

POWER DISCOURSES IN THE BRAZILIAN LEGISLATURE: THE INTERDICTION OF NON-BINARY LANGUAGE AND DISSIDENT BODIES

DISCURSOS DE PODER NO LEGISLATIVO BRASILEIRO: A INTERDIÇÃO DA LINGUAGEM
NÃO-BINÁRIA E DOS CORPOS DISSIDENTES

DISCURSOS DE PODER EN EL LEGISLATIVO BRASILEÑO: LA PROHIBICIÓN DEL LENGUAJE
NO BINARIO Y DE LOS CUERPOS DISIDENTES

Iran Ferreira de Melo*

Gustavo José Barbosa Paraíso**

Amanda Monteiro da Silva***

Universidade Federal Rural de Pernambuco

ABSTRACT: This article aims to present a particular view on non-binary language, through a reading of Michel Foucault (1996, 2005, 2012) and Norman Fairclough (2003, 2016) for the analysis of legislative speeches. The theoretical apparatus comes from Queer Studies and Queer Linguistics and it is justified because it is a writing to enhance reflection-action for life policies for our resistant bodies in a 'necapolitical' country like ours. Its central objective is to promote a discussion about the manifestation of disruptive uses of language to demarcate gender in Brazilian Portuguese, with the aim of describing contemporary mechanisms and analyzing their repercussions. Its contribution to professional and critical-reflexive training in our country occurs mainly in terms of strengthening narratives that enable the visibility and representation of non-binary subjects and gender dissidents in general.

KEYWORDS: Non-binary language. Legislative speeches. *Apparatus*.

RESUMO: Este artigo pretende apresentar uma visão particular sobre a linguagem não-binária, por meio de uma leitura de Michel Foucault (1996, 2005, 2012) e Norman Fairclough (2003, 2016) para análise de discursos legislativos. O aparato teórico advém dos Estudos Queer e da Linguística Queer e ele se justifica por se tratar de um escrito de potencialização da reflexão-ação para políticas

* PhD in Linguistics (USP). Professor of Queer Linguistics, Critical Discourse Analysis and Human Rights Education (UFRPE/UFPE). Coordinator of the Centre for Queer and Decolonial Studies (NuQueer) and the Brazilian Gender Inclusive Language Observatory. Lecturer in the Postgraduate Programme in Language Studies (Progel-UFRPE) and the Postgraduate Programme in Letters (PPGL-UFPE). E-mail: iranmelo@hotmail.com.

** Graduated in Social Communication - Radio and TV from UFPB. Graduating in Languages - Portuguese and Spanish from UFRPE. Member of the Queer and Decolonial Studies Centre (NuQueer/UFRPE). Researcher in Linguistics at CNPq. Fellow of the CNPq's Institutional Scientific Initiation Scholarship Programme (PIBIC) in the research Non-binary language in Brazil: disputes and tensions in legislative discourses, the aim of which is to analyse the arguments and justifications found in these prohibitive texts in the light of Critical Discourse Analysis. E-mail: guga.paraíso@gmail.com.

*** Master's student in Language Studies (UFRPE), Language Instructor at SENAC-PE. Pedagogue, Political Scientist - Specialist in Pedagogical Coordination and Psychopedagogy. E-mail: manda.msilva@gmail.com.

de vida às nossas corpos resistentes em um país 'necapolítico' como o nosso. Seu objetivo central é promover uma discussão sobre a manifestação de usos disruptivos de linguagem para demarcar gênero no português brasileiro, com o intuito de descrever mecanismos contemporâneos e analisar a sua repercussão. Sua contribuição para a formação profissional e crítico-reflexiva em nosso país se dá sobretudo no que tange ao fortalecimento de narrativas que possibilitam a visibilidade e representatividade de sujeitas não-binárias e dissidentes de gênero em geral.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Linguagem não-binária. Discursos legislativos. Dispositivo.

RESUMEN: Este artículo tiene como objetivo presentar una mirada particular sobre el lenguaje no binario, a través de una lectura de Michel Foucault (1996, 2005, 2012) y Norman Fairclough (2003, 2016) para el análisis de los discursos legislativos. El aparato teórico proviene de los Estudios Queer y la Lingüística Queer y se justifica porque es un escrito para potenciar políticas de reflexión-acción para la vida de nuestros cuerpos resistentes en un país 'necapolítico' como el nuestro. Su objetivo central es promover una discusión sobre la manifestación de usos disruptivos del lenguaje para demarcar el género en el portugués brasileño, con el objetivo de describir mecanismos contemporáneos y analizar sus repercusiones. Su aporte a la formación profesional y crítico-reflexiva en nuestro país se da principalmente en términos de fortalecer narrativas que posibiliten la visibilización y representación de sujetos no binarios y disidencias de género en general.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Lenguaje no-binario. Discursos legislativos. Dispositivo.

1 INTRODUCTION

For certain schools of thought, all that matters is what is regulated politically and socially, including language. Nowadays, and influenced by a different perspective, we dare to present our concerns and observations about the language of power. To do so, we took as a reference the collection we built through a project funded by the CNPq's¹ Institutional Program of Scientific Research and Scholarships¹. The object of the study developed within this program was *Non-binary Language in Brazil: disputes and tensions in legislative discourses*. In August 2023, we presented the final report of this research focusing on the bills that prohibited the usage of Non-binary Language (NBL) that were in progress in the Chamber of Deputies and in the State Legislative Assemblies and the Federal District.

Due to this and for other aspects, like being northeastern researchers living with non-conforming bodies, and other markers of difference, we wrote this text. We start from the paradigm that ignited our enthusiasm: **discourse as a system of thought validating existence**. We will initially explore some aspects contained in the writings of the philosopher and writer Michel Foucault (1926-1984). His work, in one of its phases, questions knowledge and power. Such thinking helped the construction of the basis for discussion and deepening of the condition of the human subject, especially in social power relations, and sexuality policies, even criticizing the sex-gender system. We will displace Foucault's content and create approximations with the use of Non-binary Language as disciplining by the Brazilian legislature through prohibitive bills.

We would like to start by arguing against the fallacy of protecting and defending the language. In the daily practice this is untrue and not supported by linguistics professionals:

The legislation of a language is never the language itself, but its usage. Whenever the community creates a new word, a new way of interacting, or even a new way of writing, it is responding to specific social needs. It is a misconception to think that we will end a usage of the language through legislation. Even though there is an endeavor to legislate language, it is necessary for that to happen in consonance with the population and linguistic experts. (Melo, 2023).

¹ CNPq - The National Council for Scientific and Technological Development is an agency linked to the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovations, dedicated to fostering research in Brazil.

These words encourage us to show that in our society, diverging from what is expected and normalized by the rules imposed by the binary system of sex-gender, of heteronormative identity and sexual orientation is to coexist with excitable speech (Butler, 2021) and face the most diverse types of violence directed at vulnerable communities, especially trans bodies. We bring here data from the International Trans Murder Monitoring Project (TMM)², in which Brazil is ranked first in the total number of murders of transgender people in the world, a survey that happened between 2008 and September 2022, presented by the International Trans Respect Research Agency³.

The issue is linked to the panel on violence due to the lack of protective measures for members of the LGBTQIAPN+⁴ community. According to the 2023 report of the National Association of Travestis and Transsexuals of Brazil (ANTRA) on violence and murders against Brazilian trans people, there was an increase of more than 10% in murder cases compared to 2022. According to this report, Pernambuco is placed 6th among the Brazilian states that have murdered the most trans people between 2017 and 2023, totaling 68 cases.

We understand that to escape this scenario, we need interventions in education and national politics to combat perversities and crimes. The Brazilian Legislature although, is moving in the opposite direction of this expectation. In the Federal Chamber of Deputies and State Assemblies, there are 63 bills prohibiting non-binary language (NBL), according to data presented in 2023, in the research "Non-binary language in Brazil: disputes and tensions in legislative discourses" (Melo; Paraíso, 2023) which aims to identify the production of meaning in these discourses, observing the types of signification mobilized in them to support the argument for the prohibition of this language.

The main argument against using the non-binary language is that it harms the teachings of the Brazilian Portuguese and threatens our language. The Federal Chamber of Deputies and the State Assemblies have shown intolerance towards real-life events. They use a forceful discourse, backed by conservative forces, and legitimized by power, to make invisible the non-conforming bodies and sexualities under the guise of cisgender heteronormativity. We will explore these concepts of non-conforming sexualities and cisgender heteronormativity in more detail later.

Given this context, we will approach the bills prohibiting the Non-binary Language from two perspectives. First, from a political-philosophical standpoint, expanding the dialogue on power in the thoughts of Michel Foucault (2005). For him, power cannot be just a coercive entity, but also intrinsically linked to language and the way categories and norms are established in society. And from a linguistic perspective, guided by Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) with the focus of the British linguist Norman Fairclough (2003, 2016).

2 EXPLORING SOME CONCEPTS

In 1975, the American anthropologist and feminist activist Gayle Rubin (1949-) proposed the concept of a "sex/gender system". According to Rubin, this system is "the arrangements by which a society transforms biological sexuality into a product of human activity" (Moncau, 2018). She problematizes the hierarchical categories of sexual stratification, demonstrating the political dimensions of life, gender, and sexual desire, and how these dimensions are intertwined within the same social process.

² Trans Murder Monitoring (TMM) is the Transgender Murder Monitoring project that, since July 2009, has published updates at least once a year in the form of reports, name lists, tables, and maps.

³ It is a human rights defense network, created in 2005, that provides an excellent environment for bringing together the experience of trans activists from all over the world.

⁴ Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, Pansexual, Non-binary, and the '+' which is a way of acknowledging all other identities and orientations not explicitly represented in the previous letters.

First, let's clarify that all people who identify and conform to the body-gender relationship are called cisgender, and heteronormativity is the ethical-moral set of prescriptive practices of this binary gender system, man-woman, that propagates this incessant search for desire and sexual practice in opposition between bodies. Cisgender heteronormativity, therefore, would be the system of values that accumulates prescriptions of the body-gender-desire relationship with the intention of, by the name (applying the prefix 'cis-'), giving evidence to the first link body-gender, which perhaps the word 'heteronormativity' could obscure (Melo, 2021).

To understand non-binary gender, we know that discourse is capable of subverting gender norms and disrupting the binary that we invoke in the process of gendering a body. This breaks with a dualistic tradition in our culture that does not consider possibilities outside the dichotomous canon of man-woman. Non-binary gender would be this breaking of the dualistic position that we invoke in discourses and seeks to eliminate the idea that words inherently contain dichotomous values to consolidate another performative pattern.

Nowadays, postmodern theories have shed light on studies of the concept of non-binary gender:

Non-binary gender is a way of recognizing ourselves in a place other than the male-female and man-woman dualism, which is a legacy of our cultural formation stemming from our coloniality, resulting from the colonial practices we have experienced since the invasions of the Americas centuries ago. These practices bequeathed us a way of being in the world and of thinking that is largely derived from the Global North (Melo, 2021, p. 01).

A fundamental point is to understand what we call non-binary language, or NBL. First, we observe that there are some other ways to name NBL today. The most commonly used synonyms are "neutral language" and "neolanguage". However, for those of us situated in critical discourse studies, we agree with the perspective that has a total distrust of a possible "neutrality" in the production of scientific knowledge. We observe that "neolanguage" is a name frequently used by non-binary activists, especially the researcher Úrsula Brevillheri (2022), who says that neolanguage is a broad term that encompasses the perspective of new forms of language not associated with the standard norm. And she also says that it is a movement that she has named "polyphonic," that is, crossed by different voices precisely because it is a collective, decentralized, and plural construction.

Therefore, our understanding of NBL is perhaps a sum of these thinkers, because for us, non-binary language is a set of discursive strategies to allow communication, especially for people who do not fit exclusively into the binary logic of man/woman, as governed by dominant cultural models of gender performance, to be plural and polyphonic, that is, crossed by people with voices of different perspectives and experiences.

And NBL is part of the inclusive gender language, discourse model already widely discussed by references in Linguistics, which aims to democratize gender representations outside of masculinist universalizations. Thus, inclusive gender language (IGL) integrates what is called inclusive language, which are linguistic uses that aim to make visible historically marginalized groups.

3 THE SUBJECT, THE DISCOURSE AND THE POWER

This triad, subject, discourse, and power, invites us to deal with issues of valuation and categorization that are mutable throughout history, where the negation and violation of the subject mediated by discourse awakens and rivals controversial and sensitive relational categories. Taking as a starting point the category of subject[1], which etymologically derives from the Latin *subjectus*, with the same origin as the word *subjection*, we can say that they unite a form of power that makes men subjects. Subjects to someone and subjects to their own identity.

Michel Foucault, in his writings, always showed that he intended to focus his thought on the subject and not on power. He stated in his work *The Subject and Power* (1995) that he always had a perspective on how human beings are objectified as subjects. For him, there are at least two meanings for the word subject. The first would be subject to someone through control and dependence, and

the second would be subject to one's own identity through consciousness or self-knowledge. In other words, what he is telling us is the importance of subjective aspects. In the same work, Foucault reflects on the objectification of the subject, in what he called 'dividing practices,' practices of normalization and their power relations. In his later studies, he addressed the way in which men become subjects, which he called 'the processes or modes of subjectivation'.

In general, he stated that there are three struggles: the first would be against forms of domination, the second against forms of exploitation, and the third against subjection. This last one is the struggle of contemporary times. Thus, it would be possible to analyze subjectivation or to construct a history to think about "the way in which human beings become subjects" (Foucault, 1995, p. 231).

The individual recognizes themselves as a subject, and the subject is intrinsically linked to discourse, as discourse enables the production of subjectivity and the subject. This presupposition permeates Foucault's most varied works and expands the possibilities in Discourse Analysis by affirming that discourse is a fundamental category of the subject and power.

In Foucault's later studies, he explores how power permeates bodies and inscribes norms into the consciousness of subjects. Foucault reiterates the proposition that discourse is a discursive practice defined by the status of the speaker, the positions from which they speak, and the stances they take when speaking.

Keeping this author's point in mind, we reflect on the legislative discourses from which the bills prohibiting non-binary language originate. What is the position of these enunciating subjects? Do they want to preserve standard language and the learning of Portuguese?

Therefore, in this discursive study, it is necessary to resort to a Foucauldian archaeology, because simply analyzing the description of these utterances will not demonstrate the power relations established in these discourses, as they are strategies of silencing these subjects who deviate from the norm and are marginalized.

Given that the discourse of these bills comes from yet another device of power that produces an effect on subjects, we can understand that they are practices aimed at the destitution of these subjects who deviate from the norm.

Thus, for Foucault, discourse is a discursive practice, like a device of power, that constructs truths which will have effects on subjects. Every discursive practice involves the positioning of subjects within social groups, and furthermore, utterances carry meanings that change from one place to another (Foucault, 1995). In this way, power is exercised through discourse, and the place from which this discourse originates reaffirms this power.

Still within a Foucauldian archaeology, the work *The Order of Things* resulted from an inaugural lecture given by the philosopher at the Collège de France on December 2, 1970. In this work, Foucault (1996, p. 2) understands discourse as a "set of statements that may belong to different fields, but which nevertheless obey common rules of functioning". He argues that the discursive device is always based on a knowledge and a power. And he affirms that [...] "in every society, the production of discourse is at the same time controlled, selected, organized and redistributed by a certain number of procedures that have the function of conjuring their powers and dangers, dominating their random occurrence, and avoiding their heavy and fearful materiality" (1996, p. 8-9).

This shows us that in a society like ours, some individuals have the power to say anything, others have this power limited, and many are not even considered subjects and are socially excluded and marginalized.

These mechanisms of power are external to discourse and are situated within society itself. As Foucault observes in his work, "It is well known that one does not have the right to say everything, that one cannot speak of everything in any circumstance, that anyone, in short, cannot speak of anything" (Foucault, 1996, p. 21). This presupposition is evident in how society employs this mechanism of power to control those who are deemed worthy of having the floor, granting not only the right to speak but, above all, the right to say something of significance.

In this text, Foucault provides a brief overview of the social appropriation of discourse. He posits that the subjugation of discourse is achieved through the regulation and imposition of rules upon discourse subjects, as well as by determining the conditions under which discourse operates (Foucault, 1996). Foucault uses the educational systems as an example saying that education serves as a "political means of maintaining or altering the appropriation of discourses, along with the knowledge and power they entail" (1996, p. 44), thereby demonstrating that access to knowledge is contingent upon social struggles and educational policies.

Foucault defines "societies of discourse" as entities that safeguard secrets by imposing restrictions on the circulation of discourse. These societies function to "conserve or produce discourses, but to make them circulate in a closed space, distributing them only according to strict rules without their holders being dispossessed by this distribution" (Foucault, 1996, p. 46). Foucault provides medical, political, and economic institutions as illustrative examples of such societies, highlighting their role in coercing and limiting the dissemination of knowledge.

Contributing further to this framework, Foucault characterizes belonging as a doctrine. This is because belonging is predicated upon the shared possession of a specific discourse, thereby aligning the individual with the corresponding doctrinal framework: "A doctrine connects individuals to certain types of statements and consequently prohibits all others; but it uses, in turn, certain types of statements to connect individuals to each other and to differentiate them, for that very reason, from all others" (1996, p. 43).

The term power originates from the Latin *potere*⁵, and is something for which humans have struggled for centuries. It is an adjective that permeates all of history. One could say that all of history is a record of this struggle.

For Michel Foucault, power occurs as a relationship of forces.

It is necessary not to take power as a massive and homogeneous phenomenon of domination of one individual over others, of one group over others, of one class over others; but to keep in mind that power is not something that can be divided between those who possess and exclusively hold it and those who do not possess it. Power must be analyzed as something that circulates, or rather, as something that only functions in a chain. It is never located

here or there, never in the hands of a few, never appropriated as a wealth or a good. Power functions and is exercised in a network. In its meshes, individuals not only circulate, but are always in a position to exercise this power and to suffer its action; they are never the inert or consenting target of power, they are always centers of transmission. In other words, power is not applied to individuals, it passes through them (Foucault, 2005, p. 193).

In this way, we can say that power does not exist as an entity but rather as power relations. These relations permeate all of society, every place, and every person. Through its mechanisms, power acts as a force that coerces, disciplines, and controls individuals. To facilitate this control, society employs two primary devices: surveillance and punishment. These devices are subtly integrated into society, and society itself deems them indispensable. Moreover, citizens often legitimize these devices.

When we think of power, we automatically think of those who hold it, exercise it, and maintain it. Power has always been present in human relations. Wherever there are people, there is a power relationship. As Foucault states: "The device, therefore, is always inscribed in a play of power, always linked to one or more configurations of knowledge that are born from it but also condition it. This is what a device is: strategies of relations of force sustaining types of knowledge and being sustained by them" (Foucault, 2005, p. 246).

⁵ Etymologically, this word originated from the Indo-European *poti-*, which was applied to the head of a social group (family, clan, tribe). From this came the Greek *pôtis*, meaning "husband". And *despotês*, initially meaning "lord, master of the house", later applied to Oriental tyrants and then to tyrants of all kinds. In Latin, the adjective *potis* means "powerful, capable of" (ORIGEM DA PALAVRA, 2024)

Therefore, power exists and operates in a sophisticated and subtle manner. It disciplines and trains bodies with the aim of multiplying their forces to produce wealth and diminish their capacity for political resistance. For Foucault, the penal system makes the exercise of punishment seem natural and legitimate, as it eliminates the excesses of punishment but grants legality to disciplinary mechanisms. When punishment becomes 'legal,' it can be inflicted by the powerful without being seen as excessive. The power to punish becomes discreet. "This is how monarchical power functioned. Justice only imprisoned a negligible proportion of criminals; it used this fact to say: punishment must be spectacular so that others will be afraid" (Foucault, 2005, p. 217).

In this way, surveillance and punishment mechanisms are subtly integrated into society and validate their own necessity. It is from these devices that Foucault develops his idea of disciplinary power, which is no longer presented in a centralized manner but rather as dynamic and operating at all levels of society.

4 A SOCIETY CONTROLLED BY LANGUAGE

All the concepts explored thus far, supported by the perspectives of Michel Foucault, will provide us with a foundation to analyze the discourses of bills that prohibit the non-binary language. These bills represent attempts to erase these dissenting bodies that dare to break with norms and challenge the power that permeates social relations, controlling and marginalizing these bodies. Before this, let's gain a deeper understanding of Critical Discourse Analysis and Norman Fairclough's assumptions.

When we reflect on who controls whom, we draw parallels with Fairclough's (2016) thought when he mentions that hegemonies are organized, produced, reproduced, contested, and transformed through discourse. This postulate refers to what he calls the social theory of discourse. This theory posits that language fulfills the function of representing or constructing experiences of the world.

This innovative thought is fundamental to CDA, as it proposes to examine in depth not only the role of language in reproducing social practices and ideologies but also its role in social transformation. Another important aspect of this theory is the dialectic that underlies this perspective, as discourse is shaped by the social structure just as it is constituted from that structure.

We must have a critical view of the role of language in society, as it promotes the maintenance of hegemonies of certain social groups to the detriment of others. Being a critical discourse analyst requires reflection and the development of a consciousness about rights and duties and, above all, the knowledge that transformations of social practices go through a transformation of linguistic practices.

For Fairclough (2016), discourses not only reflect or represent social entities and relations, but they also construct and constitute them, and it is the social effects of discourse that are the focus of CDA. In this way, we can say that linguistic analysis serves as a method to study broad social processes, changes in social structures, the construction of identities, etc., as Fairclough (2016) points out when proposing a study method that investigates changes in language as a bridge to the study of social change. Based on this, we consider that the non-binary language is not only a social disruption, but also a linguistic disruption. Therefore, the non-binary language not only promotes the inclusion of more people in the discourse but is also essential for the existence of a broad collectivity.

In his work *Discourse and Social Change* (2016), Fairclough dedicates a chapter titled 'Michel Foucault and Discourse Analysis.' He begins by affirming that Foucault's work is a significant contribution to the social theory of discourse due to its treatment of the relationship between discourse and power, and its exploration of how discourse functions in social change. Foucault was concerned with discursive practices as constitutive of knowledge and with the conditions under which knowledge is transformed into sciences associated with a discursive formation.

Discursive formation consists of rules of formation for the particular set of utterances that belong to it and, specifically, in rules for the formation of objects, in rules for the formation of enunciative modalities and subject positions, in rules for the formation of concepts and in rules for the formation of strategies (Foucault, 1972, p.31-39 *apud* Fairclough, 2016)

Fairclough points out certain weaknesses in Foucault's conceptions of power, resistance, struggle, and change. For him, Foucault exaggerates the extent to which he considers most people to be manipulated by power and is mistaken in not giving sufficient

emphasis to the contestation of practices, to the struggles between social forces, nor to the possibilities of dominated groups opposing dominant discursive and non-discursive systems. He also fails to emphasize the possibilities of change in power relations through struggles.

It is not that he ignores these approaches, but rather that his interest lies in changes and transformations. He emphasizes that the rules of discursive formation do not define static objects and concepts, but rather the fields of their possible transformations.

For Fairclough (2016), Foucault's work lacks a sense that practices have their own properties, which cannot be reduced to the implementation of structures. While Foucault argues that structures are both reproduced and transformed in practice, Fairclough contends that structures are reproduced or transformed depending on the state of relations and the balance of power among those who are struggling for dominance in a particular practice such as schooling. Thus, a focus on structures provides a one-sided perspective of these struggles, and the lack of focus on practice and struggle may help explain why Foucault's analyses are unilateral.

5 PROHIBITIVE BILLS ON THE USE OF NON-BINARY LANGUAGE

The analysis was based on the research we participated in, *Non-binary Language in Brazil: Disputes and Tensions in Legislative Discourses*, presented in August 2023 by Melo & Paraíso. The Brazilian legislative texts prohibiting non-binary language - federal and state bills - were collected from the portals where the processing of these data is published. Federal bills were collected from the Chamber of Deputies website (camara.leg.br) and state bills were collected from the portals of each state's legislative assembly. The keywords used to index the search fields of the websites were 'gender-neutral language,' 'gender ideology,' and 'gender,' previously observed in the corpus as being quite popular ways of naming non-binary language.

The lexical resources that indexalize the non-binary language were analyzed through the lens of a strand of CDA. Within the premises of CDA, one presupposition was chosen for the analysis following the concept of indexicality. In CDA, indexicality is essential for understanding how words and expressions are loaded with ideological meanings, point to the context in which they are used, and, above all, how they contribute to the construction of identities and power relations. The values, discourses, narratives, voices, and social conventions that are indexed and hierarchized are, then, the orders of indexicality. Through indexicality, it is possible to uncover the discursive strategies that influence how we interpret and relate to the world around us.

We can observe that, in the summaries of these bills, the justification for their processing always lies in the objective of preserving the standard language, whether through the protection of the Portuguese language or merely a prohibition on issues of language and gender.

A point we should demonstrate is how notable is the quantity of bills that began their legislative process during the years 2020 and 2021. We know that the government in power was that of former President Jair Bolsonaro and that the parties that proposed these bills, for the most part, were part of the government base, their political/partisan bias being consistent with discourses coming from the conservative far-right that proliferated in Brazil.

In the analysis conducted by Melo & Paraíso (2023), lexical resources that indexalize the non-binary language were identified, in line with the postulates of Melo & Ferreira (2017). According to the latter, indexicality in language occurs through the process of reference that a linguistic clue performs. Indexicality is the capacity that all linguistic resources have, to construct a reality in the world, and this is a quick and easy way to identify which performances the references to the non-binary language are mobilized in the analyzed bills or, in other words, how these projects construct meaning about the non-binary language in order to advance their interests.

To understand the indexicalization of these words, that is, what they construct within the continuum of the texts, they verified that their articulation is realized in 9 different performances. The most frequent performance is adjectivation. The authors understand

adjectivation as a performance that carries out an appraisal of NBL and have demonstrated that, in many moments, the bills carried out depreciative adjectivation by saying that NBL is an 'invention,' 'linguistic aberration,' and 'hysterical tragedy'.

Negatively appreciating NBL by associating it with a problem and a disorder is yet another facet of the objectification that reactionary discourses against NBL have been undertaking. What is objectification? The objectification is not just the disidentification with something, but the perception that this something is so horrible that it disorganizes the existing order. And this is what happens with the construction of meaning that the prohibitionist bills make with NBL.

We can observe in the referred research that most of the presented projects are aligned with the radical right of our country, conservative religious groups, and high-income sectors. These segments present the following main arguments: 1. the promotion of the standard norm of Brazilian Portuguese; 2. the establishment of protective measures for the Portuguese language of Brazil; 3. the non-breaching of the orthographic agreement established between Lusophone countries in 2009; 4. the right of students to learn the language; and 5. the protection of the family.

We know that these arguments are a 'smoke screen' for the old silencing posture of a traditional society in relation to vanguard political groups in the dissent of gender and sexuality, such as the case of non-binary transgender people - the target identity in the production and reworking of NBL in the projects that were analyzed.

6 NOT YET FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

By drawing a connection between the presuppositions of Fairclough and Foucault with the texts that prohibit NBL, we can reflect on several aspects. For Fairclough, his texts are permeated by three questions: the dialectical relationships between discourse and social practices; the degree of awareness that people lack regarding these relationships; and the essential role of discourse in social change. Thus, his presuppositions offer important reflections in CDA.

For Foucault, the problematization of discourse is at the center of his analyses, as well as power relations and the debate about the different modes of subject constitution. We must perceive the force of certain truths and certain subject positions, and this is one of the ways in which discourses are controlled, which are the rules created within certain fields of knowledge and define who can have access to certain discourses and who meets the requirements to enter the "discursive order".

Thus, even in a space intended for the more open circulation of discourses, such as schools and universities, the bills prohibit NBL, especially in these learning spaces. This leads us to reflect; after all, we live in a democracy, and to do so, we cannot live in a democracy without valuing the plurality of discourses, languages, and voices. Recognizing linguistic, gender, and sexual diversity is as fundamental as recognizing the ethnic and racial diversity that makes up a society.

Any attempt to erase this variety is strictly detrimental to democracy. And the attempt to erase this plurality is what, in Applied Linguistics, we call Glotophobia, which, according to the sociolinguist Philippe Blanchet (1998 *apud* Baptistone, 2021), "is the discrimination, contempt, hatred, aggression, or depreciation of people for the use of certain linguistic forms considered incorrect, inferior to the official or standard language, the one that receives social prestige." And NBL, which is the phenomenon that permeates this work, is a glotopolitical discourse precisely because it is the exercise we do in everyday life, to promote new ways of using language with a clear intentionality that aims to establish new political practices and, new social relations.

Therefore, conducting a discourse analysis based on Foucault's presuppositions involves looking at subject positions and power relations. When analyzing these discourses, we must observe their historical relationships with entrenched practices that manifest in these discourses.

The reflection we make is that the discourses of the bills that prohibit NBL attribute to themselves a value of truth in the way they circulate and from the place from which their speeches originate, considering that these discourses are not merely a practice, but rather operate as events.

However, with the increasing political shift in this direction that our country has been experiencing, various social sectors have been increasingly occupying a space in the ratification of heteronormative power relations that ignore the multiple facets of human expression and impose binary standards on people. Therefore, as trans, queer, non-binary people, and the entire universe that dissents from the norm, we can affirm that there is life and resistance in the face of the death project represented by these bills. And even if their discourses come from a place of power, they will always encounter the resistance of those of us who ally ourselves with queer politics.

REFERENCES

- BAPTISTONE, S. Glotofobia, fenômeno de estigmatização social: entrevista com Philippe Blanchet. *Cadernos de Letras UFF*, Niterói, v. 32, n. 62, p. 13-22, 1º semestre de 2021.
- BENEVIDES, B. *Dossiê: assassinatos e violências contra travestis e transexuais brasileiras em 2023*. ANTRA (Associação Nacional de Travestis e Transexuais) – Brasília, DF: Distrito Drag; ANTRA, 2024.
- BREVILHERI, U; LANZA, F; SARTORELLI, M. R. Neolinguagem e “linguagem neutra”: potencialidades inclusivas e/ou reações conservadoras. *Research, Society and Development*, v. 11, n. 11, 2022.
- BUTLER, J. *Discurso de ódio*. Uma política do performativo. Trad, Roberta Fabri Viscardi. São Paulo: Editora da Unesp, 2021 [1997].
- BUTLER, J. *Problemas de gênero*. Feminismo e subversão da identidade. Trad. Renato Aguiar. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2003 [1990].
- FAIRCLOUGH, N. *Discurso e mudança social*. Brasília: UNB, 2016.
- FAIRCLOUGH, N. *Analysing Discourse: Textual analysis for social research*. Londres/Nova Iorque: Routledge, 2003.
- FOUCAULT, M. *Hermenéutica del sujeto*. La Plata-Argentina: Editorial Altamira, 2012.
- FOUCAULT, M. *Microfísica do Poder*. São Paulo: Graal, 2005.
- FOUCAULT, M. *A ordem do discurso*. Loyola, São Paulo, Brasil, 1996.
- MELO, I. F. de. Por que a linguagem não-binária não briga com a linguagem simples. *Marco Zero Conteúdo*, 21 dez. 2023. Disponível em: <https://marcozero.org/porque-a-linguagem-nao-binaria-nao-briga-com-a-linguagem-simples/>. Acesso em: 3 abr. 2024
- MELO, I.F. de. Linguagem Disruptiva: parte 01-fundamentos da linguagem não-binária. Disponível em: <https://nuqueer.medium.com/linguagem-disruptiva-bc1aee41cfb2>. 2021. Acesso em: 2 fev. 2024.
- MELO, I. F. de; PARAÍSO, G. J. B. Ofensivas contra a linguagem não-binária em cenário legislativo do Brasil. *Sexuality Policy Watch*, Rio de Janeiro, p. 1-20, 2023. Disponível em: <https://sxpolitics.org/ptbr/artigo-ofensivas-contr-a-linguagem-nao-binaria-em-cenario-legislativo-do-brasil/13382> Acesso em: 16 mar. 2024.
- MONCAU, G. "Sistema sexo-gênero - Gayle Rubin". In: *Enciclopédia de Antropologia*. São Paulo: Universidade de São Paulo, Departamento de Antropologia. 2018. Disponível em: <https://ea.flch.usp.br/conceito/sistema-sexo-genero-gayle-rubin> Acesso em: 17 mar. 2024.

ORIGEM DA PALAVRA. *Dicionário on-line*. Disponível em: <https://origemdapalavra.com.br/palavras/sujeito/>. Acesso em: 23 mar. 2024.

ORIGEM DA PALAVRA. *Dicionário on-line*. Disponível em: <https://origemdapalavra.com.br/artigo/poder/>. Acesso em: 24 mar. 2024.

TRANS RESPECT. Agência Internacional de Notícias. *Transgender Europe*. Disponível em: <https://transrespect.org/en/>. Acesso em: 20 mar. 2024.



Received on August 27, 2024. Accepted on September 4, 2024.