

THE EMERGENCE OF DECOLONIAL LINGUISTICS: A DEMAND FROM THE GLOBAL SOUTH IN THE [ANCESTRAL] POST-FUTURE

 Alex Pereira de Araújo¹

Postgraduate Program in Language Studies of FAALC, Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul (UFMS), Brazil²

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to answer the question: how can one speak of a decolonial linguistics focused on the linguistic phenomena involved in this process? To this end, a pragmatic discourse approach will be used, in which discourse, “in its reality as a material thing spoken or written” (Foucault, 1996, p. 8), is the object to be analyzed; that is, this study starts from the critique of immanent linguistics, disconnected from such phenomena, amidst the rise of the Global South, multiculturalism, and the glottopolitical challenges in this [ancestral] Post-future. At the end of the discussion, it is concluded that the emergence of this decolonial linguistics, which arises primarily with Fanon and Césaire, constitutes not only a theoretical response to the colonialities of language, but a political and ontological gesture of restitution of the voice and place of speakers from the zone of non-being who were affected by the existential abyss imposed by European colonialism (Fanon, 2008).

Keywords: decolonial linguistics, glottopolitics; zone of non-being, monolingualism, multiculturalism.

1. INTRODUCTION

This work presents a discussion about the emergence of a linguistics that would be responsible for dealing with phenomena involving the decolonization of languages, not only in regions of the Global South, but also in discontinuous areas of the zone of non-being, such as immigrant and Black neighborhoods in countries like France, England, and the USA, where there is also a strong tension between the colonialities of knowledge and being with such decolonization (Quijano, 2009; Mignolo, 2019; Araújo, 2025). Therefore, this study seeks to answer how one can speak of a decolonial linguistics, taking as a starting point the works of Aimé Césaire (2000; 2020), Frantz Fanon (2008; 2022), Derrida (2001), Quijano (2009), Mignolo (2019), Labov (1982), Thiong'o (2025), Gnerre (1994), Lélia Gonzales (2020; 2022), Sousa Santos (2007), Nêgo Bispo (Santos, 2015, 2023), Araújo (2022, 2025).

Like critical linguistics, it questions the immanent concept of language and monolingualism, historically constructed under the force of law, that is, by the linguistic policies of modern states that defended the idea that there should be only one language for each nation-state (cf.

¹ Postdoctoral researcher in the Postgraduate Program in Language Studies at FAALC, Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul – UFMS. E-mail: alex.p.araujo@ufms.br

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Rajagopalan, 2003a; Derrida, 2001). However, it goes beyond such questioning by proposing a greater epistemological shift to deal with the harmful linguistic effects that are linked to the existential abyss, created with and for the zone of non-being (cf. Fanon, 2008; 2022).

Therefore, we have here a theoretical-analytical discussion that demonstrates the contours of this linguistics, which presents itself as a crossroads for decolonizing linguistic thought itself from the shackles of monolingual hegemony, based on decolonial studies, towards a new humanism, a new language. Thus, decolonial linguistics presents itself as a project that arises from a gesture by Frantz Fanon, materialized in his work *Black Skin: White Masks*, whose analysis demonstrates how Black bodies have been ruined by language in discursive practices that have inferiorized them using skin color (cf. Fanon, 2008).

Although his analysis was concerned with a psychoanalytic interpretation of the problem of the Black person, it not only "revealed affective anomalies through the structure of complexes" (Fanon, 2008, p. 27), but also demonstrated how the colonizer's language was used as a weapon of war to impose existential deviation on the men and women of the zone of non-being, "since to speak is to exist absolutely for the other" (Fanon, 2008, p. 33). Therefore, "every colonized people – that is, every people within whom an inferiority complex has arisen due to the burial of their cultural originality – takes a position in relation to the language of the civilizing nation, that is, of metropolitan culture" (Fanon, 2008, p. 34).

In a way, Fanon joins Aimé Césaire in his denunciatory critique of European colonialism and its pseudo-humanism molded in that existential deviation we know as racism, which used the following "equation: colonization = objectification" (Césaire, 2020, p. 24) to confiscate lands, empty societies of themselves, undermine institutions, destroy cultures, steal wealth, intimidating, humiliating, raping, killing, and decivilizing the colonizer himself (Césaire, 2020). It is in this sense that Césaire stated:

colonization, I repeat, dehumanizes even the most civilized man; that colonial activity, colonial enterprise, colonial conquest, which is based on contempt for the native and justified by that contempt, inevitably tends to change him who undertakes it; that the colonizer, who in order to ease his conscience gets into the habit of seeing the other man as an animal accustoms himself to treating him like an animal, and tends objectively to transform *himself* into an animal (Césaire, 2000, p.41).

So, "it is [these] objective evidences that account for reality" (Fanon, 2008, p. 33, added note).

Their political commitment or social appeal is to respond to the demands of such decolonization, understanding how to break with the linguistic patterns, forged by fire and iron, of the colonial discourse that created the existential abyss for non-whites in the zone of non-being and, at the same time, contributing to the reconstitution of the communicational ecology in the zone of non-being to reverse the harmful effects of colonial violence that persist through linguistic colonialities (Quijano, 2009; Mignolo, 2020; Araújo, 2025), without forgetting that, in the case of countries like Brazil, "the material conditions of existence of this black population refer to psychological conditioning that must be attacked and unmasked" (González, 2022, p. 21).

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Taking discourses as its material object in their observable reality, this research adopts a qualitative approach using discursive analysis, as it understands that "every discourse is the

result of historical conditions that determine its production or its appearance" (Araújo, 2024a, p. 13). From this perspective, "it cannot be analyzed without taking such conditions into account, especially in an approach like this one, undertaken here" (Araújo, 2024a, p. 13), in which discourses demonstrate their direct and material link with knowledge and power.

In his work *The Discourse on Language* (*L'ordre du discours*), Foucault (1996) reminds us, in seeking to create a theory of discourse, that "however insignificant discourse may seem, the prohibitions that affect it quickly reveal its connection with desire and power" (p. 10). It is precisely in the discursive interdictions that appear in the "genuine science of language" (Rajagopalan, 2008, p. 16) that this study finds the openings to question the immanent concept of language (Bakhtin, 2014; Makoni, Meinhof, 2006; Makoni, 2014; Makoni, Pennycook, 2015), the monolingualism that devalues multilingualism, bilingualism, and multiculturalism in the zone of non-being (Derrida, 2001; Rajagopalan, 1998; Menezes de Souza, 2019), unmasking a supposed scientific neutrality (Rajagopalan, 2003a, 2003b, 2008) by problematizing its immanent inability to deal with the [socio]political issues that stem from the linguistic ideologies that underlie the Linguistic racism, from the zone of non-being, of existential deviation, and of all sorts of aggressions against linguistic rights violated by the systemic structure of monolingual hegemony in which language teaching (i.e., the teaching of the mother tongue) has been used as "political indoctrination carried out in a veiled manner, a good example of how Althusser's (1996) 'ideological state apparatuses' function in the subjugation of individuals" (Rajagopalan, 2008, p.18).

Thus, it is considered that "the discourse of linguistics as a field of knowledge institutionally consolidated and monitored by agents duly authorized by members of the linguistic community is a discursive practice like any other" (Rajagopalan, 2003a, p. 76) in which traces of desire and power are found in the interventionist action of those who, at given historical moments, help to direct the course of research and control the evolutionary process of the discipline itself. Adding to these considerations regarding the critique of the "genuine science of language," there are works that discuss the role of language in the process of creating identities and manipulating subjectivity by the State (Gnerre, 1994; Foucault, 1995; Gonzáles, 2022; Geraldi, 2015; Lagares, 2018) and in the creation of the zone of non-being and the abyssal line (Fanon, 2008; Sousa Santos, 2007), in the maintenance of colonialities (Quijano, 2009; Mignolo, 2019), etc., as mentioned in the introduction.

In summary, this study uses pragmatic discourse analysis, derived from deconstructive discourse analysis, to consider the historical conditions of production of the discourses that underpin the zone of non-being, the existential abyss, the abyssal line, and monolingualism in the face of this phase of decolonization of being and language (cf. Araújo, 2020; 2021; 2022; 2024a; 2024b; 2025) and the epistemologies of the South (Sousa Santos, 2007).

3. DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

Since this work proposes a theoretical discussion about the emergence of a linguistics focused on the phenomena involving language in this process of decolonization of the Global South that dismantles the zone of non-being, the expected results are to demonstrate how such emergence materializes in discursive practices by highlighting the glottopolitical demands and challenges that justify its appearance in this Post-future whose time is not linear, but "beginning, middle, and beginning" (Santos, 2015; 2023). However, this study was initially conceived to address conceptions of language and speech that are outside the systemic scheme known as monolingualism, which was responsible for disseminating the linguistic ideology that forged the zone of non-being, the language market, linguistic racism, the grammatization

of languages, the creation of immanent linguistics, etc. (cf. Auroux, 1992; Saussure, 1995; Gnerre, 1994; Bakhtin, 2014; Derrida, 2001; Fanon, 2008; Sousa Santos, 2007; Rajagopalan, 2003a, 2003b, 2008, 2014; Makoni, Meinhof, 2006; Makoni, 2014; Makoni, Pennycook, 2015; Then, with the unfolding and shifts in the discussion, the aim is to consider a proposal for language education capable of making the policy of promoting racial equity more applicable in countries like Brazil, where the inclusion of teaching Portuguese as a "pretuguês" (a blend of Portuguese and Black Portuguese) is necessary as a way to undo the existential deviation whose language, in colonial acts, subjected most populations to the zone of non-being, instilling in them an inferiority complex responsible for the affective anomalies resulting from racial prejudice and linguistic racism (cf. Fanon, 2008, 2022; Césaire, 2020; Araújo, 2024a; Gonzáles, 2020; Labov, 1982).

This is why "we attribute fundamental importance to the phenomenon of language" (Fanon, 2008, p. 33), because it was through language that the existential abyss and the zone of non-being were created, which means, in practical terms, that there can be no global justice without cognitive justice (Sousa Santos, 2007) with which it is possible to promote, with the help of linguistic education, the confluence of the knowledge of the forest peoples and the quilombola communities, in their ancestral emanations in the present, with the knowledge of the global north; that is, to ensure equity and social inclusion of ancestral knowledge that resisted colonial epistemicide (Santos, 2015, 2023; Santana, 2019; Araújo, 2022, 2024b), "towards a new humanism..." (Fanon, 2008, p. 25).

In general terms, the concrete results of this theoretical discussion, which indicates ways to think about the confluence of knowledge and epistemologies, consist of demonstrating how this field was formed from the perceptions of Aimé Césaire (2020), Frantz Fanon (2008; 2022), Derrida (2001), Quijano (2009), Mignolo (2019), Labov (1982), Thiong'o (2025), Gnerre (1994), Lélia Gonzales (2020; 2022), Sousa Santos (2007), Nêgo Bispo (Santos, 2015, 2023), Araújo (2022; 2025); At the same time, the demands of the Global South and the glottopolitical challenges of this Post-future (or ancestral future) point to the need for its application in order to deal with decolonial phenomena, in their state of violence against colonial violence, where one finds "a more brutal, rustic, organic layer, a sub-humanity, a people who remain clinging to the land." (Krenak, 2020, p.22 apud Araújo, 2022, p. 88, emphasis added).

4. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS (OR BEGINNING – MIDDLE – BEGINNING)

The existence of decolonial linguistics was acknowledged here through discourse, that is, through pragmatic discourse analysis, which sought to show how works such as those of Fanon, Césaire, Thiong'o, Lélia Gonzáles, Nêgo Bispo, Derrida, etc., made its emergence possible, plus the critique of immanent linguistics made by Bakhtin, Auroux, Makoni, Meinhof, Pennycook, Labov, Geraldi, Rajagopalan, Menezes de Souza... Therefore, as can be observed up to the present moment, in this other beginning, it is a theoretical response to the needs of a world in transition towards another order that makes multiculturalism and multilateralism its indicators of political, cultural, and economic orientation.

Aware of this reconfiguration of the world order, this research sought arguments that could prove its epistemological emergence, taking as a starting point the discussions carried out by authors such as Aimé Césaire, Derrida, Lélia Gonzáles, Labov, Quijano, Krenak, Nêgo Bispo, Thiong'o, relying mainly on the gestures of Frantz Fanon initiated in *Black Skin: White Masks*. Therefore, it is through these discursive crossroads that the initial question was answered: how can one speak of a decolonial linguistics? However, this study also made use

of discussions by researchers who attest to the existence of a critical applied linguistics that expresses the need for a new approach that takes “into account the socio-political concerns that mark each historical moment through which the discipline passes” (Rajagopalan, 2003a, p. 76). Decolonial linguistics, therefore, also follows this path, moving in the opposite direction to the paradigm created by the immanent view of language, centered on monolingualism, which managed to neglect not only issues related to linguistic variation, but was also responsible for combating multilingualism, bilingualism, and multiculturalism in the pursuit of the monolingual ideal (Araújo, 2025); although it assumes a position that goes far beyond the critique of the immanent concept of language and all the problems that emerge from hegemonic monolingualism, it operates a greater epistemological shift to deal with the harmful linguistic effects that are linked to the existential abyss and the zone of non-being (cf. Fanon, 2008; 2022).

Thus, it turns to such phenomena in a more direct and conscious way, aware of its mission in the face of the glottopolitical challenges in this Post-future that is, above all, ancestral, bringing the strength of the epistemologies of the Global South, in a political gesture of convergence and equity, or global justice, having a more defined and explicit political position. In this way, such linguistics is also a counter-colonial gesture of the peoples and knowledges that resisted necropolitics and colonial necropower, and, at the same time, a decolonial gesture of those, in a state of decolonization, who believe in the possibility of love as an act of courage to transform the world, “making us sing the aesthetic song of the birds that precedes the dawn” (Santana, 2019, p. 76).

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