the field of ideological and political decision-making, which is circumscribed to the intentions of those who write them. Five syllabi and curricular guidelines for basic education (DGEBS, 1991, DEB, 2001, DGIDC, 2009, DGE, 2015, DGE, 2018) and four for secondary education (DES, 1997, DES, 2001-2; DGE, 2014; DGE, 2018) will be considered for analysis. Furthermore, the curricular effects of a linguistic terminology for primary and secondary education (DES, 2002; DGE, 2008) will also be object of attention. Three axes will structure the analysis of those curricular texts: (i) the conception of grammar in formal education (ii) the place of grammar in first language education and (iii) the implicit / explicit dimension of language learning. Different approaches on how to learn and how to teach grammar will also be underlined from the curricular texts. Grammar has been gaining curricular importance in recent decades, from a peripheral position to the core of the curriculum (Duarte, 1993; Costa & Duarte, 2004). However, if the question about the usefulness of grammar in language learning has been overcome, an open question remains: what grammar do we intend to teach? Keywords: Grammar, grammar teaching, explicit grammar, intended curriculum, Portuguese curriculum –

References

Curricular texts
Language teaching and methodological background: the role of Variety of languages
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Is it possible to study language without teaching how language is used in varied contexts? The national curriculum for French as a first language states that pupils should be taught to control their speaking and writing consciously by observing varied linguistic uses. But, despite early official recommendations (Ministère de l’éducation nationale et de la culture), teachers still have a formal approach of grammar since the first stages. Teacher trainers may ground their work on didactic and linguistic researches (Fabre-Cols, 2000; Cappeau & Roubaud, 2005 and 2018), yet most grammar handbooks provide a limited range of standard examples which illustrate a rule or a definition after a short observation time (Elalouf & Péret, 2009). It is not wide enough to help young writers to adopt a more reflexive view on their productions in order to revise and evaluate their writing. However, it is necessary to select sentences which highlight grammatical features to help pupils to build their knowledge of grammar. Our proposal will focus on this dilemma. We intend to show that it is possible to teach language from effective uses. We examined which examples were chosen in grammar rules and definitions in handbooks used in primary school and we compared them to written productions. We observed that there are prototypical constructions, early acquired, which are good candidates for teaching grammar, such as “The cat catches the mouse”. We studied which kinds of verbs are chosen in such examples: there are mostly root words, rather frequent, which subjects refer to a human being or an animal; there are dynamic verbs, intransitive or with one complement. As soon as other constructions are used, an analysis problem arises. Sometimes, in French, the same forms are used but require a different analysis (Roubaud & Sabio, 2018). If the study of language is limited to examining examples easily analyzed, there is little possibility of transferring knowledge to writing. There are prototypical constructions, early acquired, and also constructions acquired by reading which are very difficult to analyze with traditional grammatical concepts, though they are frequent. For example, how to analyze the varied constructions of the static verbs, how to analyze verbs with two complements? If such constructions are not studied, it is not possible to compare different languages and to learn from their comparison. Furthermore, there are constructions in pupils’ texts which are rejected as incorrect by teachers, without explanation, whereas there is a variation of uses according to the medium (spoken, written), to the register appropriate to the topic and the text genre, and according to interindividual differences. Children spoken and written language provide many constructions which are not recorded in grammars and dictionaries. We will focus on the uses of two antinomic verbs se souvenir/oublier [remember/forget] in a large corpus collected among pupils who have French as a first or second language and new comers (Elalouf & Roubaud, 2016). Our thesis is that teaching language must be based on language uses and lead to grammar and dictionaries and not the opposite (Combettes, 2005, 2009, 2016). It is about starting from most represented uses in pupils’ speech, identifying cooccurring elements which characterize them, varying contexts to help to diversify language that pupils hear and speak. The issue is not the measure the gap between pupils uses of language and standard French but to lead them to a metalinguistic reflection on syntactic constructions. Keywords: School grammars, Dictionaries, Spoken and written uses, Syntactic Constructions –

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Combettes, Bernard (2016). La ‘grammaire de phrase’ dans les textes officiels depuis le Plan de rénovation, Pratiques, 169-170, DOI : 10.4000/pratiques.3082
Between the prescription and the practice, the means: reflection around teaching devices
articulating grammar and text
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Beyond the theoretical questions that it raises, the interaction between grammar and text is a real challenge for French didactics and teacher training. Our contribution will first mention some of the reasons, based on the analysis of the situation in French-speaking Switzerland - a context in which, since the 1970s, a major renovation of grammar education was undertaken (see Besson, Genoud, Lipp & Nussbaum, 1979, Bronckart & Sznicer, 1990, Genevay, 1994) echoing the proposals made in France in Plan Rouchette (1971). In a second step, we will highlight the gap that exists between the prescription currently in force, which advocates an integrated teaching of grammatical and textual dimensions (see CIIP, 2010), and the means available to teachers to achieve it. (Aubert & Messeiller, 2015, Balma & Roduit, 2014, Balma & Tardin, 2013). This discrepancy leads to the interaction between grammar and text becoming an unavoidable problem of didactic engineering and training: what devices should be put in place to articulate the two purposes now attributed to grammatical teaching, namely to build knowledge of the system of language and develop useful skills for production and comprehension of texts? Anchored in this questioning, the new project FNS group GRAFE’MAIRE (see 2017) includes a component "engineering" that we will present and discuss: a) The device called "integration", which proposes: - the observation of the role that the grammatical notion studied plays in the texts; - the extraction of certain elements in the form of a corpus; - a syntactic work (manipulations) and the conceptualization of the observations made; - the reinvestment of acquired skills in textual tasks. b) The device called "interaction", comprising: - a focus on the grammatical notion studied; - syntactic work on a corpus of sentences (manipulations, justifications) for conceptualization; reinvesting observations in textual tasks. Keywords: grammar, text, didactic device, aims (of grammar teaching)

References
What institutional practice of assessment tells us about teaching grammar?

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There are several ways to try to establish an inventory of grammar teaching, from the survey of teachers to the observation of practices through the analysis of textbooks. All have their advantages and disadvantages, in terms of representativeness, reliability, depth. Institutional evaluation practices, in the form of common summative tests, by defining the contents assessed, provide us with a kind of official inventory of the knowledge and skills that students should have developed through teaching. They inform us about the grammatical knowledge and skills that students are supposed to master and, indirectly, how to teach them. In the French-speaking part of Switzerland, most cantons organize, at the end of the school year, reference tests to measure the acquisition of knowledge and skills related to the Plan d'études romand (PER) (Romand syllabus). Based on an ongoing work on the analysis of these evaluations, we will describe the grammatical contents evaluated and the way they are considered: in context or not? In the form of problems or simple application of rules? etc. We will try to make visible what is eventually targeted by the grammatical teaching and the conception of the grammar that this underlies. We will also examine the constraints specific to these summative evaluation practices - requirements related to the awarding, "objectivity", corrections, etc. and the influence they might have on the very way of considering grammar and its teaching. In conclusion, we will confront the conception of the grammar that emerges from our analyses with the reference texts in force in French-speaking Switzerland and with didactic literature while trying to highlight the convergences and divergences between these different "approaches" to teaching, grammatical. Keywords: grammar, teaching, evaluation, grammatical knowledge.
“Working writings” and grammar knowledge

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“Working writings” (Fr., “écrits de travail”) are provisional writings that make it possible to clarify and formalize a provisional state of knowledge and to help each student to think. They are not necessarily written; they can be in the form of mental maps, diagrams or working notes. They are not subject to correction by the teacher but give rise to oral exploitation (Eduscol, 2016). Used for many years in the teaching of science, where their elaboration appears as a necessary condition for the setting up of controversies between students (Vérin, 1988, 1995), they also have an important role in the teaching of grammar to understand the strategies implemented by students and their grammatical reasoning. The contribution proposes to analyse the successive states of student formulations on a certain number of notions-nuclei in syntax: criteria for recognizing a verb, criteria for locating the subject of a verb (Cosse-Manière, 2018), sentence complements (adjuncts). The diversity of students’ writings testifies to the progressive construction of grammatical knowledge, the establishment of metalinguistic awareness and mastery of grammatical metalanguage, grammatical reasoning of students (Boivin, 2014), as well as differences in declarative knowledge displayed and procedural knowledge used to process examples. These writings are also a reflection of the teaching given, with the tensions between different conceptions of grammatical teaching, notably criteria of syntactic manipulation vs. semantic criteria (Garcia-Debanc, 2009). The analysis of these writings and their oral treatment in class discussions (in small groups or in the whole class) allow the teacher to change these representations and knowledge. The contribution will conclude with the consideration of several implementation modalities favourable to the effective use of these writings. Key words: work writing, grammatical reasoning, grammatical metalanguage learning, formative assessment, management of heterogeneity and difficulty in school.

References
Operationalizing the notion of sentence to teach syntax and punctuation: experimenting with innovative devices

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The ministerial writing tests reveal that Quebec students have persistent difficulties in syntax-punctuation (MELS, 2012, Boivin and Pinsonneault, 2014). Their case is not exceptional, because we know how much the written syntax of the pupils raises "the vast question of the division of the text" (Paolacci and Rossi-Gensane, 2012). Unfortunately, teachers have few resources to effectively work grammatical objects related to syntax-punctuation, despite the place given to the notion of sentence in official documents (MELS 2009, 2011), in school material (Fisher and Nadeau, 2017) and didactic literature (eg Lefrançois, 2014, Chartrand, Lord and Lépine, 2016).

In an attempt to remedy this situation, we have undertaken to develop activities that involve the reflection, verbalization and justification of the choices made, as in interactive metacognitive dictations (Nadeau and Fisher, 2014). In a quasi-experimental research, a sequence comprising punctuation and sentence combination activities (see O'Hare 1973 or Saddler et al., 2008) was implemented in 17 primary and secondary school classes. In this presentation, we wish to show: i) the need to introduce syntactical and graphic sentence concepts with the didactical choices that flow from them and that led to a viable proposal for teachers and students; (ii) the device developed to get students to understand this fundamental distinction; iii) how students reintroduced these notions into the project’s punctuation and phrase combination activities. Finally, we will show the effect of this intervention on the production of writings, thanks to the results of the analysis of the texts produced in the pretest and the posttest, in the experimental and control classes. Keywords: didactic device, syntax, punctuation, sentence definition, metacognitive activities -

References
