

INTRODUCTION

**ANTI-DISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES IN APPLIED LINGUISTICS: MEANINGS
(DE/RE)CONSTRUCTION AND MULTISITUATED TRAJECTORIES**

*Linguística Aplicada INdisciplinar: (des/re)construção de significados e trajetórias
multissituadas*

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Since it overcame the “application of Linguistics” perspective and expanded its limits to institutional contexts beyond the educational ones, Applied Linguistics has been understood as a transdisciplinary field in interface with social sciences and the humanities. Within this perspective, some scholars have proposed an undisciplinary/transgressive approach (Moita Lopes 2006; Pennycook 2006; Szundy and Fabrício, 2019) in dialogue with areas such as the feminist, the antiracist, the decolonial, and the queer studies. That approach advocates that our epistemological choices in Applied Linguistics should blur the borders between fields and areas in ways that allow the unlearning of colonial modern logic and the engagement in new exercises of imagination. Such approach privileges the centrality of semiotic resources in the (re)production of meanings about social life (Moita Lopes 2006), as well as defends a critical proximity towards these meanings to enhance the comprehension of the heterogeneous, and often contradictory, interpretations that characterize meaning (de/re/co)construction processes.

Inspired by these premises, this thematic dossier aims at expanding the comprehension

on anti-disciplinary/transgressive approaches to Applied Linguistics in different localities and social spheres. Assuming that meanings are multisituated and thus reiterated and/or challenged as they are (de/re)contextualized in diverse semiotic trajectories, the debates fostered by the different (co)authors who contributed to the dossier focus on the interfaces that anti-disciplinary/transgressive applied linguists have been establishing with contemporary issues in social sciences and humanities. The idea for this dossier originated from the interactions the four editors (three from different public universities in Brazil and one from a public university in Colombia) have established with meaning (de/re)construction processes in different contexts throughout their trajectories as critical/anti-disciplinary/transgressive applied linguists.

A total of nine articles were approved to integrate the thematic dossier. Contributions in Portuguese, English and Spanish were welcome, but among the nine selected articles, only one was written in English and eight in Portuguese. The choice to write this presentation in English is justified by the fact that this is a lingua franca shared by the four editors. It is also oriented by our desire to expand the reflections on the epistemological potentials of anti-disciplinary Applied Linguistics done in Latin America to other localities. Within this purpose, we believe that colonial languages such as English (and Portuguese and Spanish as well!) can be made into “a space for contestation, for claiming the periphery rights, for subversion and not submission” (Rajagopalan, 2005, p. 155) and thus be transformed into decolonial tools. Prioritizing a more plural linguistic approach oriented by authorship, we also opted to keep the article title in Spanish if that was the additional language chosen by the author(s) for the translation of their abstract.

Despite the multiplicity of epistemological routes mobilized to cover distinct meaning (de/re)construction processes in different social spheres, the applied linguists who contribute to the dossier share the assumption that language is ideological (Volóchinov, 2017 [1929]) and that the performative nature of ideologies has effects in the social world (Szundy and Fabrício, 2019). The consequence of this shared belief is a critical proximity with the investigated discursive phenomena which is committed to understanding and problematizing their ethical implications. Having in mind the ethical commitment of the articles with unlearning the modern colonial logic by giving visibility to alternative ways to comprehending and organizing social experiences, this introduction to the dossier seeks to establish a dialogue between the selected articles without finding similarities between them or determining whether they validate a particular way of confronting the colonial legacies of academia dedicated to language studies.

The aspiration is to understand their onto-epistemological locations to reveal not how they speak or research language but how they configure places of listening when language operates in the socio-cultural structures of communities.

Configuring places to listen to language when it speaks to us subverts and surpasses in several dimensions the legacy of Brumfit, for whom applied linguistics is the theoretical and empirical investigation of real-world problems in which language is a central issue. The dispute is over who listens and who speaks that language. In this regard, standard references used by the researchers (featured in Ferreira, Flister and Oliveira; Szundy and Tilio; Espírito Santo, Melo and Meliconi; Pulido and Álvarez Contreras; Bem Gonçalves) are oriented towards a shift from Brumfit's idea (1995) to a more innovative one (Moita Lopes, 2006) consisting of constructing (e.g., listening to language) intelligibility about social problems in which language is not applied but is involved.

When heard and not applied, this sphere of language's involvement in the constitution of social orders (Foucault, 1970) establishes regimes of truth and produces sounds and noises to understand resistance to the hegemonic. Just as, for example, a musician captures with their ear the complex harmonies of the sounds emitted by the instruments of an orchestra, a listener tunes into the symphony of speech surrounding them. A language scholar listens to a vibrant stage where words, texts, and signifiers are transformed into meanings, senses, and discourses constituted by cultural, social, and contextual signals. The contributors to this issue draw on the diverse melodies of Moita Lopes' seminal work for Brazil and, by extension, for Latin America (2006). Other scores that offer nuances and sound cadences are those by Melo and Moita Lopes (2021), Fabricio (2006), Finardi, Borges, Dellangelo, and Ramos (2019), Tanzi (2021), and Rajagopalan (2006). It is important to connect this contribution to the discussions on applied linguistics that are taking place in the South and, for everyone, in what is known as the Global South and Global North.

Listening to what language makes intelligible is not easy because it is not a simplistic act of hearing. Listening is a political action. There, what is understood or made intelligible is not limited to what is heard. However, the implication occurs in what is felt, with depth, humanity, denunciation, and struggle. Therefore, Moita Lopes' inspiring musical note, which dates back to challenging discussions in the 1980s, as he states in his seminal work, is heard in a multifaceted way since listening is also sensitive to contexts (and this is a work that does not seek to indoctrinate). The people who contribute to this volume share this with us. For example,

we hear that language itself is an epistemological site of dispute (Bem Gonçalves, this volume); language makes it possible to inhabit the border (Menezes and Albuquerque, this volume); language allows practices to be reconstituted (Fonseca, Machado and Miranda, this volume); language becomes embodied and turns into sound in the form of theatrical semiotic elements (Ferreira, Flister and Oliveira, this volume); language, in which discursive practices are inscribed, constitutes evaluative accents that allow enunciation or silence it (Szundy and Tilio, this volume); language constitutes social changes in its interaction with human or (de)humanized legal contexts (Sierra-Pacheco and Barros, this volume); language hierarchizes and silences the silenced (Espírito Santo, Melo and Meliconi, this volume); language regulates the educational sphere with a heterosexual, patriarchal, and misogynistic bias (Pulido and Álvarez Contreras, this volume); language feeds on the interdisciplinary (Albanese, this volume).

These contributions point to where indiscipline begins to take shape from, in, with, and for the unheard or hypocritically half-heard. The contexts in which the musical notes heard in the contributions to this dossier are immersed, with one musical note or another, indicate that the modern plan for citizenship or human beings is not a necessary aspiration, either in Brazil or in other parts of Latin America, given that such a plan has its roots in whiteness, masculinity, patriarchy, Catholicism, possession and accumulation in terms of goods and land, literacy together with linguistic mastery, and heterosexuality (Castro-Gómez, 2000).

There, in what is not heard and made intelligible, are the diverse forms and experiences of migration (by Menezes and Albuquerque; by Ferreira, Flister and Oliveira, this volume), sexual orientations, and sex-gender diversities (by Menezes and Albuquerque; by Pulido and Álvarez Contreras; by Szundy and Tilio; by Bem Gonçalves, this volume), racism and racial exclusion (by Menezes and Albuquerque; by Szundy and Tilio; by Sierra-Pacheco and Barros, this volume), rural feminist struggles and critical literacy (Fonseca, Machado and Miranda, this volume), language learning and education (by Pulido and Álvarez Contreras; by Ferreira, Flister, and Oliveira; by Szundy and Tilio; by do Espírito Santo, Melo and Meliconi; and by Albanese, this volume), environmental degradation (by Sierra-Pacheco and Barros, this volume), political discourse and inclusion (by Espírito Santo, Melo and Meliconi; and by Bem Gonçalves, this volume) and inter-epistemic dialogue (by Szundy and Tilio; by Sierra-Pacheco and Barros; by Bem Gonçalves; and by Albanese, this volume).

So, why are the articles in this dossier undisciplined in applied linguistics? How can we

be undisciplined in the exile to which we are condemned by silence in the reflective line of Fanon (1961) and in coping with daily episodes of racism as narrated by Kilomba (2012) in “Plantation Memories”? What does it mean to be undisciplined? According to Moita Lopes (2006), undisciplined applied linguistics is an approach that transcends traditional disciplinary boundaries in applied linguistics. Therefore, it is not a question of applying linguistic theories but of addressing complex social, cultural, and structural problems by resorting to inter-epistemic dialogues and other disciplines to understand the diverse uses of language in such contexts without attempting to totalize them by formulating unique and definitive answers. By freeing itself from disciplinary boundaries, undisciplined applied linguistics takes on a hybrid and nomadic character. Szundy and Tilio (2024, p. 67) argue that Moita Lopes (2006) uses the word *indisciplinar* in Portuguese

To characterize transgressive applied linguistics, which implodes the boundaries of disciplines (discipline as an area of study, especially a subject at university) and is not subject to control (the prefix “in-” indicates negation, ‘disciplinary’ means subject to control, subject to discipline; “undisciplined” means not subject to control, not subject to discipline). This undisciplined aspect of Applied Linguistics is fundamental to our way of researching. Being undisciplined means being critical when addressing differences and problematizing social practices.

Creating intelligibility around what is not legible is breaking the silence to learn to listen. Listening to those who are constituted from and in language in liminal places as “outsiders-within” (Ribeiro, 2017), whose knowledge is potentially decolonizing and who have complicated and challenging social positions such as that of the “Other of the other” (Kilomba, 2012). The nomadism and hybridity proposed by the indiscipline of Applied Linguistics refer to its flexibility and adaptability to free itself from traditional disciplinary constraints.

The implosion of disciplinary boundaries is vividly experienced by Bruno Cuter Albanese. In the article “Towards a responsible applied linguistics with teacher education in Languages”, the author outlines a reflection on the epistemological trajectories through which he navigated to understand the mediatic literacies practices of a Geography teacher during a pedagogic project focusing on the production of documentaries. Oriented by the question “can Applied Linguistics, through its tradition, collaborate to interpret phenomena which also interest geographers?”, Albanese advocates Applied Linguistics’ ethical commitment to share knowledge with other researchers and/or teachers affiliated to other fields of social sciences.

Focusing on how gender identities have been addressed in English as a Foreign

Language (EFL) classroom in Colombia, the responsibility of Applied Linguistics towards more equity and social change in education represents a central preoccupation in the article “Teaching beyond the norm: a narrative literature review about gender, language and identity in Colombian EFL spaces”. Luis Alberto Pinto Pulido and Finn Ale Álvarez Contreras draw on a queer perspective to analyze the intersections between gender, language and bilingual education in Colombia. They problematize the prevalent heteronormative and binary discourse in EFL settings and propose “that integrating gender awareness into language teaching is essential for fostering equitable learning environments”.

The contributions of a decolonial approach of Applied Linguistics to deaf people education in Brazil constitutes the theme of Joseane dos Santos do Espírito Santo, Denise Maria dos Santos Melo and Flávia Colen Meniconi’s article: “Reflexiones sobre la decolonialidad y la educación de personas sordas en Brasil”. Through a documental analysis of public policies, the authors outline a reflection on the colonial and decolonial perspectives related to deaf people’s linguistic education textualized in the analyzed documents. They defend the necessity to overcome Eurocentric perspectives in deaf people’s education as an essential strategy to promote greater inclusion of this linguistic minority in Brazil.

In their article “Ideologies refracted in PNLD’s evaluation criteria: ethical principles (de)legitimized within chronotopes, Paula Tatianne Carréra Szundy and Rogério Tilio also brings a documental analysis of an important public policy in Brazil: the Brazilian National Textbook Program (PNLD). Combining the dialogic approach to language proposed by the Circle of Bakhtin with transgressive perspectives of Applied Linguistics, the authors connect the changes observed in ethical and citizenship principles related to race, gender, sexuality, human rights etc. in PNLD’s public notices to the ideological systems which characterize distinct macropolitical chronotopes in Brazil.

Also focusing on the educational sphere, the article “The identity construction of humanitarian migration in a learning environment”, by Luciane Corrêa Ferreira, Catarina Valle e Flister and Barbara Vieira de Oliveira, presents a reflection about the identity construction of migrants and refugees in a course of Portuguese as a Welcoming Language. The analytical corpora are composed of workshops in which the participants were invited to talk about their lives and migratory experiences. By emphasizing the diversity and complexity of the migrants’ personal and professional trajectories, the authors defend the necessity of promoting welcoming experiences in Portuguese classes which approach migrants and refugees as a heterogenous

group.

Shifting from the educational to the literary sphere, Maria Clara Chagas de Menezes and José Lindomar Coelho Albuquerque explore how the Vietnamese-American poet Ocean Vuong resorts to written and spoken language, both in Vietnamese and English, to cross borders and (re)construct his existence. The article “Ocean Vuong and life between borders: mastering languages as a way of creating another world” blurs the disciplinary borders between Sociology, Linguistics and Literature, to make sense of the experiences narrated by Vuong in the autofictional autobiography “Sobre a terra somos belos por um instante”, the Brazilian version of “On Earth We Are Briefly Gorgeous”.

Empowerment of rural women as a means of reinventing their existences is the focus of the article “La emancipación de las mujeres rurales a través de la marcha de las margaritas: un análisis desde la perspectiva del evento de literacidad crítica”, by Alyssandra Viana Fonseca, Camila Miranda Machado and Cícero Anastácio Araújo de Miranda. Based on the concepts of literacy practices and events as social practices, the authors analyze how the participation of rural women in a regional workshop aiming at preparing them for the political movement “A Marcha das Margaridas” (The March of Daisies, in English) can become a powerful space to seek for emancipation and for confronting violence and sexism.

Disputes around the sign “kit gay” in Brazilian hegemonic media is the topic of Carlos Henrique Bem Gonçalves’ article: “Discursive Registers in Dispute: the Circulation of the “Kit Gay” across media, politics, and religion from the perspective of Applied Indisciplinary Linguistics”. Bem Gonçalves establishes profitable dialogues between the fields of Indisciplinary Applied Linguistics and Linguistic Anthropology to draw a critical reflection on the ideological effects produced by the circulation of the sign “kit gay” within distinct social arenas. Emphasizing how this circulation is fundamental to construct *bolsonarismo* as a political-discursive project, the author claims for a more critical approach to ethical issues related to journalism and to the spread of misinformation.

The article “Legal discourse, developmentalism and racial exclusion in judgment T-622 of 2016: a critical analysis of the recognition of the Atrato River as a legal subject”, by Camilo Andrés Sierra-Pacheco and Solange Maria de Barros, is the final musical note in the anti-disciplinary multisituated trajectories which compose the melody of this special issue. Through a critical analysis of the linguistic-discursive resources and ideological strategies applied by the Colombian Constitutional Court in the ruling T-622 2016, which recognized the Atrato River

as a “subject of rights”, the authors deconstruct the idea of impartiality of legal discourse, showing how it can contribute to reiterate a racist imaginary in relation to the ethnic communities who live on the banks of the river.

Given the dialogical nature of discourses, we believe that the multisituated trajectories through which different perspectives on anti-disciplinary Applied Linguistics are constructed in this thematic issue are only provisional. Other notes are to be added and diverse possibilities of melodies are to be composed by the many applied linguists who are committed to understanding and changing the performative uses of semiotic resources in the social world to (re)design more ethical futures. We invite readers to listen to the discursive notes that compose this dossier and share this active hope of transgressing with us!

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