Salvationism and Developmentalism: coloniality biases in an English language textbook /

Salvacionismo e Desenvolvimentismo: vieses de colonialidade em um livro didático de língua inglesa

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ABSTRACT

This text analyses a unit from the English language textbook Life, which is used in language schools in Brazil and around the world. Through decolonial literature, our aim was to identify and analyse the biases of coloniality present in this unit. Using Content Analysis, we were able to verify the existence of two biases: salvationism and developmentalism. The first is related to the idea that communities considered primitive need to be saved and that colonised peoples are incapable of managing their own destiny. The second refers to the cultural imposition and the view that countries considered underdeveloped have the mission of achieving European evolution. Thus, we can see that the textbook analysed does not scape the 'patriarchal/capitalist/colonial/modern world-system' and that its knowledge is situated, despite the idea that there is neutrality in its content and vision. In this way, the textbook also

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supports the colonial discourse that has led to the suppression and marginalisation of traditional knowledge and practices.
KEYWORDS: Decoloniality; Textbook; English language.

RESUMO
Este texto apresenta uma análise de uma unidade do livro didático de língua inglesa Life, utilizado em escolas de idiomas do Brasil e do mundo. Através da literatura decolonial, nosso objetivo foi identificar e analisar os vieses de colonialidade presentes nessa unidade. Valendo-se da Análise de Conteúdo, pudemos verificar a existência de dois vieses: salvacionismo e desenvolvimentismo. O primeiro é relacionado à ideia de que comunidades consideradas primitivas precisam ser salvas e de que os povos colonizados são incapazes de gerir seu próprio destino. Já o segundo viés refere-se à imposição cultural e à visão de que os países considerados subdesenvolvidos têm a missão de alcançar a evolução europeia. Assim, percebemos que o livro didático analisado não foge do 'sistema-mundo patriarcal/capitalista/colonial/moderno' e que seus conhecimentos são situados, apesar da ideia de que há uma neutralidade em seu conteúdo e em sua visão. Dessa forma, o livro também sustenta o discurso colonial que gerou a supressão e a marginalização de conhecimentos e práticas tradicionais.
PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Decolonialidade; Livro didático; Língua inglesa.*

1 Introduction

In the trajectories of English language teachers, the textbook is always placed as the main object of lessons. Following the content of the books is the most basic recommendation given to the vast majority of teachers in the private sector; hence, rarely does a lesson take place without them. They serve both as a point of reference for the lessons and for the organisation of the courses, which is usually based on a series of books.

The proposal of this project has as one of its axes the contextual aspect, linked to our experience as English language teachers in language schools and, as a second axis, the aspect based on the literature on decoloniality (Quijano, 1992, 2000, 2005, 2014, 2022; Lander, 2000; Maldonado-Torres, 2007, 2020; Castro-Gómez, 2007; Grosfoguel, 2007, 2008, 2016, 2018; Mignolo, 2009, 2010, 2015, 2017).

With regard to the first axis, our experience in the classroom has shown us the power that the textbook has in the school and how it becomes, for teachers and students, a central piece of knowledge that is often unquestionable. Even with the wide variety of materials available, physically or electronically, language teaching textbooks are widely used in classrooms all over the world and, according to Kumaravadivelu, they seem to "have a magical hold on both teachers and learners most of whom just cannot do without them" (2012, p. 21). Textbooks and language teaching/learning materials help to develop students' linguistic awareness and communicative skills, as well as having a significant cultural content. This strong cultural component came to our

attention, especially as we have noticed a pattern of exalting Eurocentric countries, while the cultures of countries outside this axis were often treated as exotic or unusual. This recurring discourse is largely reproduced by the students, consolidating itself as a widely accepted truth.

We also know that the content presented is not neutral – meaning the presentation of content in an impartial and objective manner, without influencing readers with viewpoints or opinions. Kumaravadivelu even states that:

> no text is innocent, and every text reflects a fragment of the world we live in. In other words, texts are political because all discursive formations are political. Analysing a text or discourse means analysing discursive formations that are inherently political and ideological by nature (Kumaravadivelu, 2006, p. 140).

When it comes to English language books, it is common for the ideal speaker, for example, to be a white, cisgender, heterosexual man from a middle or upper-class background and a native of England or the United States. This reference standard, which positions these countries as models in textbooks and various other fields – such as economics, education, technology use and development, among others – reveals to us that

> Europe/Euro-North America are thought of as living at a more 'advanced' stage of development (cognitive, technological and social) than the rest of the world, giving rise to the idea of the superiority of the Western way of life over all others. Thus, Europe is the model to be imitated and the developmentalist goal was (and still is) 'to catch up'[1] (Castro-Gómez; Grosfoguel, 2007, p. 15, our translation).

In this way, these books almost always establish a Eurocentric view of their content. When they talk about places that are not from Western Europe or from the USA, they generally describe them from their parameters, reproducing a colonial vision. These regions are seen as "places of non-thought (of myths, non-Western religions, folklore, underdevelopment involving regions and people)" (Mignolo, 2009, p. 26). We will discuss the literature on decoloniality, which serves as the

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[1] Originally: "Europa/Euro-norteamérica son pensadas como viviendo una etapa de desarrollo (cognitivo, tecnológico y social) más 'avanzada' que el resto del mundo, con lo cual surge la idea de superioridad de la forma de vida occidental sobre todas las demás. Así, Europa es el modelo a imitar y la meta desarrollista era (y sigue siendo) 'alcanzarlos'" (Castro-Gómez; Grosfoguel, 2007, p. 15).

foundation for one of the main axes of this article, in more detail in the theoretical framework section.

It is also worth mentioning that, in addition to the theoretical aspects described here, the relevance of this work is based on its potential applicability. The epistemologies of the South "denounce the suppression of knowledges carried out over the last centuries by the dominant epistemological norm, valuing the knowledges that have successfully resisted and the reflections they have produced" (Santos; Meneses, 2010, p. 7). This epistemic proposal and, in particular, what has been called, firstly by Maldonado-Torres, the decolonial turn (Castro-Gómez; Grosfoguel, 2007), constitute not only a theoretical project, but also a social and political one, as it fights for the recognition of subalternised epistemes.

In this sense, it is of utmost importance to identify the biases of coloniality in textbooks, as understanding them is necessary to drive the development of more robust explanations and critiques of what is printed in the pages of our books. Thus, the objective of this study is to identify and analyse, from a decolonial perspective, the biases of coloniality present in the English language textbook *Life*. In addition to the general objective, we also aim to name and understand how each bias is presented in the analysed book.

In order to achieve this objective, the next section presents the theoretical assumptions that underpin the analyses: decolonial theory and the decolonial turn (Quijano, 1992, 2000, 2005, 2014, 2022; Lander, 2000; Maldonado-Torres, 2007, 2020; Castro-Gómez, 2007; Grosfoguel, 2007, 2008, 2016, 2018; Mignolo, 2009, 2010, 2015, 2017). Next, in the third section, we look at the methodological part of the research, which was based on Laurence Bardin's Content Analysis (1977) and also a detailed presentation of the textbook being analysed: *Life*. In the fourth section, we analyse a textbook unit in which we find two colonial biases: salvationism and developmentalism. We end the text with our considerations on the findings of the analysis, reinforcing the importance of decolonial theory.

2 Decoloniality and the Decolonial Turn

In the 1990s, Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano (1992) formulated the concept of coloniality of power to characterise the pattern of historical-structural domination that, according to

the author, originated with European colonialism at the end of the 15th century and continues to this day: the hierarchical classification of the world's population around the idea of race/ethnicity (Quijano, 2000).[2] Based on Quijano's approach, it was pointed out that the coloniality of power also functions as coloniality of knowledge (Lander, 2000), to the extent that it imposes an episteme and produces the inferiorisation of other knowledges. Furthermore, it was found that coloniality also functions as a coloniality of being (Maldonado-Torres, 2007), as it generates not only epistemological subalternisation, but also ontological subalternisation in relation to the people who have been colonised. Thus, coloniality also ends up inferiorising certain modes of existence that it classifies as 'underdeveloped'.

Beyond the power-knowledge-being triad, Mignolo (2010) explains that coloniality of power is a complex structure of intertwined levels and that "it is crossed by specific activities and controls, such as coloniality of knowledge, coloniality of being, coloniality of seeing, coloniality of doing and thinking, coloniality of listening, etc. Many of these activities can be grouped under coloniality of *feeling*"[3] (2010, p. 12, emphasis in original).

The decolonial current is not only committed to the elaboration of analyses around the coloniality of power, but also to a project of epistemological, political, economic and epistemic subversion of coloniality, which has become known as decolonial turn (Castro-Gómez; Grosfoguel, 2007). That is, in Maldonado-Torres's words "the decolonial turn represents an inversion of coloniality's framework of subjugation. Whereas the dominant perspective frames the colonized as a problem, the decolonial turn positions colonized peoples as agents who pose problems" (2020, p. 562)[4]. Also, in a very practical way, "decolonial turn refers both to a change of attitude and to the affirmation of a project of action that involves political, artistic, intellectual, epistemological, and other types of interventions" (Maldonado-Torres, 2020, p. 562)[5]. It refers to distancing from the

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[2] We emphasize that, even prior to the concept formed by Quijano, Lélia Gonzalez (1988), through her frameworks of racial division of labour and racial privilege, articulates what is brought up as the economic dimension of the coloniality of power (Fonseca, 2021).

[3] Originally: "está atravesada por actividades y controles específicos tales la colonialidad del saber, la colonialidad del ser, la coloniliad del ver, la colonialidad del hacer y del pensar, la colonialidad del oír, etc. Muchas de estas actividades pueden agruparse bajo la colonialidad del *sentir*, de los sentidos (Mignolo, 2010, p. 12, emphasis in original).

[4] Originally: "El giro decolonial representa una inversión del esquema de sometimiento de la colonialidad. Si en la visión dominante el ente colonizado aparece como problema, el giro decolonial plantea a las personas colonizadas como agentes que plantean problemas" (Maldonado-Torres, 2020, p. 562).

[5] Originally: "giro decolonial refiere tanto a un cambio de actitud como a la afirmación de un proyecto de acción que envuelve intervenciones políticas, artísticas, intelectuales, epistemológicas, y de otros tipos" (Maldonado-Torres, 2020, p. 562).

discourse of coloniality to eradicate the inferiorisation of ways of life and knowledge that became 'other', and thus, to establish intercultural communication on symmetrical terms (Walsh, 2008) or, more precisely, inter-historical communication (Segato, 2015).

Europe's position at the centre of knowledge has been questioned and Mignolo, for example, asks, "why did Eurocentric epistemology hide its own geo-historical and biographical locations and manage to create the idea of universal knowledge, as if the knowing subjects were also universal?" (2009, p. 26). The author goes on to explain the geo-historical divisions made in the world based on this colonial vision:

> the geo-historical and biographical loci of enunciation were located by and through the creation and transformation of the colonial matrix of power: a racial system of social classification that invented Westernism (e.g. the West Indies), which created the conditions for Orientalism; it distinguished southern Europe from its centre (Hegel) and, in this long history, reclassified the world as first, second and third during the Cold War. (Mignolo, 2009, p. 26).

Colombian philosopher and professor Santiago Castro-Gómez brings up an important concept for understanding the place from which Eurocentrism speaks: the "zero-point hubris". This would be a point of observation thought of as the reference, something unquestionable "in fact, hubris is the great sin of the West: the pretension to establish itself as a point of view over all other points of view, but without that point of view being able to have a point of view" (Castro-Gómez, 2007, p. 83). Grosfoguel adds that, "in Western philosophy and sciences, the one who speaks is always hidden, concealed, erased from the analysis. Western philosophy's 'egopolitics of knowledge' has always favoured the myth of an unsituated 'Ego'" (2008, p. 119). By maintaining this vision as universal rather than localized, the resulting consequence is that

> European/Euro-American colonial domination and expansion managed to build all over the globe a hierarchy of superior and inferior knowledge and, consequently, of superior and inferior peoples. We have gone from the characterisation of 'peoples without writing' in the 16th century, to 'peoples without history' in the 18th and 19th centuries, 'peoples without development' in the 20th century and, more recently, 'peoples without democracy' in the 21st century (Grosfoguel, 2008, p.120).[6]

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[6] Originally: "a dominação e a expansão coloniais europeias/euro-americanas conseguiram construir por todo o globo uma hierarquia de conhecimento superior e inferior e, consequentemente, de povos superiores e inferiores. Passámos da caracterização de 'povos sem escrita' do século XVI, para a dos 'povos sem história' dos séculos XVIII e XIX,

The Eurocentric viewpoint present in most English language textbooks is generally seen as the only one, the correct one, almost a divine one. For many textbooks, this point of view is considered neutral and therefore serves as a parameter for analysing the other. As Spivak (2010) explains, it is the Western intellectual who holds the knowledge and who creates representations of Third World subjects, who are the subaltern Other, the subject who cannot speak.

Coloniality, which is different from colonialism, as we shall see, operates in different social layers that crystallise power relations in relation to those who are colonised. It is colonialism that has created the conditions for something as profound as coloniality, which only a few decades ago we began to think about, to still be so present and have such strong roots throughout the world.

> Coloniality is a different concept, although linked to the concept of colonialism. The latter refers strictly to a structure of domination and exploitation, where the control of political authority, production resources and labour of a given population is held by another population with a different identity, and whose headquarters are, moreover, in another territorial jurisdiction. But it does not always, nor necessarily, imply racist power relations. Colonialism is obviously older, insofar as coloniality has, over the last 500 years, proved to be deeper and more enduring than colonialism. But it was certainly engendered within colonialism and, moreover, without colonialism it could not have been imposed on the intersubjectivity of the world in such a deep-rooted and long-lasting way (Quijano, 2014, p. 285).[7]

Thus, when reflecting on textbooks, we can try to identify traces of the coloniality of power (Quijano, 2005), which is not confined to governments and formal institutions, but which operates in all structures of societies, through economic relations, social hierarchies, forms of knowledge(s), etc.

'povos sem desenvolvimento' do século XX e, mais recentemente, 'povos sem democracia' do século XXI" (Grosfoguel, 2008, p.120).

[7] Originally: "Colonialidad es un concepto diferente, aunque vinculado con el concepto de colonialismo. Este último se refiere estrictamente a una estructura de dominación y explotación, donde el control de la autoridad política, de los recursos de producción y del trabajo de una población determinada lo detenta otra de diferente identidad, y cuyas sedes centrales están, además, en otra jurisdicción territorial. Pero no siempre, ni necesariamente, implica relaciones racistas de poder. El colonialismo es, obviamente, más antiguo, en tanto que la colonialidad ha probado ser, en los últimos 500 años, más profunda y duradera que el colonialismo. Pero sin duda fue engendrada dentro de éste y, más aún, sin él no habría podido ser impuesta en la intersubjetividad del mundo, de modo tan enraizado y prolongado."

Risager (2022), who discusses approaches to analysing the cultural content of language teaching textbooks, points out that postcolonial studies[8] are a crucial part of the analysis as they focus on historical power relations and hierarchies between the target language and other languages. The author explains that research in this area emphasises the importance of considering power relations over knowledge and culture. She suggests some questions to use for the analysis: "who represents whom under what circumstances? Who purports to know what about whom, and why?" (Risager, 2022, p.116). The above questions will also be present when analysing the textbook *Life*.

3 Analysis of the textbook *Life*

For this analysis, we selected the English language textbook *Life Intermediate Student's Book* which is in its second edition and has a global distribution. Authored by British writers Helen Stephenson, Paul Dummett, and John Hughes, it was published by National Geographic Learning in 2019. This edition, targeting young adults and adults, consists of 6 books at different levels, among which we selected the intermediate level for containing a unit that references Brazil. Moreover, the authors and publisher state their mission is "to bring the world to the classroom and the classroom to life" (2019, p. 1) – which immediately prompts the question: 'which world?' This textbook is primarily used by language schools, many of which operate across most Brazilian states.

There is research concerning coloniality in textbooks across various fields of knowledge, such as the studies by Papakosta (2022) and Caixeta and Arruda (2023) in History textbooks, by Lopes and Nascimento (2023) in Geography textbooks, by Macedo (2004) in Science books, by Pereira and Ibrahim (2024) in Natural Science, by Aquino and Ferreira (2022) in German language and by Pereira (2019) in Sociology textbooks. As for English language textbooks, we have studies

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[8] We employ here the term originally used by the author. In this work, we refer to authors who are critical of coloniality without terminological distinction, although we recognize that while decolonial studies, emerging in the 1990s, are more closely associated with South America (or more precisely, Abya Yala), 'postcolonial studies', which originated in the 1970s, primarily refer to India and the Middle East.

by Alves dos Santos (2023), Anjos (2019) and Pereira (2012), but all of them analyse textbooks from Brazilian public schools. Thus, we emphasize that our focus here is on analysing a textbook that circulates widely in Brazil and globally, but which does not undergo the selection criteria of the National Program for Textbooks and Teaching Materials (PNLD). We acknowledge the excellent work on public school textbooks, but beyond the lack of research in private institutions, we highlight that there are no studies on coloniality biases in teaching materials.

For the methodology of this research, we employed Content Analysis by Laurence Bardin (Bardin, 2016). According to the author, Content Analysis aims to examine what was said or written in a given study with the objective of developing and presenting concepts related to an object of study. The material analysis consists of three stages defined by Bardin (2016): 1) pre-analysis, which involves floating reading, document selection, the (re)formulation of objectives and hypotheses, and the formulation of indicators; 2) material exploration, categorization or coding, when categories are created; and 3) treatment of results, inferences and interpretation, the stage based on analysing and interpreting the results.

Content Analysis is suitable for obtaining valid and reliable answers in qualitative research because the description and interpretation of research content undergo a systematization process. For the author, 'content analysis seeks to understand what lies behind the words it examines. (...) It is a search for other realities through messages" (Bardin, 2016, p. 44).

In the first part of Content Analysis, called pre-analysis, we have the formulation of hypotheses and indicators. Bardin (2016, p. 213) explains that this phase "corresponds to a period of intuitions, but aims to operationalize and systematize initial ideas, in order to lead to a precise scheme for developing subsequent operations". In this stage, when conducting the floating reading of the textbook unit, we noticed that not all lessons presented colonial content, but we already grouped the findings from the three analysed lessons - to be detailed in the next section.

In the following phase, the corpus is analysed in greater detail and the data are processed to ensure they are meaningful and valid (Bardin, 2016). Therefore, in this stage, by carefully analysing the colonial content, we refined the definition of biases and named them with support from decolonial theory. With the first stage well conducted, this subsequent part becomes only a systematic administration of what was previously defined (Bardin, 2016). Finally, in the third phase, we have the analysis and interpretation of data, which will be described in the next section.

4 The biases found

The English textbook *Life Intermediate Student's Book* consists of 12 units on different topics, with each unit containing 6 lessons. The unit analysed in this study was Unit 11, titled *Connections*. The selection criterion for the unit to be analysed was that it should reference or mention countries, territories, or nationalities. Among these, we chose Unit 11 because it was the only one containing a reference to Brazil. The lessons from this unit included in our analysis are three: the first, which presents a grammar focus with a text used for contextualization; the second, also focusing on a grammatical structure but with an audio for contextualization; and the third, centred on developing reading skills and critical thinking. The other lessons were not included in this study as they did not reference countries, territories, or nationalities.

After selecting the materials to be analysed and following the floating reading (Bardin, 2016), we categorized the elements of analysis and grouped them according to their common characteristics. The naming of categories was established based on these groupings and is grounded in decolonial theory. Thus, we propose the following analytical categories: *salvationism* and *developmentalism*.

4.1 Salvationism

This bias refers to the colonial notion that Indigenous cultures, non-white communities, or those deemed primitive or less developed require "saving" or protection by Western or external nations. This approach carries the connotation that colonised peoples are inferior or incapable of managing their own destinies. This perspective recalls Rudyard Kipling's poem "The white man's burden", which articulates the view that colonial empires had a civilising mission over non-white populations - constituting their burden – while employing racist ideologies to justify colonial domination (Facina, 2010). Moreover, the term "salvationism" stems from what Mignolo (2015) calls the "rhetoric of salvation", initially focused on saving souls through Christian conversion, thereby empowering the hegemonic elite to dictate trajectories for subaltern groups.

This unit's first lesson (p. 131), titled *Uncontacted Tribes*[9], opens with a text of the same name. This text presents information about an isolated Indigenous people alongside a photograph[10]. According to the text, FUNAI (National Foundation for Indigenous Peoples) took the photograph and determined that this community was under threat due to Amazonian exploitation. The text further mentions that after the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) published a video about the people, the photos went viral, prompting a global reaction asking "what was being done to save the tribe". This attitude of viewing Indigenous peoples as lacking capacity to care for themselves and their future has been propagated since colonisation's inception. As Krenak states, "civilisation called those people barbarians and waged an endless war against them, aiming to transform them into civilised beings who could join the club of humanity" (2019, p. 14). What draws particular attention in this textbook excerpt is that in this case, "the club of humanity" arriving to "save them" is only mobilised because a British corporation takes the initiative to spread news of the Indigenous group's existence. Thus, it creates the impression that only through intervention by a Eurocentric country could they possibly survive.

According to Grosfoguel (2008), the notion of "salvation" has changed over time, from the imposition of Christianity (to "save" the souls of the so-called "savages") in the 16th century, followed by the "civilising mission" of white men in the 18th and 19th centuries, the imposition of the "developmentalist project" in the 20th century, and the imperial project of military interventions in the 21st century, supported by the rhetoric of "democracy" and "human rights." However, according to the author, the rhetoric of modernity on which this notion of "salvation" is based remains the same: the appeal to save the other from their own barbarism. The identification of Indigenous communities with the primitive, the savage, and/or the barbarian in need of being saved from themselves is still prevalent in Brazil. Indeed, news reports about a widely known case in the media some years ago, linked to the creation of Bill 1.057, from 2007 – known as the "Indigenous Infanticide Bill" –, reinforced this image of "Indigenous societies as barbaric, homicidal, and cruel"

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[9] Although in Brazil, officially, the term "isolated peoples" or "isolated indigenous peoples" is used as registered by the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples "the denomination 'isolated indigenous peoples' refers specifically to indigenous groups with an absence of permanent relations with national societies or with little frequency of interaction, either with non-Indians or with other indigenous peoples." Available on <https://www.gov.br/funai/pt-br/atuacao/povos-indigenas/povos-indigenas-isolados-e-de-recente-contato-2/povos-isolados-1>.

[10] This study focuses exclusively on analysing the written content, which is why the images in the textbook were not included, since analysing them would require different approaches to those used here.

(Segato, 2014, p.70)[11]. While Indigenous people were accused of practising infanticide and, consequently, dehumanised, a local evangelical NGO, with international branches, emerged to "save the children" of these peoples. According to professor and anthropologist Rita Segato, "the mission thus presented itself as indispensable for the well-being of the 'primitive' incapable and the eradication of their savage customs—in other words, for their salvation not only celestial but also worldly"[12] (2014, p.71).

In the same lesson of the textbook, on the following page (p.132), there is another text reporting on a video recorded by the NGO Survival in the Awá Indigenous territory. In the original video available on YouTube[13], among other topics, an Indigenous person states, in the Guajá language, that contact with white people brought diseases to their people and concludes by saying, according to the English translation, "please don't let this happen again". However, in the textbook, this statement appears differently: "the final speaker (...) asked the filmmakers how they could stop this happening". Upon watching the full video, it becomes clear that "this" refers to what the Indigenous person previously mentioned: the depopulation of their people due to contact with white people. Initially, the statement may seem ambiguous, as if it were a plea for help from those recording the video. However, when analysing the context, it is evident that the statement is, in fact, a request for no further contact with outsiders—in other words, it expresses precisely the opposite of a plea for help.

Understanding that Indigenous peoples are not asking for help, but rather "the possibility of rebuilding autonomous processes of life in their territories"[14] (Baniwa, 2006, p.93), is essential. Indigenous peoples in Brazil have sought and achieved a degree of autonomy over themselves, yet this autonomy is an ongoing process, full of challenges, and there is a need for deeper recognition from both the state and society (Baniwa, 2006).

4.2 Developmentalism

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[11] Originally: "sociedades indígenas como bárbaras, homicidas e cruéis" (Segato, 2014, p.70).
[12] Originally: "a missão se apresentava, assim, como indispensável para o bem-estar dos incapazes 'primitivos' e a erradicação de seus costumes selvagens – em outras palavras, para sua salvação não somente celeste, mas também mundana" (Segato, 2014, p.71).
[13] Available on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bfrDACu7g_c&ab_channel=SurvivalInternational>.
[14] Originally: "a possibilidade de reconstrução de processos autônomos de vida nos seus territórios" (Baniwa, 2006, p.93).

This bias refers to a cultural imposition, to the understanding of history solely as progress; anything contrary to this is seen as backward or outdated. Furthermore, European evolution is considered the "goal," and the objective of countries that, from a Eurocentric perspective, are deemed underdeveloped is to reach it (Castro-Gómez; Grosfoguel, 2007). This bias views technological, economic, and social advances as synonymous with modernisation. Moreover, the term "developmentalism" is used following Grosfoguel's definition, which explains that "developmentalism is linked to liberal ideology and the idea of progress"[15] (p. 11, 2018), adding that, fundamentally, what is at stake is how to acquire more wealth and "catch up" (Grosfoguel, 2018).

In the second section of the analysed chapter (p. 132), which begins with vocabulary related to technology, the only mention of countries appears in an audio describing a travel idea shared on the social media platform Twitter. According to the audio, this idea consists of a digital influencer visiting different places and requesting real-time suggestions for activities to do in each location. To illustrate the scenario, the audio presents the following statement: "I've just got off the train in Paris, and I'm feeling hungry. Where can I get a good breakfast?" We notice that using an example of real-time interaction on social media while mentioning a Eurocentric country is highly indicative of the fact that technological availability is easily accessible in a "modern" and "globalised" country. Quijano explains that so-called globalisation has a political character and

> that it is not, as in its mythical image, a kind of 'natural' phenomenon, inevitable and inescapable as a consequence. On the contrary, it is the result of a vast and prolonged struggle for the control of power, from which the forces representing coloniality and capitalism emerged victorious (Quijano, 2002, p. 16).[16]

Thus, it is no surprise that the power of a so-called "economic, political, and cultural integration of the world" (Quijano, 2002, p. 22) is exemplified by a Eurocentric country. Indeed, according to Grosfoguel e Castro-Gómez (2007), Europe and Euro-North America are perceived as being at a more "advanced" stage of development (cognitive, technological, and social) than the

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[15] Originally: "o desenvolvimentismo está vinculado à ideologia liberal e à ideia de progresso" (Grosfoguel, p. 11, 2018)
[16] Originally: "que não se trata, como em sua imagem mítica, de uma espécie de fenômeno 'natural', inevitável e inescapável em consequência. Pelo contrário, trata-se do resultado de um vasto e prolongado conflito pelo controle do poder, do qual saíram vitoriosas as forças que representam a colonialidade e o capitalismo" (Quijano, 2002, p. 16).

rest of the world, which leads to the idea of the superiority of the Western way of life over all others. In this sense, these countries become examples or models to be imitated, and the developmentalist goal consists of "catching up with them." This is particularly evident in the dichotomy of developed/underdeveloped, rich/poor, but also in other dichotomies such as civilisation/barbarism, Western/non-Western, and primitive/advanced, among others.

On the other hand, to illustrate difficulties in accessing technology, the textbook presents another situation in a text (p. 135) that discusses different ways of disseminating news. The text in question provides examples of places (India, Guatemala, and other Central American countries) with little or no internet access that still manage to communicate and share local news without the absence of a network being an obstacle. To emphasise the contrast the book seeks to create between countries with and without internet access, the text states "even in richer countries, the number of rural households with internet access is much lower than 100 per cent. And in some rural areas of India, for example, it`s less than one per cent." In other words, the technological revolution does not reach everyone; there remains a dominance of power in Westernised countries, and the use of an example such as this – where regions of India have less than one per cent internet coverage - suggests that something so "simple" and so closely linked to globalisation does not reach non-Eurocentric countries – considered poor – while simultaneously implying that this should be achieved. That is to say, once again, the developed/underdeveloped dichotomy is presented to express, in this case, that the technological development of Europe/Euro-North America should be imitated by other countries as a fundamental goal for their own development. History is seen, by Eurocentric countries, as an evolutionary continuum in which the ultimate destination is Europe, positioning it as the mirror for all other cultures (Quijano, 1992).

In the same textbook text, it is explained that the term "digital divide" is defined as "the gap between those who have and those who don't have the communications technology that gives them easy access to information", making it clear that those who have access to information and technology are the wealthy, Eurocentric countries. On the other side, in the sphere of the opposing countries - those without access to information and technology - are the colonised nations, the ones whose epistemologies have been erased. These opposing sides and the categories that define them are made explicit by Grada Kilomba (2019) as the universal versus the specific, the objective versus the subjective, the neutral versus the personal, those who have knowledge versus those

who have experiences. Clearly, this vocabulary and this way of dividing the world into dualities are not merely semantic categorisations: "they hold a dimension of power that maintains hierarchical positions and preserves *white* supremacy" (Kilomba, 2019, p.52, emphasis in original).

In this same textbook text, several examples emerge indicating that only non-Eurocentric countries appear among those that require alternative forms of communication that do not rely on the internet. One example presented in the text is the caption of an image in which three men, holding mobile phones, stand among sheep and mountains "if these men in Kyrgyzstan had a signal, they could use their phones for more than just photos". Additionally, the text highlights that the countries striving to find solutions to "overcome the problem of digital inequality" are Guatemala, other Central American countries, and India. Here, we may recall the concept put forward by the Colombian philosopher Santiago Castro-Gomez (2007), who explains that Eurocentric forms of knowledge, in this case, the "universality" of internet access, have become "non-situated". As such, this point of view does not present itself as merely one point of view, but rather as the production of knowledge, information, and universal wisdom. In this way, any knowledge that is perceived differently from the epistemology of the zero point – such as the alternative forms of communication described in the textbook – is "seen as biased, invalid, irrelevant, lacking seriousness, partial; in other words, as inferior knowledge" (Grosfoguel, 2016, p. 30)[17].

Furthermore, the text, without a specified author, which allows us to infer that the authors are the same as those of the textbook, states that "these days, the popular view is that we're all connected, all of the time, by the internet". This leads us to question: who are '*we*'? How can they place everyone into a single group and assert that only one form of connection is possible? When the text presents alternative forms of communication that do not rely on the internet but frames these as something inferior, we may ask ourselves, just as Grosfoguel does, "how is it that in the 21st century, with so much epistemic diversity in the world, we remain anchored in such provincial epistemic structures disguised as universal?" (Grosfoguel,2016, p.27)[18]. We must also remember that the speaking subject – the authors of the textbook and, consequently, of this text – are three white British individuals and that, by failing to make this reality explicit and

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[17] Originally: "visto como tendencioso, inválido, irrelevante, sem seriedade, parcial, isto é, como conhecimento inferior" (Grosfoguel, 2016, p. 30).
[18] Originally: "como é que no século XXI, com tanta diversidade epistêmica existente no mundo, estejamos ancorados em estruturas epistêmicas tão provincianas camufladas de universais?" (Grosfoguel, 2016, p.27).

> by breaking the link between the subject of enunciation and the ethnic-racial/sexual/gender epistemic place, Western philosophy and sciences manage to generate a myth about a True universal knowledge that covers up, that is, that conceals not only the one who speaks but also the geopolitical and body-political epistemic place of colonial power/knowledge structures, from which the subject pronounces (Grosfoguel, 2008, p. 119)[19].

In this sense, the historical (cognitive, technological, economic and social) evolution of Euro-centred countries imposes itself as a universal criterion of development, disregarding the existence of other criteria that are relevant to subalternised communities, such as care and relationship with the land in contrast to extractivism for profit.

Conclusions

The present study was dedicated to exploring, analysing, and naming the coloniality biases present in the English language textbook *Life*, based on the assumption that this book, like a large number of textbooks, carries colonial biases – as pointed out by previously cited authors (Alves dos Santos, 2023; Anjos, 2019; Pereira, 2000; for example).

Much more than simply highlighting the presence of coloniality in the textbook *Life*, our objective was to understand how, from a decolonial perspective, the biases found are represented in the pages of this book used in language schools in Brazil and many other countries. In the analysed unit of the book in question, the investigation revealed that two aspects of colonial thought are strongly present: salvationism and developmentalism. These two biases lead us to understand that the textbook does not escape "the class, sexual, gender, spiritual, linguistic, geographical and racial hierarchies of the 'patriarchal/modern/colonial/capitalist world-system'" (Grosfoguel, 2008, p.118)[20].

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[19] Originally: "ao quebrar a ligação entre o sujeito da enunciação e o lugar epistêmico étnico-racial/sexual/de gênero, a filosofia e as ciências ocidentais conseguem gerar um mito sobre um conhecimento universal Verdadeiro que encobre, isto é, que oculta não só aquele que fala como também o lugar epistêmico geopolítico e corpo-político das estruturas de poder/conhecimento colonial, a partir do qual o sujeito se pronuncia" (Grosfoguel, 2008, p. 119).
[20] Originally: "às hierarquias de classe, sexuais, de gênero, espirituais, linguísticas, geográficas e raciais do 'sistema-mundo patriarcal/capitalista/colonial/moderno'" (Grosfoguel, 2008, p.118).

We are convinced that the systematisation and naming of coloniality biases make colonial views more evident, both in textbooks and in other media – sometimes with unquestionable knowledge – such as news, for example. We affirm this because, for the most part, the colonial vocabulary is not easily perceived and is sometimes not explicit, but it is an idea that has been left in some text or audio to perpetuate colonial values. Just as the semantic categorisations presented by Kilomba (2019) help us to perceive how Eurocentric countries place the "other" on the opposite side to maintain power relations and hierarchy, the naming of coloniality biases also helps us to understand, more clearly, how coloniality is maintained.

Furthermore, we need to bear in mind that the biases found in the textbook stem from a point of view, from a particular place situated within power structures, and, like our own knowledge, they are also situated (Haraway, 1988 *apud* Grosfoguel, 2008). The colonial idea that a view can be neutral and originate from a zero point (Castro-Gómez, 2007) needs to be not only questioned but completely overthrown. In addition to the myth of neutrality, Mignolo mentions that the idea of modernity – which can also be understood through the bias of developmentalism – grounded in Eurocentrism, is also fiction and separates us from nature, with "one of the objectives of the decolonial option being to naturalise ourselves rather than modernise ourselves" (Mignolo, 2017, p. 26)[21], overcoming the separation between human beings and nature promoted by modern discourse.

With the presence of coloniality biases, books end up sustaining the colonial discourse that produced and continues to produce an epistemicide – insofar as it generates the suppression and marginalisation of traditional knowledge and practices and, with that, of the subjects who embody them. In this sense, a decolonial textbook valuable for students and teachers will be one that seeks the recognition and epistemic valorisation of the differences that were silenced and inferiorised by colonialism. Thus, we agree with Walsh that "decoloniality is not a theory to follow, but a project to undertake. It is a process of action to walk pedagogically" (Walsh, 2013, p. 67).

We hope that this work contributes to the strengthening of the decolonial project by showing how colonial views are presented in textbooks, how they functioned and function to erase, silence, and tarnish other ways of understanding and relating to the world. We also

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[21] Originally: "um dos objetivos da opção decolonial a de nos naturalizarmos em vez de nos modernizar-nos" (Mignolo, 2017, p. 26).

reinforce that these two biases found in this unit of the book *Life*, salvationism and developmentalism, are just a few examples of the colonial view present in a large number of textbooks, which leads us to the need for additional research to identify other biases. Furthermore, taking into account that the classroom is a crucial space to resist various forms of power, we believe that the teacher's role in this context is to contribute to deconstructing Eurocentric and unilateral narratives. This allows students to see themselves as protagonists of their own history, valuing their origins. We advocate that pedagogical resources have the potential and the need to be used to break with the colonial matrix, promoting an educational project that confronts different forms of discrimination and segregation in society.

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