

Dossier

Language teaching as a stage for language policies

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Both languages itself and the way they are used are undeniably political elements – a fact that has been investigated by various fields of knowledge, not just language studies. Moreover, it is not a recent phenomenon, but one that has been observed for a long time: In the founding of the Greek colonies between the Iberian peninsula and the Caucasus, in the 8th and 6th centuries BC, the relationship between language and politics was decisive, as it was in the establishment of the Silk Road (Hernig, 2023), in Central Asia during the first millennium of our era, or in the expansion of the Inca Empire in South America, before the arrival of the Europeans. It links a relationship that encompasses, among other things, the fields of geographical “discoveries”, the economy and military power, spheres that are then of crucial importance to politics. It is no coincidence that Antonio de Nebrija, a distinguished Spanish philologist and humanist, said that language has always been the companion of empire. For this reason, it has always been in the interest of humans to combine politics and language.

A central pillar of the languages and political action interface is undoubtedly the conscious use of foreign languages. Humans have always learned other languages and dealt with them, as shown by the example of the “Toledo School of Translation” in medieval times (Vélez León, 2017). There have been reports of language teaching in schools in Europe since the 1400s, centuries before the era of modern language teaching (Reinfried, 2016, p. 620). We also note that in the teaching of languages, whether mother tongues or additional languages, the political nature of governmental, non-governmental or even individual decisions is equally undeniable. In Brazil, back in the 18th century, we observe a very clear case of a government policy decision

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How to cite:

FILHO, Ebal Sant'Anna Bolacio; VOERKE, Paul. Language teaching as a stage for language policies. *Gragoatá*, Niterói, v. 30, n. 66, e66259, jan.-abr. 2025. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.22409/gragoata.v30i66.66259.en>

that changed the course of our country's linguistic landscape: the 1755 Directory of Indians, instituted by the Marquis of Pombal, which, among other actions, banned the use of Brazilian indigenous languages, a fact that ultimately led to the perception still ingrained in many or most Brazilians that Brazil is a monolingual country, even though there is proof of "(...) countless indigenous languages, several immigration languages, three Afro-Brazilian languages and two sign languages, totaling around 255 Brazilian languages – not to mention the contact varieties spoken in border regions, varieties of Brazilian Portuguese, two allochthonous creole languages, as well as countless heritage languages practiced in everyday life in the country" (Savedra; Pupp-Spinassé, 2021, p. 106)

Even being so, the area of academic study known today as Language Policy is relatively recent, with one of its foundations being laid in the middle of the 20th century with Einar Haugen's (1959) studies on language planning in the case of Norway, though the term itself was actually coined by Weinreich some years earlier. Initially, scholars in the field were mainly interested in studying and solving the "language problems" of nations that had become independent from colonial domination in Africa and Asia.

Currently, there is a common understanding that language policies are decisions made by government agents about which languages should be supported and taught, or, on the contrary, which languages should be left to their own devices, excluded from any kind of promotion and consequently no longer occupying social spaces, which would lead to their extinction (Ammon, 2018) – the connection between public policies and language policies has been analyzed, for example, by Souza and Pereira (2016).

The term Linguistic Politics itself can be perceived as something that is decided from the top down, since common sense tends to think that politics is always something impersonal, over which the individual person has no influence. On the other hand, this understanding is contested by scholars such as Calvet (2008), who states that language policies are linked to decisions at world, national, state, municipal or family level about the use of language(s). Furthermore, as Spolsky (2004) and Shohamy (2006) state, language policies can be explicit or implicit, and in some contexts they are inferred only through the linguistic practices and beliefs observable in certain contexts.

The term Glottopolitics, which was not coined but became better known through the works by scholars Louis Guespin and Jean-Baptiste Marcellesi in 1986, tries to understand not only the "official" instances, but any group or individual as potential (glottopolitical) agents, *i.e.* capable of causing some kind of change with regard to language(s) and their use within society, as stated in their text considered to be the founder of Glottopolitics, translated by Marcos Bagno:

[Glottopolitics] Designates the various approaches that a society takes to acting on language, whether it is aware of it or not: whether on language, when society legislates on the reciprocal status of French and minority languages, for example; or on speech, when a certain use is repressed by this or that person; or on discourse, when the school makes the production of a certain type of text a subject of examination - glottopolitics is necessary to encompass all the facts of language in which the action of society takes the form of the political. These considerations are in no way intended to make the terms language planning or language policy obsolete. (Guespin; Marcellesi, 2021, p. 11-12).

Lagares (2021, p. 54) in his re-reading of this founding text of Glottopolitics states that "From my point of view, the most original contribution of the glotopolitical approach, as proposed by the two authors, consists precisely in breaking down the conceptual division between the linguistic and the social. By seeing both dimensions as integrated, they turn glottopolitics into a "point of view" that allows us to observe the linguistic consequences of any social change."

A recent example of a movement of active glottopolitical agency "from the bottom up" is the #FicaEspanhol movement, which arose in response to the removal of the compulsory teaching of Spanish in schools, following the reformulation of the *New High School Law 11.161/2005*, that determined the gradual implementation of Spanish in high school and allowed its inclusion in elementary school, but students were not obliged to attend classes. The movement, which was highly articulated at a national level, did not fully achieve its goal, which was to make Spanish compulsory, because in August 2024 the Senate approved the reform of the *New High School*, keeping Spanish optional. Despite this, the joint action of Spanish teachers at national level lead to results in some Federal states, such as the introduction of compulsory Spanish in Rio Grande do Sul. The Spanish teachers' associations and their political action were decisive for this achievement, albeit partial (Rodriguez *et al.*, 2024). It is interesting to note, as it was widely reported by the press, that the representatives of the governments of Germany, France and Italy worked with Brazilian parliamentarians to prevent Spanish from being compulsory and thus make it difficult for other languages to be taught in Brazilian schools, demonstrating the recognition of the great political role of language teaching as a clear proof of *soft power*.

Soft power, in turn, a political science concept developed extensively by Joseph Nye since 1990, is based on the idea that political decisions (especially at international level) can be influenced by actors and institutions outside the economic and military sphere, by conscious, planned and directed cultural and educational actions. This conviction was largely the basis of Germany's "*Auswärtige Kultur- und Bildungspolitik*" (Foreign Policy on Culture and Education), described by Lambrecht in 1912 and actively institutionalized as state policy since 1925, mainly by intermediary organizations (Maaß, 2015). In this way, we see a continuity of active language policy actions, dating back centuries and increasingly structured, right up to the present day.

This issue of the Gragoatá Journal takes up some central aspects of these and other related discussions and thus reflects one of the lines of research of the graduate program in Language Studies at Federal University UFF, which includes, among other studies, research into language policies and language teaching. It is worth noting that language policy studies were already covered in vol. 32 of this journal, 13 years ago, in an issue organized by the linguists and researchers Mônica Savedra and Xoán Lagares. In this context, it is interesting to note that some of the themes of the current volume are present again, with relevant additions and updates, for example in the case of the situation of Portuguese and indigenous languages in Mozambique and East Timor.

This dossier compiles a total of 18 articles – selected from more than 30 submissions – which present a comprehensive overview of the interface between language policies, glottopolitics and language teaching, dealing with topics ranging from analyses of official government policies that directly affect language teaching in Brazil and other countries to research that investigates the role and effective actions of non-governmental agents in the context of language teaching. In this way, we can highlight various thematic axes which in turn motivated the order of the articles in this dossier.

1. The volume starts with three contributions on *language policies* in the context of Brazil, which focus on inclusion, multilingualism and the practice of Portuguese as a foreign language.
2. This is followed by two articles on the *politics of other languages* (minority and immigration languages) in Brazil and their revitalization.
3. An important part, with five articles, deals with *language teaching and learning*, whether from the perspective of inclusion, diversity or, above all, teacher training in different contexts.
4. When putting together the dossier, it was important to open up the panorama and include texts that could serve as a bridge to *specific countries or regions*, some of which were written in *other languages*. There are five articles, drawn in French, German and Portuguese, dealing with perspectives from Brazil, France, Germany and various African countries, on schools and primary education, the role of organizations (political and mediators), language practices, identities and post-coloniality.
5. Space was also given to the *Portuguese language in contexts outside Brazil*. In this section, there can be found three articles on the situation in São Tomé and Príncipe, Mozambique and East Timor, reporting on the regional, social and educational implications of language and teaching policies.

We begin the dossier with the article *Disputing the letter of the law: a proposal for intervention by linguists and applied linguists in Brazilian migration legislation* (*Disputando a letra da lei: uma proposta de intervenção de linguistas e linguistas aplicados na legislação migratória brasileira*) by Leandro Diniz and Jael Sânera Sigales-Gonçalves, which presents the process of drafting a Technical Note with proposals for changes to Article 5 of Ordinance No. 623/2020, dealing with proof of the ability to communicate in Portuguese for individuals interested in acquiring Brazilian nationality, in accordance with the Migration Law (Law No. 13.445/2017). The text examines the linguistic requirements related to naturalization in Brazil from the 20th century until 2018, discussing how these duties are addressed in the aforementioned Ordinance

Letícia Cao Ponso's article *Language policy resolutions within the framework of inclusion policies in Brazilian higher education: a documentary analysis* (*Resoluções de políticas linguísticas no marco das políticas de inclusão no ensino superior brasileiro: uma análise documental*), which aims to analyze 59 language policy resolutions published between 2017 and 2023 by Federal and State Higher Education Institutions, based on the MEC's requirement for the re-accreditation of universities in the Languages Without Borders Program (IsF), reveals that internationalization dominates the agenda of these language policies, while other inclusion issues, such as the linguistic rights of the deaf, refugees and native peoples, are largely neglected.

Adrián Pablo Fanjul and Tadinei Daniel Jacumasso, in their article *Foreign language in Brazilian postgraduate programs. (Glottopolitical reflections from the survey in an area and region)* investigates language policies in Postgraduate Education programs in the Southeast region of Brazil, with a focus on the languages accepted for demonstrating proficiency. Framed within the framework of Glotopolitics, the study analyzes institutional interventions on languages and their ideological dimensions, reflecting on the role of English as the dominant language in scientific production and critically discussing the ideologies that shape the presence of languages in academic publications within the political-linguistic scenario of South America.

We subsequently move on to the second thematic focus. In her article *Intergenerational transmission and linguistic revitalization* (*Transmissão intergeracional e revitalização linguística*) Cristine Severo Görski investigates the role of intergenerational transmission in language policies, with a specific focus on the linguistic revitalization of two minority language communities, one related to the Pomeranian language and the other to the Yiddish language in Brazil. The researcher argues that although intergenerational family transmission has been weakened, it has been replaced by creative, collaborative and agentive educational, cultural and identity initiatives, in dialogue with globalization and market movements.

A topic associated to Severo Görski's article is addressed by Bernardo Kolling Limberger, Lucas Löff Machado and Luciane Leipnitz in their article *Scientific support in the promotion and revitalization of minority*

languages: contributions of Pomeranian research in Serra dos Tapes, Rio Grande do Sul (Suporte científico na promoção e revitalização de línguas minoritárias: contribuições da pesquisa do pomerano na Serra dos Tapes, Rio Grande do Sul) in which they examine the role of theoretical and methodological subsidies and practical impulses in the process of revitalizing the Pomeranian language, highlighting the importance of research actions not only in relation to the objects of study themselves, but also as essential resources for the training of teachers of additional languages, as well as the promotion of intercomprehension and the interdisciplinary approach to Pomeranian in schools.

Entering the axis of teaching and learning, Matheus Lucas De Almeida and Antonio Henrique Coutelo de Moraes present a study in the field of teaching additional languages to deaf students in Brazil, entitled *Translanguaging, (no) inclusive education and language policies: Reflections on English teaching in Brazil from the perspective of two deaf students*. (Translinguagem, educação (não) inclusiva e políticas linguísticas: Reflexões sobre o ensino de inglês no Brasil a partir da perspectiva de duas alunas surdas). The study examines the perceptions of two deaf students from public schools in Recife, Pernambuco, about learning English as an additional language. The research adopts a descriptive qualitative approach to explore the meanings, beliefs and values attributed to this educational experience, revealing that the Brazilian education system is still a long way from becoming fully inclusive.

In their article *From monolingualism to welcoming multilingualism (Do monolinguismo ao multilinguismo de acolhimento)* Edilaine Buin and Gilvan Müller de Oliveira discuss the need to reformulate language policies and educational practices in Brazil, highlighting the appreciation of multilingualism and linguistic diversity, especially in schools that serve immigrants and refugees, and suggest changes in the teaching model to create a more inclusive environment adapted to the demands of a globalized world.

On the same theme of Portuguese as a host language, Santos Abreu *et al.* in their study *Linguistic Policies and Intercultural Hosting of Warao Indigenous Children, Youth and Adults in Piauí (Políticas linguísticas e acolhimento intercultural de crianças, jovens e adultos indígenas Warao no Piauí)* address the training and monitoring of educators in the Federal State of Piauí in the context of actions developed with indigenous Venezuelans of the Warao ethnic group in the capital of the State and present these experiences as examples of intercultural, translingual and Freirian hosting experiences, the understanding of which can contribute to the deepening of intercultural educational policies that guarantee linguistic rights in Brazil.

The article by Mergenfel Vaz and Roberta Stanke *Language policies and the training of German language teachers in the municipality of Rio de Janeiro (Políticas linguísticas e a formação de professores de língua alemã no município do Rio de Janeiro)* reviews public policies that regulate language teaching and teacher training, with an emphasis on university outreach projects as essential spaces for integrating theory and practice, an approach

highlighted in official documents since the 2000s. The authors also discuss the perceptions of undergraduate students participation in the projects.

Also in the context of Rio de Janeiro and adding an example from São Paulo, Shirlei Baptistine, Catarina Lobo Gonçalves and Sahsha Kiyoko Watanabe Dellatorre present a critical analysis of the role of the Higher Education Institutes in initial teacher training. In their article *Glottopolitical challenges in the training of additional language teachers at the institute and laboratory school (CAP-UERJ and EAFEUSP)* (*Desafios glotopolíticos na formação de professores de línguas adicionais do instituto e escola de aplicação (CAP-UERJ e EAFEUSP)*) they highlight their linguistic, political and pedagogical relevance inside and outside the classroom by exploring the contexts of additional language teaching at the aforementioned institutions and the impact of hegemonic legislation. The text discusses practices aimed at language education and teacher training as glottopolitical agents aligned with the Brazilian reality.

We then move on to other perspectives and languages. Charles Brun, in his article *Analysis of human diversity in Brazilian CM1 and CM2 textbooks as part of a CAPES-COFECUB project* (*Analyse de la diversité humaine dans les manuels scolaires brésiliens de CM1 e de CM2 dans le cadre d'un projet CAPES-COFECUB*), presents ongoing research into the representation of human diversity in Brazilian 4th and 5th grade textbooks, approved in the latest National Textbook and Teaching Material Plan (PNLD) for the 2023-2026 cycle. The research adopts a quantitative-qualitative approach to evaluate how cultural, linguistic and phenotypical diversity is treated in the texts and illustrations of the books, with a focus on the specificity of the Brazilian context in relation to the international scenario. The analysis also examines the relationship between editorial trends and legal guidelines on inclusive education, based on references such as Sociodidactics, the Plural Language Approach and studies on glottophobia.

In the same vein, but with an example from the French context, Stéphanie Clerc Conan explores in her article *Some contributions from welcoming parents, their languages and cultural practices. Analysis of nursery school experiences in France* (*De quelques apports de l'accueil des parents, de leurs langues et pratiques culturelles. Analyses d'expériences en écoles maternelles en France*), pedagogical approaches that encourage parental participation in the development of preschoolers' language skills in France. The study corroborates the need for education systems to provide coherent support for all the languages in children's repertoires, beyond basic schooling, and to aim in particular for bi- and even multilingualism.

The article *From student exchange to language policy to science diplomacy: 100 years of DAAD* (*Vom Studierendenaustausch zur Sprachenpolitik zur Science Diplomacy: 100 Jahre DAAD*) by Ursula Paintner, Head of the communications department in the aforementioned intermediary organisation, gives us a historical overview of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). The article is based on the hypothesis that the DAAD's "language policy" is indeed subject to political trends, both

in Germany and internationally, but that the DAAD has repeatedly succeeded in setting independent priorities.

Shifting the focus to another continent, the article *The French language and the policies of the African Union: what reflections on language teaching in Africa?* (*Langue française et politiques de l'union africaine: quelles réflexions sur l'enseignements des langues en Afrique?*) by Michele Bevilacqua investigates how the African Union's language policies shape the relationship between its institutions and local communities on the continent, and although the African Union presents initiatives aimed at valuing and strengthening African languages, colonial linguistic practices continue to echo in the educational and institutional choices of African governments thus far.

Anderson Lucas Macedo and Lauren Van Niekerk analyze in their article *Beyond Slang: Unpacking the Self-Perception of Coloured Speech* how speakers of Kaaps, a predominant language variant among Cape Town's Coloured community, the speakers perceive their own language, often labeled as "slang". The research investigates the historical and linguistic factors that have shaped this view, highlighting the impact of Apartheid on the formation of linguistic identity and the stigma associated with Kaaps while also looking at language policies regarding the role of languages in the South African education system.

Still in the African context, but this time in Portuguese-speaking countries, we find two articles: In her contribution *The Portuguese of Sao Tome and Principe: Questions of norm, power and teaching* (*O português de São Tomé e Príncipe: Questões de norma, poder e ensino*), Amanda Balduino brings an analysis of the expansion of Portuguese in that country. The study is using concepts of linguistic norm and dialoguing with data from the census and sociolinguistic field interviews carried out in 2019, reflecting on the historical trajectory of the language in the São Toméan context, and thus explores ideological issues and linguistic attitudes that influence the perception of the Portuguese language as pluricentric and affect local teaching.

Águeda Cristóvão Simão, Luis Ausse and João Claudio Arendt take us to Mozambique. Their article *Coloniality of Portuguese in Mozambique: Clashes over the development of Bantu languages* (*Colonialidade do Português em Moçambique: Embate no desenvolvimento das línguas bantu*) examines the effects of Mozambique's language policies, highlighting how the expansion of Portuguese reinforces colonial power structures and contributes to the linguistic and cultural erasure of native communities.

Finally, Karin Noemi Rühle Indart takes us to the Asian continent with her article *Social justice and education for all: the case of multilingualism and language policies in East Timor* (*Justiça social e educação para todos: o caso do multilinguismo e das políticas linguísticas em Timor-Leste*), in which she addresses the relationship between social justice, equal access to education and language policies in that Asian country. The text discusses the most recent proposal for multilingual literacy, which seeks to include the various ethnolinguistic groups in the territory, made up of at least 16 local languages, in order to analyze the social implications of this approach.

We believe that the research compiled in this dossier will make a significant contribution to current discussions in the field of Language Policy and its interface with language teaching in their respective contexts. We hope that reading and capturing the articles will inspire and lead to more research projects in our field.

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