



## PROPOSALS FOR THE NON-SLOGANIZATION OF THE CONCEPT OF TRANSLANGUAGING

### *PROPOSTAS PARA A NÃO SLOGANIZAÇÃO DO CONCEITO DE TRANSLINGUAGEM*

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**Abstract:** In the wake of academic capitalism, which subordinates knowledge production to the logic of the Market, some concepts have been undergoing a process of *sloganization*, which empties them of their meanings and reduces them to impact discourses with the primary aim of seducing and promoting engagement. As translanguaging is a concept increasingly mobilized by educators and researchers seeking additional language teaching-learning practices and language policies that are non-standardizing and non-assimilationist, this article aims to draw attention to its sloganization, bringing four proposals that may help to avoid it: (i) recognizing that the concept of translanguaging does not represent a paradigm shift or an epistemological turn; (ii) not isolating the marks of translanguaging, at the risk of erasing the socio-historical-ideological practices from which they emerge; (iii) observing the functioning of translanguaging beyond the more evident phonetic-phonological and lexicogrammatical elements; (iv) promoting metareflection on translanguaging manifestations. We conclude our article by highlighting that the first proposal stems from the perception of sloganization traces in some ways of presenting the concept and, mainly, in its spread. The other proposals seek to avoid superficial readings of the concept in an academic branding process, which reveals signs of the liberal multiculturalism, criticized by Maher (2007).

**Keywords:** Translanguaging. Academic capitalism. Sloganization. Liberal multiculturalism

**Resumo:** Na esteira do capitalismo acadêmico, que subordina a produção do conhecimento à lógica do Mercado, alguns conceitos têm sido submetidos a um processo de *sloganização*, que os esvazia de seus sentidos e os reduz a discursos de efeito, com o principal objetivo de seduzir e promover o engajamento. Sendo a translanguagem um conceito crescentemente mobilizado por educadores e pesquisadores que buscam práticas de ensino-aprendizagem de línguas adicionais e políticas linguísticas não normatizadoras e não assimilacionistas, o presente artigo objetiva alertar para sua sloganização em alguns trabalhos acadêmicos, trazendo quatro propostas que podem contribuir para evitá-la: (i) reconhecer que o conceito de translanguagem não representa uma mudança de paradigma ou uma virada epistemológica; (ii) não isolar as marcas de translanguagem, sob pena de apagar as práticas sócio-histórico-ideológicas das quais emergem; (iii) observar o funcionamento da translanguagem para além dos elementos fonético-fonológicos e lexicogramaticais mais evidentes; (iv) promover a metarreflexão sobre manifestações translíngues. Concluímos nosso artigo destacando que a primeira proposta advém da percepção de traços de sloganização em algumas formas de apresentação do conceito e, principalmente, em sua circulação. As demais propostas buscam evitar leituras superficializadas do conceito, num processo de *branding* acadêmico, as quais revelam, inclusive, marcas do multiculturalismo liberal, criticado por Maher (2007).

**Palavras-chave:** Translanguagem. Capitalismo acadêmico. Sloganização. Multiculturalismo liberal.

## Introduction

Throughout our careers as researchers in Applied Linguistics, teachers of Portuguese as an Additional Language and teacher trainers in this field, textbook authors and organizers, and agents of public and language policies, we have been concerned with contributing to the structuring of language teaching and learning processes from pluralistic and non-assimilationist perspectives. One concept that has gained considerable traction in both Brazilian and international academic circles is translanguaging. By way of illustration, a search on Google Scholar reveals a substantial number of results for the terms *translanguaging* (33,700), *translinguajar* (373), and *translinguar* (617); *translanguage* and *translinguagem* yield 4,930 and 989 results, respectively, while *translingual* and *translínque* produce 16,900 and 666 results<sup>1</sup>. Although we acknowledge that digital search results are influenced by algorithmic factors tied to the neoliberal market (Maly, 2018), these numbers are, to some extent, indicators of the popularity of the terms in focus.

As Little (1994, p. 430 *apud* Schmenk; Breidbach; Küster, 2019, p. 4) warns, "any technical term that gains currency as a buzzword is in danger of losing its original, perhaps rather precisely grounded, meaning and becoming an empty slogan". Moreover, in the era of academic capitalism (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997, 2001), which tends to simplify, sensationalize, and commodify scientific knowledge, different concepts have undergone a process of sloganization as part of academic branding, as noted by Schmenk, Breidbach, and Küster (2019). The field of language education, where the concept of translanguaging has gained prominence, is particularly vulnerable to this trend. This susceptibility is driven by the constant push for "innovation" in educational programs, methodologies, pedagogical practices, and solutions to political issues (Schmenk; Breidbach; Küster, 2019).

In recent years, we have noticed a trend towards the sloganization of the concept of translanguaging in various scientific publications, undergraduate and postgraduate theses, presentations at academic events, and other academic-professional activities in which we have been involved. In our view, this trend seems to dilute the concept's heuristic value, which, along with other key concepts, has played a role in challenging monolingual perspectives and reshaping our understanding of social organization and metalinguistic knowledge. Concurrently, this trend appears to restrict the effective implementation of translanguaging in pedagogical practices, such as in teaching additional languages, and in the development of language policies.

The objective of this article is, therefore, to raise awareness of the sloganization of the concept of translanguaging in certain academic works within the field of language studies, while presenting proposals that may help to avoid it. We will avoid focusing on individual cases of sloganization, even though citing specific works might clarify and illustrate our argument more effectively. We made this choice not only because we believe this article could do without the specific reference to particular works – thus avoiding the unnecessary exposure of authors and their data when discussing

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<sup>1</sup> Searches carried out on Jul. 18, 2024.

regularities – but also because we are interested in emphasizing the propositional nature of this text.

This text is organized into four sections, in addition to this introduction. Section 2 explores the connection between academic capitalism and sloganization, defining the latter concept based on Schmenk, Breidbach, and Küster (2019) and Pavlenko (2019). In Section 3, we revisit concepts that have undergone sloganization in Brazilian and Portuguese academic literature on language studies, as analyzed by various authors. Section 4 is divided into subsections presenting four proposals to avoid the sloganization of the concept: (i) acknowledging that translanguaging does not signify a paradigm shift or a major epistemic turning; (ii) avoiding the isolation of translanguaging features, which risks erasing the socio-historical and ideological contexts from which they arise; (iii) examining translanguaging beyond its most obvious phonetic, phonological, and lexicogrammatical elements; and (iv) encouraging meta-reflection on translanguaging practices. We conclude our article by highlighting that the first proposal arises from the perception of traces of sloganization in certain presentations of the concept and, primarily, in its circulation. The other proposals highlight our concern with superficial readings of the concept, in a process of academic branding, which also reveal traces of liberal multiculturalism, criticized by Maher (2007).

## 2. Academic capitalism and sloganization

According to Lewkowicz, Cantarelli, and Grupo Doce (2003), contemporary times are characterized by the dissolution of the National State – now relegated to a technical-administrative function – and the rise of the Market as the dominant force. This shift does not mean that the Market has replaced the National State as a "meaning-producing meta-institution for each and every situation"<sup>2</sup> (Lewkowicz, Cantarelli, & Grupo Doce, 2003, p. 31). Instead, it has led to significant changes in the predominant modes of subjectivation, which have shifted from institutional to “mass media” forms. In this context, "it is not about norms and knowledge, but about image and personal opinion"<sup>3</sup> (Lewkowicz, Cantarelli, & Grupo Doce, 2003, p. 53). As Payer (2005, p. 18) argues, "the Market's dominant discourse, which serves as the primary means of social engagement, can be summed up in one word: 'success'"<sup>4</sup>. Conversely, Payer notes that those who fail to conform to the Market's rules face the penalty of "anonymity".

Universities and research institutions are significantly impacted by the shift from a National State to a Market-driven approach. Their knowledge production policies are increasingly influenced by neoliberal interests, a phenomenon described by Slaughter and Leslie (1997, 2001) as *academic capitalism*. This process, which aligns scientific endeavors with economic objectives, transforms universities into entities akin to

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<sup>2</sup> Originally: "meta-institución productora de sentido, para todas y cada una de las situaciones".

<sup>3</sup> No original: "no se trata de normativa y saber, sino de imagen y opinión personal".

<sup>4</sup> Originally: "o enunciado todo-poderoso do Mercado, que funciona como lugar máximo de interpelação, pode ser resumido em uma palavra: 'sucesso'".

corporations seeking public and private funding. Academic capitalism thus involves applying typical capitalist market strategies to science (Slaughter & Taylor, 2016). A practice that has become commonplace in universities is *branding* (Schmenk, Breidbach, and Küster, 2019), which, in the field of marketing, refers to the process of distinguishing a product and positioning it in the market against others, as well as endowing it with a strong emotional content to consolidate a unique image in the minds of consumers (Usmanova; Azamatov, 2023).

Similarly to entrepreneurs, professors engage in branding to enhance their visibility among their peers. It is necessary to publish more in prestigious outlets and achieve more citations. It is necessary to train undergraduate and graduate researchers within deadlines. It is necessary to attract students and mentees and to be well evaluated by them. It is necessary to participate in committees, scientific associations, and hold administrative positions. It is necessary to expand one's networking. It is necessary to improve one's curriculum. It is necessary to document what one does – not only in Currículo Lattes but also on the Sucupira Platform, within your institution's systems, and on institutional websites. It is necessary to promote your work on platforms like Academia and ResearchGate, as well as on WhatsApp and Instagram. The anticipated reward for this effort is the "success" mentioned by Payer (2005), which includes securing funding, scholarships, consultancies, prestigious professional positions, and national and international recognition. However, little has been said about the consequences of the often dizzying pace of such an endeavor, driven by the goals of "efficiency", "productivity", and "visibility".

A particularly effective strategy in branding that faculty-researchers engage in, whether deliberately or not, consists of sloganization – a term that "expresses a process of both slogan making and slogan using" (Schmenk, Breidbach, & Küster, 2019, p. 169). As the authors explain,

Sloganization is meant to denote a tendency to use a range of popular terms in scholarship, policy papers, practical applications and curriculum development *as if* their meaning were obvious and shared across the globe. Assuming that the meaning of a popular term is obvious and globally shared leads to foregoing precise definitions, ignoring the whereabouts of concepts, overlooking the variety and inconsistencies of different meanings attached to them, and perpetuating seemingly straightforward and unproblematic terms that would sometimes more appropriately be considered *slogans*.

The field of language education, as Schmenk, Breidbach, and Küster (2019) note, has experienced a series of trends and shifts over the past few decades. As the authors observe, at a macro level, different approaches to language teaching have emerged or faded, such as audiolingualism, communicative teaching, task-based instruction, intercultural education, and, as this article focuses on, translingual education. At a micro level, principles, concepts, and key themes often cross linguistic and cultural boundaries and begin to function as slogans within the field of language education. According to the work edited by Schmenk, Breidbach, and Küster (2019), examples of these terms include *learner autonomy*, *communicative teaching*, *innovation*, *turns / paradigm shifts*, *multiple intelligences*, *intercultural and transcultural learning*, *input*, *language commodification* e *superdiversity*.

Thus, by *sloganization*, we understand a commodification process that reduces complex theories and concepts to catchy discourses, primarily aimed at promoting identification, seduction, and engagement, even at the expense of the trivialization and superficialization of the very epistemology in which one is supposedly inscribed. Pavlenko (2019, p. 142) explains that the process of sloganization observed in the academic context relies on the same strategies used in marketing, where words or phrases are created to distinguish a brand, a product, a cause, or an individual, and to generate demand for the things they refer to. This creation, which aims to capture the attention of interlocutor-consumers and attract them, should be characterized primarily by simplicity, memorability, and emotional appeal.

In the next section, we will discuss some examples of sloganization within academic work in the field of language studies.

### 3. Some Processes of Sloganization in the Brazilian and Portuguese Academic Production in the Field of Language Studies

Processes of sloganization, in which certain concepts evolve into "buzzwords," can be observed in the recent history of Brazilian – and Portuguese – academic production in the field of language studies. In this section, drawing from various authors, we will briefly discuss the sloganization of several concepts, including *empowerment* (Maher, 2007), *discursive/textual genres* (Fanjul, 2012), *welcoming language* (Anuniação, 2017), *interculturality* (Bizon & Diniz, 2019), *pluricentrism* (Garcez, 2021; Keating, 2022; Feytor Pinto, 2022; Albuquerque; Mulinacci, 2024), and *literacy* (Kleiman *et al.*, 2024).

In a 2007 text, Maher expresses some discomfort with how the term *empowerment*, a concept central to Applied Linguistics, is often used. According to the author, terms like *politicization* or *political strengthening* of minority groups might better capture the goals of certain research and educational initiatives. From Maher's perspective, the empowerment of these groups arises from "three courses of action: (1) their politicization; (2) the establishment of legislation favorable to them; and (3) educating those around them to respect differences"<sup>5</sup> (Maher, 2007, p. 257), with politicization being a necessary, but not sufficient, foundation for emancipatory projects. In the same text, Maher advocates for the use of the term *interculturality* over *multiculturalism*, arguing that the former is less "polysemic," "saturated", and "trivialized"<sup>6</sup> (2007, p. 265).

Fanjul (2012, p. 50) highlights the shortcomings of "theoretical-practical approaches to so-called 'discursive genres' and/or 'textual genres' that neglect the textual and discursive dimensions"<sup>7</sup>. His analysis is based on a corpus of texts related to research on the Spanish language in Brazil, which addresses the issue of genres, published in the proceedings of two conferences held in the country in 2010. Rather than adopting a transdisciplinary perspective, these works often operate within a "disciplinary flattening"<sup>8</sup> (Fanjul, 2012, p. 50), leading the author to criticize the use of theoretical concepts as though they were common-sense terms. Contrary to the

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<sup>5</sup> Originally: "três cursos de ação: (1) de sua politização; (2) do estabelecimento de legislações a eles favoráveis; e (3) da educação do seu entorno para o respeito à diferença".

<sup>6</sup> Originally: "polissêmico", "saturado" e "banalizado".

<sup>7</sup> Originally: "abordagens teórico-práticas do que se denomina 'gêneros discursivos' e/ou 'gêneros textuais' que negligenciam as dimensões textual e discursiva".

<sup>8</sup> Originally: "aplainado disciplinar"

Bakhtinian perspective, many of the works in the corpus make a direct leap from the utterance – often mistakenly equated with genre – to external contexts, overlooking the utterance's dialogic nature, despite the frequent mention of dialogism in these works. Furthermore, the frequent emphasis on "the need to attend to the 'plurality/multiplicity of voices,' 'polyphony,' and 'other' discourses" (Fanjul, 2012, p. 57) as qualities of "critical" pedagogical practices aimed at "citizen education" misunderstands Bakhtin's view that discursive heterogeneity is inherent in every utterance. This repetition signals "a certain automatization" of theoretical concepts, which "begin to transform into mere formulas for inscription into a discourse, with little relation to the actual practices that accompany it"<sup>9</sup> (Fanjul, 2012, p. 57). Fanjul also critiques the limited investment in linguistic and cultural alterities when working with a given genre in teaching additional languages. He further criticizes the tendency of works to distance themselves increasingly from "linguistic materiality and regularities at all levels of its functioning, including syntax, reference production, textual structure, enunciative configuration, and dialogism"<sup>10</sup> (2012, p. 61), under the pretext of moving beyond mere grammar. In this process of erasing interdiscursive relations, linguistic-discursive functioning is quickly abandoned in favor of mere thematic discussion – a markedly non-Bakhtinian approach that neglects compositional form and style.

Anuniação (2017), drawing on Viebrock (2014), critiques the sloganization of the term "welcoming language", arguing that the welcoming of crisis migrants can – and should – also occur in languages other than the official language, particularly in the migrants' mother tongues. She advocates for rethinking the concept of a welcoming language "from a transcultural (César & Cavalcanti, 2007) and translanguaging (Canagarajah, 2013a) perspective, which acknowledges the use of different languages in the various spaces of enunciation that make up this context"<sup>11</sup> (Anuniação, 2017, p. 96). The author also calls for the implementation of language policies for migration and refuge that address the dispossession processes triggered by "welcoming" actions rooted in homogenizing ideologies. As she emphasizes, such actions, despite being framed in liberal terms of inclusion and equality, often contribute to assimilation practices and the silencing of migrant agency.

Bizon and Diniz (2019) criticize the erosion of the term *interculturality*, comparing it to the process that occurred with the label *communicative approach*. According to the authors, many practices are labeled as *communicative*, *intercultural* – or even *decolonial*, arguably the most sloganized concept in Brazilian language studies today – even when they fall far short of these ideals. It is not uncommon, for instance, to find teaching materials that claim to be *intercultural* but actually rely on a liberal version of multiculturalism, as criticized by Maher (2007, p. 260), manifesting in activities that fetishize differences and merely celebrate what is on the surface of cultures (food, dance, music), without connecting them to people's real lives and political struggles. A similar process occurred with the *communicative* label, which became widely adopted as a "seal of quality", even though teaching materials and pedagogical practices often remained tied to a grammatical approach. Bizon and Diniz

<sup>9</sup> Originally: "uma certa automatização" de concepções teóricas, que "começam a transformar-se em meras fórmulas de inscrição em uma discursividade, com escassa relação com as práticas efetivas que acompanham".

<sup>10</sup> Originally: "da materialidade linguística e das regularidades em todos os planos do seu funcionamento, tanto a sintaxe quanto a produção de referência, bem como a trama textual, a configuração enunciativa e o dialogismo".

<sup>11</sup> Originally: "a partir de uma perspectiva transcultural (César; Cavalcanti, 2007) e translíngua (Canagarajah, 2013a), que contemple o uso das diferentes língua(gen)s nos diferentes espaços de enunciação que constituem esse contexto".

(2019) argue that theorizing does not necessarily equate to knowing how to coherently operationalize theory in teaching materials and methodological guidelines. Bridging the gap between theory and practice is a significant challenge that requires substantial investment from researchers, teachers, and language policy makers.

Garcez (2021) and Keating (2022) explore the mobilization of the concept of pluricentrism, which in recent years has been prominent in discussions on language policies aimed at expanding Portuguese as an international language. Garcez (2021) expresses concern about narratives surrounding the so-called pluricentric management of the Portuguese language, cautioning that these could reinforce inequalities if effective measures are not taken to involve Portuguese-speaking countries beyond Portugal and Brazil in this management process. Keating (2022) differentiates between the distinct ontologies underlying the terms *pluricentric* and *polycentric*, both of which circulate in the Portuguese academic space. The former refers to a political designation given to the Portuguese language, while the latter relates to the language's condition in multilingual contexts. Her analysis illustrates how terms, when mobilized in certain activities, can be subject to local restrictions and "strategically (and pragmatically) appropriated according to interests within the political economies of different academic and public policy contexts"<sup>12</sup> (Keating, 2022, p. 43). As Keating warns, "both terms risk being domesticated in the process, potentially reproducing established ways of doing and knowing, with limited impact on creating spaces of voice and citizenship for the speakers involved"<sup>13</sup> (Keating, 2022, p. 43).

Building on discussions of pluricentrism from works by Clyne (1992a) and Muhr (2012), Feytor Pinto (2022) examines whether Portuguese can be considered a pluricentric language by applying twelve criteria to the sociolinguistic realities of the nine countries of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP) and Macau. Feytor Pinto (2022) finds that the degree of affirmation of a national norm of Portuguese can be categorized into five levels: (i) spaces where "national norms, spoken by almost all of the respective populations, are the only ones fully codified and influence other language norms"<sup>14</sup> (Feytor Pinto, 2022, p. 34), namely, Portugal and Brazil; (ii) spaces with significant potential for legitimizing a national standard, even if European Portuguese is the reference standard (Angola and Mozambique); (iii) spaces where the codification of Portuguese is in development (São Tomé and Príncipe); (iv) spaces where the affirmation of a national standard seems unlikely or even impossible (Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, East-Timor, and Macau); and (v) a space where this affirmation is impossible due to the lack of an autochthonous community of Portuguese speakers (Equatorial Guinea). In this context, the author concludes that "the pluricentrism of the language is, for now, a Luso-Brazilian bicentrism, but an unequal bicentrism"<sup>15</sup> (2022, p. 34), highlighting the significant demographic weight of Brazilian Portuguese speakers and the fact that the Portuguese standard is the only one not stigmatized.

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<sup>12</sup> Originally: "estrategicamente (e pragmaticamente) apropriados de acordo com interesses situados nas economias políticas de diferentes contextos académicos e de políticas públicas".

<sup>13</sup> Originally: "ambos os termos correm o risco de serem domesticados no processo e de reproduzirem formas de fazer e saber já estabelecidas, com impacto limitado na criação de espaços de voz e cidadania para os oradores envolvidos".

<sup>14</sup> Originally: "normas nacionais, faladas pela quase totalidade das respectivas populações, são as únicas que estão plenamente codificadas e que influenciam outras normas da língua".

<sup>15</sup> Originally: "evidente que o pluricentrismo da língua é, para já, um bicentrismo luso-brasileiro, mas um bicentrismo desigual".

For Albuquerque and Mulinacci (2024), the notion that Portuguese is a pluricentric language is an "academic fad"<sup>16</sup> (p. 19), a "worn-out cliché"<sup>17</sup> (p. 8), and has become a "truism"<sup>18</sup> (p. 3), reflecting superficial and reductionist views that overlook the complexity of the concept of pluricentrism. While Clyne (1992b, p. 1) defines a *pluricentric language* as one with "several interacting centers, each presenting its national variety with, at least, some of its own (codified) norms"<sup>19</sup>, this sloganized interpretation simplifies the concept to the mere geographical presence of Portuguese across continents, ignoring the presence or absence of national standardizing forces. Similar to Feytor Pinto (2022), Albuquerque and Mulinacci (2024) argue that, rather than being pluricentric, the normative reality of Portuguese is characterized by a Luso-Brazilian bicentrism. Using Ammon's (1989) criteria to analyze the type and degree of standardization of a language, the authors describe Portugal as a "full center," Brazil as an "almost full center," Mozambique as a "semi-center," and Angola as a "rudimentary center." From Albuquerque and Mulinacci's perspective (2024), despite varying degrees of exonormativity, there are no national standards in Portuguese-speaking African countries and East Timor, and such standards may never be established. Thus, the supposed pluricentrism of Portuguese is seen as a form of "wishful thinking" (p. 20), which, paradoxically, could hinder Portuguese internationalization efforts, as "the international status of a language also involves the subtraction, not just the addition, of its normative standards" (p. 20).

Finally, Kleiman *et al.* (2024, p. 251) address the "distortion" and "semantic emptying" of the concept of literacy that emerged in Brazilian academic production in the 1980s. The authors argue that terms like *school literacy*, *academic literacy* and *teacher/professional literacy* use the adjective *literacy* to specify the ideological context in which writing practices are examined in research. These uses go back to a basic theoretical premise: that literacy events are always contextually situated. Conversely, the researchers critique terms such as *political literacy*, *racial literacy*, and *human rights literacy*, arguing that their meanings diverge from the perspective of Literacy Studies. They contend that these terms focus on "subjective, individual, and historical aspects," or emphasize "the development of individual skills, knowledge, and competencies related to specific topics or fields"<sup>20</sup> (p. 250-251), rather than aligning with the foundational principles of Literacy Studies.

Just as the authors cited throughout this section highlight the saturation, trivialization, superficialization, and emptying of various concepts in recent years within the field of language studies, we also address the process of sloganization of the concept of translanguaging in some academic works. In the next section, we will not only discuss the characteristics of this process but also present proposals aimed at avoiding it.

#### 4. Proposals against the sloganization of the concept of translanguaging

The concept of translanguaging appears to be increasingly undergoing a sloganizing process, partly due to how it is being presented and, more significantly, due

<sup>16</sup> Originally: "modismo acadêmico".

<sup>17</sup> Originally: "surrado chavão".

<sup>18</sup> Originally: "truísmo".

<sup>19</sup> Originally: "vários centros em interação, cada um apresentando sua variedade nacional com, ao menos, algumas normas próprias (codificadas)".

<sup>20</sup> Originally: "o desenvolvimento de habilidades individuais, conhecimentos, uma aprendizagem crítica de determinado tópico ou assunto e competências específicas de um determinado tema ou campo de ação".



to its growing presence in academic work in recent years, which might suggest a branding process at play. This trend is further reinforced by the fact that the concept appears susceptible to liberal interpretations, similar to the criticisms leveled at multiculturalism by Maher (2007). Indeed, as Jaspers (2018, p. 8) warns, translanguaging has increasingly been associated with

the pursuit of now widely sanctioned ‘postmodern’ values like being disruptive, critical, creative, agentive, and in tune with a globalized world (cf. García and Wei, 2014, p. 9) – now to the detriment of non-hybrid linguistic practices that, in contrast, offer a first-class ticket to a rigid, static, hopelessly outdated identity.

Below, we present some proposals that can help to avoid this sloganization.

#### **4.1 Acknowledging that translanguaging does not signify a paradigm shift or a major epistemic turning**

One way in which the concept of translanguaging is being sloganized is by interpreting it as a scientific revolution, in the sense described by Kuhn (2011). As Rösler (2019) notes, terms like "paradigm" and "turn" often signal processes of sloganization, masking the reality that what is often portrayed as a new paradigm is actually just an expansion of existing knowledge, not a revolutionary shift.

We can see signs of this trend in some excerpts that present the concept of translanguaging, such as the following: (i) "When one develops a new paradigm, there are challenges created for the language used to discuss it" (Canagarajah, 2013a, p. 15, emphasis added); (ii) "the connection between structuralism and translanguaging needs to be explored further to theorize the analytical benefits of the new paradigm" (Canagarajah, 2017, p. 32, our emphasis); (iii) "there is more to the paradigm shift of translanguaging than accommodating more diverse verbal resources in communicative practice or in one's proficiency" (Canagarajah, 2017, p. 51-52, our emphasis). In the movements of appropriation and circulation of the concept in academic production, the image of "revolution" is constructed even more strongly. In this regard, despite the fact that, as mentioned previously, search engines are not neutral tools, it is significant that the search for the term "translingual turn" returns 2,440 results on Google. With this in mind, we will now discuss some concepts related to translanguaging, which highlight the latter's affiliation with the post-structuralist paradigm – and not the foundation of a new paradigm.

Since Cen Williams coined the term *translanguaging* from the Welsh word *trawsieithu* to describe a pedagogical approach where students are encouraged to switch languages based on their needs, the concept has been widely adopted. It is used to describe both the complex linguistic practices of plurilingual speakers and communities and the pedagogical approaches that incorporate these practices (García; Wei, 2014, p. 20). Canagarajah (2013a, p. 9) considers that translanguaging practice is a hypernym that covers a series of terms used by researchers, such as the following: *codemeshing* (Young, 2004; Canagarajah, 2006); *multiliteracies* (Cope; Kalantzis, 2000); *continua of biliteracy* (Hornberger, 2003); *translanguaging* (Creese; Blackledge, 2010); *dynamic bilingualism* and *pluriliteracy* (García, 2009); and *plurilingualism* (Council of Europe, 2001).

A significant contribution to the post-structuralist perspective on language, and one that is particularly valuable for current discussions on translanguaging, is John Gumperz's concept of *linguistic repertoire*, introduced in the 1960s (as noted by Busch,

2012). From his observations of social interactions in two rural communities, one in India and the other in Norway, Gumperz defines a *speech community* as a human aggregate that interacts regularly and frequently over a period of time and that is distinguished from other aggregates by its differences in the frequency of interaction (Gumperz, 1964, p. 137 apud Busch, 2012, p. 2). Initially termed *verbal repertoire*, the linguistic repertoire is linked to a speech community and is made up of all the acceptable ways of formulating messages that speakers mobilize according to the meanings they wish to convey. This repertoire includes "languages and dialects", which form a "behavioral whole", regardless of grammatical specificities, and are considered "constituent varieties" of the same repertoire (Gumperz, 1964, p. 140, apud Busch, 2012, p. 2).

The concept of linguistic repertoire, therefore, shifts the focus to understanding languages from the speaker's perspective. It moves away from the view of languages as fixed, separate entities and changes the interpretation of code-switching. Once seen as a deviation, an anomaly in bilingual (or multilingual) speech, or a transitory phenomenon in language learning (known as interlanguage [Selinker, 1972]<sup>21</sup>), code-switching is now recognized as a normal aspect of bilingual (or multilingual) linguistic behavior. It is understood to generate meanings and reveal socio-pragmatic and identity aspects.

Directing his gaze to Latin America, Mignolo (2003) analyzes how centuries of Western expansion resulted in religious, economic and epistemic domination, naturalizing the subordination of knowledge and local languages even among leaders of these populations. During this process, *mundialización* (a term purposefully kept in Spanish by the author even in publications written in other languages) emerges as "the other side of globalization, parallel to the two sides of modernity/coloniality"<sup>22</sup> (Mignolo, 2003, p. 341). The author explains that the bars between *mundialización/globalization* and *modernity/coloniality* represent what he calls *liminal spaces* (Mignolo, 2003, p. 341): borders at the fringes that are marked by colonial difference. These spaces are characterized by conflict and tension but also by resistance and transformation, made possible through what Mignolo terms "liminal thinking", which "requires, in addition to economic planning and social organization, an epistemology of *bilinguajamento* and not of territory" (Mignolo, 2003, p. 342, our emphasis). More than dealing with the knowledge and use of two or more languages, *bilinguajamento* refers to a way of thinking and a lifestyle between languages, "possible within the fractures of a hegemonic language (national or imperial)"<sup>23</sup>, which "overcomes fear and shame in those who do not master the main language" (Mignolo, 2003, p. 359). It is through the bilingualism lens that we can better understand how the Chicano writer, teacher and activist Anzaldúa (1999, p. 216) describes, in Chicano Spanish<sup>24</sup>, what it is like to live on the borders and be a *mestiza*. The author alludes to the metaphor of herself as a battlefield where enemies are kin to each other and conveys the feeling of being a stranger in her own home.

<sup>21</sup> We will return to this concept in section 4.2.

<sup>22</sup> Originally: "o outro lado da globalização, paralela aos dois lados da modernidade/colonialidade".

<sup>23</sup> Originally: "possível nas fraturas de uma língua hegemônica (nacional ou imperial)", which "supera o medo e a vergonha daqueles que não dominam a língua principal".

<sup>24</sup> Anzaldúa (1999) describes Chicano Spanish as a language made up of linguistic and discursive elements from various forms of Mexican Spanish and English. This language emerged from the need of the Chicano people (descendants of Mexican migrants born and raised in the United States) to establish a distinct identity, becoming "a language that corresponds to a *modo de vivir*" (Anzaldúa, 1999, p. 77). The author highlights that, like the Chicano people themselves, Chicano Spanish is a heterogeneous and complex language, and as such, there is no single, unified version of it.

Although terms like *codemeshing*, *multiliteracies*, *biliteracy continuum*, *dynamic bilingualism*, *pluriliteracy*, *plurilingualism*, *linguistic repertoire*, and *bilinguajamento* are not entirely synonymous with translanguaging, they share a common post-structuralist perspective. According to this view, language is not merely an abstract system of structures or solely a product of human cognition but is deeply connected to social practices. From a Bakhtinian standpoint, the meanings of an utterance are not original creations by a speaker but rather dialogical constructs that arise in response to previous statements and generate responses to future ones (Sipriano & Gonçalves, 2017). Language is seen as a social, dialogical, and heterogeneous activity that is shaped through interaction with others.

More recently, Canagarajah (2013a) argues that the concept of translingual practices calls for moving beyond structuralist views of language. He suggests that communication: (i) "transcends individual languages", reinforcing that "mixtures" of languages are not impure and deviant versions of the named languages (e.g. Guarani, French, Libras, Portuguese); (ii) "transcends words and involves diverse semiotic resources and ecological affordances" (Canagarajah, 2013a, p. 6). By doing so, the author broadens the notion of repertoire beyond verbal resources, engaging in dialogue with researchers from New Literacy Studies, among others. The term *translanguaging*, therefore, highlights the mobility, fluidity and hybridity of communication and literacy practices, which are not limited to closed structures and limited to names such as Haitian Creole, English, and Swahili. Hence Canagarajah's (2013b) criticism of terms such as *multilingual* and *plurilingual*, which, in his perspective, produce a certain separation of languages when addressing their coexistence. Furthermore, echoing a series of authors who problematize the Herderian triad (equivalence between language, community and territory) and the notion of the native speaker, Canagarajah argues that "those who are considered monolingual are typically proficient in multiple registers, dialects, and discourses of a given language" (Canagarajah, 2013a, p. 8), which is always composed of resources from different spaces, making itself heteroglossic in Bakhtinian terms, as discussed in section 4.4.

In summary, as Canagarajah (2013a) notes, the practices that are built in/through the blending of named languages and diverse semiotic resources are nothing new. We also stress that the theoretical discussion surrounding these practices is not new either, despite some recent tendencies to frame it as such. Translingual practices – which have become more visible due to recent forms of globalization in the form of transnational contacts, migrations and technological advances (Canagarajah, 2013a) – do not represent the birth of new paradigm, nor do they emerge from it. Additionally, we emphasize that the concept of translanguaging itself does not radically alter our understanding of these practices.

We are not denying the contributions of this concept, but rather emphasizing that it adds to other concepts of a post-structuralist paradigm, with which it establishes both alliance and opposition. As Canagarajah himself (2017, p. 31) recognizes, the post-structuralist paradigm can contribute to "theorize and practice translingualism according to a spatial orientation that embeds communication in space and time, considering all resources as working together as an assemblage in shaping meaning".

#### **4.2 Avoiding the isolation of translanguaging features, which risks erasing the socio-historical and ideological contexts from which they arise**

Although the perspective of translanguaging seeks to challenge the reification of a set of linguistic elements (which would characterize a certain language from a

systemic point of view), we have observed a tendency in some research to focus narrowly on isolating instances of translanguaging within a given production (such as that of an additional language learner) from a perspective that is, precisely, that of the norms of certain languages conceived as systems.

Paradoxically, this approach resembles studies based on the concept of interlanguage, which, according to Selinker (2014, p. 223), refers to the "linguistic/cognitive space that exists between the native language and the language that one is learning", constituting a dynamic phenomenon towards the target language marked by the mixture between languages. For Selinker (2014, p. 223), "interlanguages are non-native languages which are created and spoken whenever there is language contact", and they constitute systems with their own rules, not analyzable based on the parameters of either the native or additional language. This perspective is criticized by Maher (1996) on two main grounds: (i) "language" and "native speaker" are taken as homogeneous entities, generally erasing non-prestigious varieties and their speakers – an erasure strongly influenced by ideological factors; (ii) the behavior of the additional language learner is idealized, as if they progress linearly and continuously towards the behavior of the "native speaker" of that language, when, in fact, "there are constant retreats in the communicative behavior of the bilingual subject towards their mother tongue, largely due to issues of identity and cultural resistance"<sup>25</sup> (Maher, 1996, p. 205). Maher's critique of the interlanguage concept shares epistemological foundations with the translanguaging perspective, which "moves us beyond a consideration of individual or monolithic languages to life between and across languages" (Canagarajah, 2013a, p. 1). Why, then, can the interlanguage perspective align with a sloganized vision of translanguaging, despite the radically different epistemologies of these two concepts?

When a teacher or researcher isolates linguistic items in a given text and takes them autonomously – whether from the lens of interlanguage or from the lens of translanguaging –, the same detrimental effect tends to occur: the disregard of the communicative situation, both in its strict and broad senses, leading to the erasure of its socio-historical and ideological context. The difference is that, from the interlanguage perspective, the isolation of so-called "interlanguage errors" works as a pedagogical strategy so that learners can overcome them, since interlanguage, as the name suggests, would not be the "true language". Therefore, while it is part of the language learning process, it is viewed as something to be corrected. In contrast, from the translanguaging perspective, isolating instances categorized as marks of translanguaging is intended to highlight the creativity and richness of a linguistic repertoire.

According to Selinker (1972), interruptions in the process of learning an additional language can lead to fossilization. Selinker defines fossilizable linguistic phenomena as "linguistic items, rules, and subsystems which speakers of a particular native language will tend to keep in their interlanguage relative to a particular target language, no matter what the age of the learner or amount of explanation and instruction he receives in the target language" (Selinker, 1972, p. 215). The focus on "interlanguage errors" prompts additional language teachers to act to prevent fossilization, which, if pervasive, might indicate a "failure" in the learning process. In contrast, a translanguaging perspective that isolates linguistic items risks fostering a certain passivity, marked only by the celebration of deviations from established norms. As discussed in section 4.4, while valuing the student's repertoire rather than stigmatizing it, this approach may limit opportunities for meta-reflection. This reflection could

<sup>25</sup> Originally: "possível nas fraturas de uma língua hegemônica (nacional ou imperial)", que "supera o medo e a vergonha daqueles que não dominam a língua principal".

otherwise enhance strategic use of different linguistic resources for meaning-making, depending on the specific context of the utterance.

### 4.3 Examining translanguaging beyond its most obvious phonetic, phonological, and lexicogrammatical elements

From the interlanguage perspective, the tendency to isolate elements like phonemes, words, and grammatical rules that deviate from a norm reflects a specific view of language. Similarly, a sloganized perspective on translanguaging often focuses on these same surface-level aspects, contrary to the deeper epistemological assumptions underlying translanguaging. However, García and Seltzer (2016), when discussing the concept of *translanguaging corriente*, argue that even when manifestations appear to consist only of elements from a named language, translanguaging is always present at a deeper level. For instance, in multilingual classrooms with migrants and refugees, "even if the class is being conducted in the dominant majority language only, students are constantly making sense of the new language through what they already know in their language" (García; Selzer, 2016, p. 23).

A deeper examination, which goes beyond the surface level of linguistic forms, reveals more profound manifestations of translanguaging, often uncovering significant socio-historical and identity processes. For instance, Maher (1996), among other issues, explores interactions with indigenous participants in a teacher training project. Although these interactions are superficially conducted in Portuguese, they reveal traces of a "cultural interaction" from their ancestral languages, even when proficiency in these languages is limited. The researcher analyzes, for example, a dialogue where Apurinã teachers dramatize the arrival of an indigenous person from their group at the home of someone they haven't seen in a while:

The dramatized dialogue unfolded as follows: the "visitor" (Jorge Avelino) approached and encircled the "host" (Geraldo) before initiating the interaction.

Host: Hey Jorge Avelino, you've arrived...

Visitor: I'm here.

Host: You can come in.

Visitor: Yes, I'm coming in...

Host: Let's sit down...

Visitor: Then I'll sit down <sup>26</sup>(Maher, 1996, p. 184-185).

As the author argues, "this way of greeting is very far from our 'Hi, how are you? Okay, and you, how are you? Alright, let's go in...'"<sup>27</sup> (Maher, 1996, p. 185). This illustrates that conventions for initiating a conversation can vary significantly between indigenous and non-indigenous communities. Maher also reports that, according to several indigenous teachers participating in this teacher training project, expressions of gratitude are generally non-verbal, conveyed through reciprocation in the form of treats

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<sup>26</sup> Originally: "O diálogo dramatizado ocorreu nos seguintes moldes: a "visita" (Jorge Avelino) foi chegando perto, rodeou o "dono da casa" (Geraldo), até que este procedeu à abertura da interação.

Dono da casa - Ó Jorge Avelino, 'cê já chegou ...

Visita - Eu 'tou aqui.

Dono da casa - Pode subir.

Visita - Sim, eu já 'tou subindo ...

Dono da casa - Vamos sentar ...

Visita - Então eu vou sentar".

<sup>27</sup> Originally: "esta maneira de cumprimentar está muito longe do nosso 'Oi, tudo bem? Tudo bem, e você, tudo bem? Tudo bem, vamos entrar...'"

and gifts given sometime after the act being thanked for. The researcher interprets these manifestations as indicative of the "discursive functioning of the Indianized variety of Portuguese"<sup>28</sup> being studied (Maher, 1996, p. 187).

Zoppi-Fontana and Celada (2009), drawing on French Discourse Analysis, examine two enunciative scenes involving themselves as Argentine migrants living in Brazil. In the first scene, one of them, newly arrived in Brazil and frustrated by the delay at a postgraduate program's secretariat, asks: "Listen, don't you have any employee who can assist me?"<sup>29</sup> (2009, p. 169) – a question followed by a silence that the protagonist perceived as hostile. In the second scene, which occurred at a scientific event, the other migrant, who had been residing in Brazil for many years, was attending a session when a monitor asked: "What's your name, professor?"<sup>30</sup> (2009, p. 176). While holding a stack of certificates with one hand, the monitor handed the migrant a list to sign, registering her participation as a speaker. Before signing, the professor responded: "But I haven't spoken yet..."<sup>31</sup> (2009, p. 176), which led to a look of confusion from the monitor. Zoppi-Fontana and Celada analyze the linguistic materiality of these statements, emphasizing their positioning within a "subject position determined by a 'right of regulation'"<sup>32</sup> rather than a "subject position determined by a *casuistic/interpersonal right*"<sup>33</sup> (authors' emphasis), which is more common among Brazilian subjects (2009, p. 178). According to the authors, both episodes reveal the "irruption of the immigrant subject's original *discursivity*"<sup>34</sup>, where linguistic markers indicate a "way of being in the other's language while remaining within the relative discursive order of its own functioning"<sup>35</sup> (2009, p. 170, authors' emphasis).

Carvalho and Schlatter (2022) examine the writing of two master's dissertations by Avá-Guarani and Kaigang researchers defended at a Brazilian federal university, mobilizing the concepts of language ideologies (Woolard, 2021), communicative repertoires (Rymes, 2010) and academic literacies (Ávila Reyes et al., 2020). The authors observe how these researchers integrate Portuguese with elements from their own linguistic repertoires – including Avá-Guarani and Kaigang – to assert their indigenous identities, address various forms of violence, and validate historically marginalized practices and knowledge. For example, one of the indigenous people cites historical events narrated by elders and leaders of her community, instead of resorting to bibliographic sources or research transcriptions; the other author, in the bibliographical references, refers to the "LIVING LIBRARY of the elderly. Interviews carried out with older people from the Kanhgág ethnic group, 2017"<sup>36</sup> (apud Carvalho; Schlatter, 2022, p. 720). Carvalho and Schlatter (2022) also highlight a certain circularity in the argumentation, which, as Gorete Neto (2012) points out, should not be mistaken for redundancy or repetition. Furthermore, these indigenous people legitimize, in their dissertations, linguistic and semiotic resources of their communities – such as orality and drawings –, contrary to colonial ideologies that represent European languages and

<sup>28</sup> Originally: "funcionamento discursivo da variedade indianizada do português em foco".

<sup>29</sup> Originally: "Escuta, não tem nenhum empregado que possa me atender?"

<sup>30</sup> Originally: "Qual o seu nome, professora?"

<sup>31</sup> Originally: "Mas eu ainda não falei..."

<sup>32</sup> Originally: "posición-sujeto determinada por un "derecho de reglamentación".

<sup>33</sup> Originally: "posición-sujeto determinada por un *derecho casuístico/interpersonal*".

<sup>34</sup> Originally: "irrupción de la discursividad de origen del sujeto inmigrante".

<sup>35</sup> Originally: "modo de estar en la lengua del otro al mismo tiempo que se permanece en el orden discursivo relativo al funcionamiento de la propia".

<sup>36</sup> Originally: "BIBLIOTECA VIVA dos mais velhos. Entrevistas feitas com mais velhos da etnia Kanhgág, 2017".

writing as superior. The drawings "are my writing", says one of these indigenous people. In this way, there is a game between obedience and disobedience to expected academic norms, which questions language ideologies and inspires "pedagogical guidelines that reference students' communicative repertoires"<sup>37</sup> (Carvalho; Schlatter, 2022, p. 729).

In examining all episodes and excerpts from Maher (1996), Zoppi-Fontana and Celada (2009) and Carvalho and Schlatter (2022), we can see how a plural repertoire, composed of diverse linguistic and semiotic resources, is evident. If we concentrate solely on the linguistic units themselves rather than on the statements – which, according to Bakhtin (1992), are inherently ideological – we risk adopting a sloganized perspective on translanguaging. Such a perspective fails to capture the *translanguaging corriente* discussed by García and Seltzer (2016). As Canagarajah (2013a, p. 5) asserts, "We need to focus on practices rather than forms because the translingual orientation treats heterogeneity as the norm rather than the exception".

#### 4.4 Encouraging meta-reflection on translingual practices

Based on our discussion, we argue that a sloganized interpretation of translanguaging can risk endorsing an "anything goes" perspective. However, from a translingual standpoint, meaning-making occurs through practices that employ language(s) and semiotic resources in a hybrid and simultaneous manner (Canagarajah, 2013a). This does not mean disregarding the movement of speakers across spaces. On the contrary, it is crucial to consider the heteroglossic<sup>38</sup> nature of linguistic repertoires and to adopt a "spatial orientation" (Canagarajah, 2017), viewing space as stratified (Blommaert, 2010).

Each space operates under its own linguistic regime, defined by specific rules, discourses, and language ideologies. According to Busch (2012, p. 18), when interacting within a particular space, speakers can access and use different linguistic resources in various ways, positioning themselves relative to the space's linguistic regime – whether by adhering to its rules willingly, reluctantly, or by transgressing them. Linguistic resources, crossed by ideologies, mean that, in a given space, the effects of certain positions are achieved – but not others (Langenhove; Harré, 1999). For example, as Deus (2024) illustrates, certain segmental or suprasegmental features in pronunciation can form an accent that might link an individual to a particular country, thus positioning them according to stereotypes associated with that place. The persistence of these features after an extended period of using an additional language in the destination country might indicate resistance to changing one's identity.

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<sup>37</sup> Originally: "diretrizes pedagógicas que tenham por referência os repertórios comunicativos dos estudantes".

<sup>38</sup> Each utterance is composed of varied and conflicting opinions, viewpoints, and ideological stances, or voices, in Bakhtinian terms, making discursive practices a domain where languages and social voices interact through "multiple dialogical relationships of acceptance, refusal, harmony, conflicts, intersections, and hybridizations" (Rocha & Maciel, 2015, p. 427). Supported by Blackledge and Creese (2014), Rocha and Maciel (2015, p. 428) emphasize that this heteroglossic perspective on language practices goes beyond merely acknowledging the presence of different languages, dialects, and codes as resources. It also involves a commitment to multidiscursivity and multivocality. In this sense, Rocha and Maciel (2015, p. 427), drawing on Canagarajah (2013a), argue that "translingual orientation embraces the hybridization of (social) languages, leading to significant practices concerning 'values, voices, and identities'" and recognize heteroglossia as intrinsic to translanguaging. Similarly, from a Bakhtinian perspective, Busch (2012) suggests viewing the linguistic repertoire as inherently heteroglossic.

In line with Rocha and Maciel (2015), we acknowledge the translingual perspective's potential to move language teaching away from rigid, standardizing practices, thus paving the way for lived and situated expressions. This approach helps to make languages and cultures more visible and valued, creating a space where marked hybrid identities can emerge and fostering greater creativity in meaning-making. However, we want to clarify that our aim is not to unconditionally celebrate all translingual manifestations, regardless of the conditions of production, as sloganized interpretations of the concept of translanguaging may suggest. Such an approach would overlook, precisely, the heteroglossia of the linguistic repertoire and its spatial orientation, treating translingual manifestations as if they were uniform and independent of meaning-making practices, which are always situated.

The translingual perspective does not disregard, therefore, the norms and conventions established for certain contexts by dominant groups. Instead, it suggests that "translingual practices are applied as engagement strategies with different codes, maintaining the awareness that the final textual production varies according to contextual expectations" (Canagarajah, 2013a, p. 8). Several aspects affect influence how space is stratified: the production conditions in which a certain interaction takes place, in a strict and broad sense; the conditions of the interaction, both specifically and broadly; the genres in use; the level of formality required; the degree of typological and cultural proximity or distance between the languages involved; the speaker's familiarity with the linguistic and multisemiotic resources of their interlocutor<sup>39</sup>; and the willingness of participants to negotiate meanings, which can be influenced by power dynamics often shaped by raciolinguistic ideologies (Galabuzi, 2006; Bizon; Cavalcanti, 2018). In relation to this last aspect, in fact, one of the elements that restricts the possibilities for speakers to move between multiple linguistic and semiotic resources in their repertoires concerns language ideologies that value certain resources over others. There is a "social etiquette of linguistic choice" (Gumperz, 1964, p. 138), which creates speech styles that, when maintained across different communities, may lead to interpretations that diverge from or even contradict expected norms<sup>40</sup>. Conversely, speakers may also challenge and subvert these conventions by using these styles to resist restrictive categorizations.

Productions like translingual poems or slams offer more room for creative effects – such as rhymes, neologisms, and humor – as well as for expressing identity. Similarly, a translingual cover letter can have varied impacts depending on its purpose: whether it's for gaining admission to a creative writing course or applying for a corporate job. In academic contexts, plurilingual authors need to be strategic about their use of codemeshing: deciding how much, where, and when to employ it (Canagarajah, 2013a). In this regard, Canagarajah (2013a, p. 125) draws attention to the fact that pluralizing plurilingual students' academic writing

demands more, not less, from minority students. It demands proficiency in established varieties, expert use of local variants, and the rhetorical strategies of meshing. In other words, this strategy

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<sup>39</sup> In our experience training teachers to work with migrants and refugees, we've often encountered Basic Education teachers who report that they "understand nothing" of their Venezuelan students' Spanish, despite their efforts to welcome them. Similarly, many migrants and refugees, including Spanish speakers, have shared that one of their greatest challenges in adapting to life in Brazil is understanding Portuguese.

<sup>40</sup> For example, the omission of "please" in certain requests in Brazilian Portuguese can be carried over into interactions in other languages and communities where such an adverbial phrase is considered essential.



requires not only awareness of the established and local norms, but the competence to bring them together strategically for voice and for one's objectives. Codemeshing calls for a complex linguistic and rhetorical competence. It is not a practice of deficiency.

In a sloganized view of the concept of translanguaging, there is little room to explore the full potential of translingual practices because it tends to focus solely on celebrating the richness of a given linguistic repertoire. In such a sloganized perspective, there is also little – or no – room left to consider that there are translingual manifestations that do not work, either because they make interaction difficult or even unfeasible, or because they are permeated by language ideologies that a speaker does not wish to, or cannot, oppose, at a certain moment, outside the protected space of a course guided by a translingual perspective. Neglecting how languages are valued in contexts beyond the educational sphere risks "suggesting that while translanguaging practices are valuable and pupil-friendly, they are in the end less important than pupils' ability in socially valued or academic registers", incurring the following dilemma:

how do you valorize pupils' linguistic diversity without losing sight of socially valued, monolingual, registers? Or, inversely, how do you make pupils learn a collectively valued register without implying that their individual linguistics skills are less important? (Jaspers, 2018, p. 6).

It is necessary, therefore, that proposals for expanded linguistic education (Cavalcanti, 2013) encourage meta-reflexive processes on how translanguaging works, acknowledging both its potential and its limitations. In this regard, we refer back to Maher (1996), who, on the one hand, criticizes indigenous education programs that seek to eradicate Indigenous Portuguese by sanitizing the marks that separate it from prestigious varieties of Portuguese, since the objective should be to "bring the Indians to master the Portuguese language and not vice versa"<sup>41</sup> (p. 239). Conversely, the author also criticizes "naively non-interventionist policies"<sup>42</sup>, noting that, as many indigenous people perceive, access to oral and written Portuguese produced by white people in prestigious varieties can be an important defense tool - though, evidently, not a sufficient condition on its own. In the author's words, "Teaching the so-called standard Portuguese must be done to expand the Indian's communicative repertoire, not to impoverish their experiences with the language"<sup>43</sup> (Maher, 1996, p. 240). Similarly, in harmony with Zavala (2019), Carvalho and Schlatter argue that

developing awareness and reflection around the diversity of repertoires and the values associated with them should be a goal for teachers and students at the university, so that they understand which sets of language resources can be useful for belonging to and participating in which communities, taking positions in relation to how they wish to perform, for whom or against whom, through the linguistic resources they already have and those they may wish to add to their repertoires (Carvalho; Schlatter, 2022, p. 728-729).<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Originally: "levar o índio a dominar a língua portuguesa e não vice-versa".

<sup>42</sup> Originally: "políticas ingenuamente não-intervencionistas".

<sup>43</sup> Originally: "O ensino do português tido como padrão deve ser feito para ampliar o repertório comunicativo do índio, não para empobrecer suas experiências com a linguagem".

<sup>44</sup> Originally: "desenvolver uma consciência e uma reflexão em torno da diversidade dos repertórios e dos valores associados a eles deva ser uma meta para docentes e estudantes na universidade, para que

A crucial element in these expanded language education projects is, therefore, an awareness of the language ideologies at play in a given space. In this regard, when discussing the linguistic education of migrant students in schools where English is the language of instruction, García and Seltzer advocate for such a practice, in which

Together students start to question who decides what counts and doesn't count as a language; which practices are more valued and which are not; which practices are included in schools and which are not. In this way, students start to develop not only metalinguistic awareness, but *critical* metalinguistic awareness. The students become critical sociolinguists as they raise the question of why these linguistic hierarchies exist and who benefits from these decisions. Students then deal with the features of English with the same critical lenses that they apply to their own language practices (García; Seltzer, 2016, p. 26, author's emphasis).

There is, therefore, a complex foundation that underpins translingual practices. Given the spatiality and indexicality of these practices, a linguistic education project from this perspective cannot limit itself to enabling the transit between multiple linguistic and semiotic resources. Nor should it adopt a celebratory stance toward the linguistic repertoires of students from minority groups while ignoring the colonial dynamics that subordinate these repertoires, which are often contrary to the lived experiences of these students. A translingual linguistic education project, from a non-sloganized perspective, must promote meta-reflection on translingual practices. Without this reflection, the very possibility of operationalizing a decolonial perspective will be obliterated.

In this sense, we also caution against the establishment of an unequivocal link between translanguaging and decoloniality, a concept that, as mentioned earlier, is currently undergoing strong sloganization. We align with Leroy's (2021) view that the visibility of translingual practices can contribute to the emergence of historically erased knowledge from the Global South and, in this way, favor a decolonial linguistic education. However, we also emphasize that while decoloniality may presuppose translanguaging—despite the fact that so-called decolonial discourses often allow little or no space for historically silenced languages—translanguaging does not necessarily presuppose decoloniality. After all, translanguaging, in its less or more conscious manifestations, is present in the most diverse communicative practices, as it is inherent to them. To illustrate this point, we could remember, for example, a common practice among supporters of Jair Bolsonaro, a far-right Brazilian politician, in pro-military “intervention” demonstrations that occurred throughout his term as president of Brazil (2019-2022) and shortly thereafter. During these events, it was common to see banners and posters featuring not only Portuguese but also English, German, and other semiotics (images, colors, symbols). As this example shows, translingual practices can indeed create space to validate historically discredited linguistic-discursive practices, but they can also be employed to reproduce highly colonialist discourses.

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compreendam quais conjuntos de recursos de linguagem podem ser úteis para pertencer e participar de quais comunidades, tomando posições em relação a como desejam performar, a favor de quem ou contra quem, por meio dos recursos linguísticos que já possuem e dos que podem desejar acrescentar aos seus repertórios”.

## 5. Final considerations

The discussion on translanguaging undeniably represents a significant advance in the field of language studies, with a strong potential to influence the development of linguistic and educational policies. It emphasizes the organic and fluid nature of language functioning—an inherent dynamism that persists despite the norms imposed to artificially regulate it, thereby continually creating spaces for the (re)construction of discursive, social, and identity practices.

However, as we have highlighted throughout this article, the concept of translanguaging has been sloganized in some academic works, a process fueled by the rise of academic capitalism with its strong neoliberal tendencies. This text was written precisely to draw attention to this sloganization and to offer proposals that can help mitigate it. These proposals are: (i) recognizing that translanguaging does not constitute a paradigm shift or an epistemological turn; (ii) avoiding the isolation of translanguaging markers, which risks erasing the socio-historical and ideological practices from which they arise; (iii) considering translanguaging beyond the more apparent phonetic-phonological and lexicogrammatical elements; and (iv) encouraging meta-reflection on translingual practices.

The first proposal arises from our observation of traces of sloganization in the way the concept of translanguaging is sometimes presented – as a "new paradigm" or an "epistemological turn"—and, more significantly, in its widespread circulation. We contend, however, that translanguaging is embedded within a post-structuralist paradigm, resonating with a range of concepts that, despite their unique aspects, similarly challenge the monolingual orientation that has historically dominated the field of language studies.

The other proposals against sloganization address concerns about superficial interpretations of the concept, which are often favored by a process of academic branding. Similar to other sloganized concepts presented in section 3, these interpretations exhibit traces of a liberal perspective on multiculturalism, criticized by Maher (2007) – particularly in its emphasis on equality. From this standpoint, translingual manifestations are uncritically celebrated, even though the intent may be to value them. This approach can lead to the exoticization and fetishization of these practices, while overlooking the language ideologies that marginalize certain practices. What ends up being celebrated is "only what is on the surface of cultures"<sup>45</sup> – in this case, particular features of translanguaging – disconnected from the "real lives of people and their political struggles"<sup>46</sup> (Maher, 2007, p. 260). Such a liberal perspective tends to flatten the different layers of the functioning of translingual practices, potentially producing negative effects on several levels. One of them is the erasure of ideologies and spatiality, which produce social stratifications in languages. Consequently, as Garcez (in press) points out, while certain celebratory speeches multiply – which, by superficializing concepts, often construct the impression of equality –, the production of inequalities continues by not proposing and implementing policies that, effectively, provide opportunities for equality.

Another consequence of this flattening is a certain universalization of the functioning of different translingual repertoires, specifically rooted in a sloganized interpretation of the statement that "we are all translinguals, not native speakers of a single language in homogeneous environments" (Canagarajah, 2013a, p .8). While this

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<sup>45</sup> Originally: "apenas aquilo que está na superfície das culturas".

<sup>46</sup> Originally: "vida real das pessoas e de suas lutas políticas".

critique of the monolingualism of certain speakers is crucial for acknowledging the multiplicity of elements within their repertoires, it should not lead, in our view, to ignoring the specificities of translingual repertoires across different groups. For instance, a deaf Brazilian who moves between Portuguese and Brazilian Sign Language in their daily life mobilizes their repertoire in ways that are quite different from those observed in a Brazilian listener socialized exclusively in Portuguese. In this regard, Jaspers (2018) criticizes the process of delinking translanguaging from its specific roots in bilingual communities, drawing a parallel with the process by which prestigious varieties were treated as "universally valid and available to all those who seek their autonomy and emancipation" (Jaspers, 2018, p. 8). What seems to be at stake, in this sloganized reading of the concept of translanguaging that flattens different repertoires, is what Pavlenko (2019, p. 159) would qualify as "semantic excess", which, according to the author (2019), although counterproductive in academic terms, it can be a benefit for slogans, as their vagueness allows them to reach a greater number of consumers.

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