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Sociolinguistic exploration of the implications of necropolitics and raciolinguistic hierarchies in language teaching and learning: a case study of bilingual Hispanic-Catalan adult students

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Abstract

This article investigates the impact of necropolitics and raciolinguistics on language education, using data from a longitudinal study focused on Portuese perceptions among bilingual Hispanic-Catalan adults. The study employed a qualitative methodology over three years, collecting data through surveys, visual and textual narratives, focus groups, and classroom observations. The findings highlighted the impact of necropolitics and raciolinguistic hierarchies, contributing to disparities in the social valuation of languages. Additionally, it was observed that students' perceptions of the language served as a motivating factor for learning Portuguese. Therefore, a reevaluation of educational policies is recommended to promote linguistic equity and inclusion, especially in multicultural and plurilingual contexts such as Catalonia. This study emphasizes the need to address socioeconomic dynamics and their repercussions on identity and stereotypes.

Keywords: Projeto de Vida. Livro didático. Ensino Médio.

Resumo

Exploração sociolinguística das implicações das necropolíticas e das hierarquias raciolinguísticas no ensino e na aprendizagem de línguas: um estudo de caso com estudantes adultos bilíngues hispano-catalães

Este artigo investiga o impacto das necropolíticas e da raciolinguística na educação linguística, utilizando dados de um estudo longitudinal centrado nas percepções do português entre adultos bilíngues hispano-catalães. O estudo empregou uma metodologia qualitativa ao longo de três anos, recolhendo dados através de inquéritos, narrativas visuais e textuais, grupos focais e observações em sala de aula. Os resultados destacaram o impacto das necropolíticas e das hierarquias raciolinguísticas, contribuindo para disparidades na valorização social das línguas. Além disso, observou-se que as percepções dos estudantes sobre o idioma serviram como fator motivador para a aprendizagem do português. Por isso, recomenda-se uma reavaliação das políticas educativas para promover a equidade linguística e a inclusão, especialmente em contextos multiculturais e plurilíngues como a Catalunha. Este estudo enfatiza a necessidade de abordar as dinâmicas socioeconômicas e suas repercussões na identidade e nos estereótipos.

Palavras-chave:
Life Project.
Didactic book.
High School.

Zusammenfassung

Exploration der soziolinguistischen Implikationen von Necropolitik und raciolinguistischen Hierarchien im Unterricht und beim Sprachenlernen: eine Fallstudie über erwachsene, bilinguale hispano-katalanische Schüler

Dieser Artikel untersucht die Auswirkungen von Nekropolitik und Raciolinguistik auf die Sprachbildung, basierend auf Daten aus einer longitudinalen Studie zu den Wahrnehmungen des Portugiesischen unter zweisprachigen hispanisch-katalanischen Erwachsenen. Die Studie verwendete eine qualitative Methodik mit der Dauer von drei Jahren und sammelte Daten durch Umfragen, visuelle und textuelle Erzählungen, Fokusgruppen und Unterrichtsbeobachtungen. Die Ergebnisse hoben die Auswirkungen der Nekropolitik und der raciolinguistischen Hierarchien hervor, die zu Ungleichheiten in der sozialen Bewertung von Sprachen beitragen. Zudem wurde beobachtet, dass die Wahrnehmungen der Studierenden über die Sprache als Motivationsfaktor für das Erlernen des Portugiesischen dienten. Daher wird eine Neubewertung der Bildungspolitik empfohlen, um sprachliche Gerechtigkeit und Inklusion zu fördern, insbesondere in multikulturellen und mehrsprachigen Kontexten wie Katalonien. Diese Studie betont die Notwendigkeit, sozioökonomische Dynamiken und ihre Auswirkungen auf Identität und Stereotype anzugehen.

Schlüsselwörter:
Nekropolitik.
Kolonialismus.
Rassiolinguistik.

Introduction

This paper focuses on teaching and learning additional languages through a sociolinguistic lens, scrutinizing the ramifications of necropolitics[1] (Mbembe, 2018, 2019; Pelbart, 2018) and raciolinguistics[2] (Benveniste, 1999; Alim, 2016; Rosa & Flores, 2023), especially regarding the Portuguese language. Necropolitics refers to the practice of exerting social and political power to determine the conditions under which some people exist and others are marginalized, examining how certain bodies and populations are rendered disposable within structures of sovereignty. Raciolinguistics investigates the intersections of race and language, exploring how language practices shape and reinforce racial identities and inequalities. These concepts are employed to analyze the dynamics of power, identity, and inequality in the sociolinguistic context of teaching and learning additional languages.

The study reanalyzes data obtained from a previous qualitative longitudinal study (Matias Santos, 2021) conducted from 2016-2019 in Barcelona, Spain. This study centers on the language perceptions of bilingual Hispanic-Catalan adult students of Portuguese. Results indicated that prior perceptions motivated Portuguese learning, highlighting significant contributions to sociolinguistics at the intersection of sociolinguistics, necropolitics, and raciolinguistics.

This paper emphasizes the need to address issues related to additional language education by reflecting on the intersection of necropolitics and language education. It advocates for a comprehensive sociolinguistic approach in multicultural and plurilingual contexts, urging a reevaluation of educational policies to promote linguistic equity and inclusion. This recommendation is particularly relevant in contexts like Catalonia, which can serve as a comparative model for other regions.

In Catalonia, language policies prioritize English over languages like Portuguese or non-European languages, highlighting the importance of considering sociolinguistic factors in identity formation and inequality. This study advocates reshaping language education policies to ensure linguistic diversity, challenge hierarchies, and foster inclusivity. Despite the CEFR's emphasis on plurilingualism (CEFR, 2002), English predominates, reflecting necropolitics and raciolinguistic hierarchies that create inequalities in language valuation. The study employs qualitative methods to

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1 Pelbart expands and contextualizes Mbembe's theories on necropolitics in the Brazilian context (where the official language is Portuguese), agreeing that it is a sovereign management of life and death, but Pelbart focuses on the specific dynamics of Brazil, thus complementing Mbembe's global theoretical framework.

[2]Benveniste establishes a broad theoretical foundation on language as a social phenomenon, focusing on semantics, syntax, and pragmatics, underpinning subsequent studies in raciolinguistics, while Alim examines how language racializes and affects perceptions, and Rosa and Flores apply raciolinguistic theory to educational and social policies, expanding Benveniste's approach to address race and social justice in linguistic contexts, providing a comprehensive understanding of raciolinguistics.

explore the interplay of race, language, and power, revealing socio-economic influences on learning motivation (Benveniste, 1999; Alim, 2016; Rosa & Flores, 2023). It calls for policy reconsideration to address socio-economic dynamics and their impact on identity and stereotypes, contributing to sociolinguistic discourse

The study contributes original insights to sociolinguistics, bridging literature gaps and offering new perspectives. It examines linguistic perceptions in a multicultural, urban bilingual community, revealing the impact of stereotypes on Portuguese language learning and socio-economic factors often overlooked. Through a nuanced three-year analysis and a multimodal approach, it addresses research limitations, engages in debates on necropolitics and racialization, and aims to advance understanding in these fields within the bilingual Catalan context.

Statement of objectives and research questions

In the pursuit of unraveling the intricate dynamics between necropolitics, racialization, and the learning of additional languages, our paper is guided by the following specific objectives:

to interrogate colonial influence: to critically examine the extent to which systems of teaching and learning additional languages are still determined by colonialism.

to evaluate the impact of social prestige: to assess the extent to which the social prestige of languages conditions the learning of additional languages.

to explore the nexus of necropolitics and language teaching: to investigate the relationship between necropolitics, raciolinguistics, and the system of teaching and learning additional languages.

These objectives not only serve as a roadmap for our study but also anchor our exploration within a framework that allows for a comprehensive analysis of the sociolinguistic dimensions at play. As we proceed, each objective becomes a lens through which we scrutinize the impact of power structures, racial hierarchies, and language policies on the language learning experience. Through these specific objectives, our paper endeavors to make a distinctive contribution to sociolinguistic discourse by offering nuanced insights into the complex relationship between language, race, and power.

In order to facilitate understanding of the reflection being sought - namely, how necropolitics and raciolinguistic hierarchies significantly impact the learning of additional languages, leading to inequalities in the social valuation of various languages - we formulate the following research questions:

To what extent are systems of teaching and learning additional languages still determined by colonialism?

To what extent does the social prestige of languages condition the learning of additional languages?

What is the relationship between necropolitics, raciolinguistics, and the system of teaching and learning additional languages?

To answer these questions, we start from the perspective of necropolitics, analyzed alongside the 2021 study on Portuguese language perceptions (Matias Santos, 2021), and contributions from the aforementioned raciolinguistics authors. These paradigms view languages as integral to the cultures of their speakers. This convergence between paradigms and study results is central to our reflection.

After outlining our study's objectives and research questions, we now turn to the theoretical underpinnings of our reanalysis, rooted in qualitative methodologies of description, analysis, and interpretation, aligns with foundational concepts in our theoretical framework.

This design emphasizes a deep exploration of linguistic and social dynamics. As we delve into raciolinguistics and necropolitics, the rich qualitative data collected over three years becomes the lens to scrutinize interconnected dimensions of language, race, and power.

Our methodological choices aim to reveal the nuanced experiences of bilingual Hispanic-Catalan adult students and the relationships between necropolitical thinking, raciolinguistic hierarchies, and language teaching. We contextualize our findings within the framework of scholars like Mbembe (2018, 2019), Freire (1987), and Rosa & Flores (2023), who have shaped our understanding of power, race, and language.

In the upcoming sections, we integrate our study's narrative with theoretical threads from necropolitics and raciolinguistics, creating a cohesive analysis of the complexities of language learning within sociopolitical contexts.

Necropolitics, Racialization, Language Learning

Necropolitics 's concept (Mbembe, 2018, 2019; Pelbart, 2018) highlights the interplay between power structures, racialization, and language policies in language learning. Necropolitics shapes language learning through policies that marginalize specific languages and cultures. Language policies, influenced by power structures, create hierarchies where some languages are privileged while others are marginalized, often linked to specific racial or ethnic groups.

Racial hierarchies (Mbembe, 2012)[3] determine the worth and status of languages, favoring those tied to dominant racial groups and devaluing those associated with marginalized groups. This profoundly impacts the language learning experience by shaping social perceptions and influencing student motivation. Language learning is not neutral but deeply entwined with the socio-political dynamics of power and race. Students face the consequences of necropolitical language policies, racial hierarchies, and resultant social valuations in their language learning journeys.

The necropolitical conceptualization in this paper, based on "Necropolitics" (Mbembe, 2018; Pelbart, 2018), explores how sovereign power controls and regulates death, especially in political and social contexts where human life is threatened.

Other scholars have also explored concepts related to necropolitics. Freire (1987) discusses power and oppression dynamics. Agamben (1998) examines the state of exception and biopolitics. Although Foucault (2006, 2007) did not specifically address necropolitics, his work on power, biopolitics, and social structures is relevant. Nishiyama (2015) also explores biopolitics. Fanon (1980) discusses colonialism, decolonization, and violence. Butler (2007) addresses power, performativity, and vulnerability in necropolitics discussions.

According to Estévez (2018), necropolitics produces death in the first world, while biopolitics manages migration from necropolitical scenarios, including feminicide, criminal violence, and economic projects. Although biopolitics (managing life) and necropolitics (managing death) seem opposing, necropolitics can also extend or critique Foucauldian biopolitical control, creating a dialectical relationship where both concepts shape phenomena such as migration. Necropolitics, as Mbembe describes, focuses on power over life and death in extreme violence, challenging Foucault's biopolitics, which manages life and populations. Thus, our study suggests that necropolitics and biopolitics are constitutive and interrelated.

The concept of necropolitics often intertwines with other critical theories, such as biopolitics, postcolonialism, and critical race theory (Mbembe, 2008; Nishiyama, 2015). The works of the mentioned authors provide valuable perspectives for understanding power dynamics in contemporary political and social contexts and inform the foundational study of this paper. Within raciolinguistics, an interdisciplinary field examining the connections between race and language, our theoretical foundation includes key contributors like Benveniste (1999), who underscores the interplay between language and society, exploring how language reflects and shapes social structures. Influential figures include Alim (2016), Zentella (1981), and Anzaldúa (1987),

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[3] Mbembe reflects on the persistence of racial hierarchies and how Fanon's ideas help understand and challenge these structures, exploring the construction of racial identity and the psychological implications of colonization, analyzing Fanon's theories on colonial oppression, alienation, and liberation, and highlighting their universality and global applicability to various forms of domination and resistance across different historical and geographical contexts.

addressing Chicana identity and cultural margins, challenging linguistic norms, and presenting a mestizo approach to language linked to raciolinguistics. Flores & Rosa (2015, 2022), Rosa & Flores (2023), Ndhlovu (2019), Henry (2020), Cabral (2022), Grammon (2022), And Park (2022) discuss raciolinguistic hierarchies and their implications for linguistics. This framework consistently questions the colonial reproduction and evolution of modern knowledge and ways of life across various social contexts. Adopting a raciolinguistic perspective, we analyze political dynamics in teaching additional languages in postcolonial environments, addressing issues of power, identity, and resistance in language education.

Necropolitics and linguistic projects

Mbembe (2018) introduces a concept related to postcolonial movements, emphasizing a power that controls life and death and shapes the imaginary. Necropolitics, according to Mbembe (2018: 71), is defined as:

> contemporary forms of subjecting life to the power of death that profoundly reshape the relationships between resistance, sacrifice, and terror. (Mbembe, 2018:71).

Mbembe's term necropolitics is crucial for analyzing power in modernity and contemporary colonization. It relies on a decolonial reading "biopolitics" (Foucault, 2006, 2007; Nishiyama, 2015) and highlights another rationality of biopower, where life's dominance is subjected to colonial domination.

The core of Mbembe's thought recognizes that Europe is no longer central globally, rendering its philosophy provincial (Mbembe, 2018: 11). This provinciality arises because European philosophy, once seen as universal, now fails to encompass the diverse experiences of a multipolar world. Mbembe argues this is the fundamental experience of our era, influenced by postcolonial historian Chakrabarty (2010). According to Mbembe (1995: 76-77), postcolonialism implies the identity of societies emerging from colonization, an experience primarily considered a relationship of violence. For Mbembe (2018: 28), race is not a:

> physical, anthropological, or genetic natural fact [...] it is nothing more than a useful fiction, a phantasmic construction, or an ideological projection. (Mbembe, 2018:28)

Race is part of a bioeconomy defining population groups based on varied, often random risks. It functions as a security device, rooted in the species' biological essence. Historically, race codes, organizes, divides, fixes, and hierarchizes figures within an enclosed space. This function is evident in necropolitical regimes: plantation, apartheid, and colony, in both modern and contemporary forms. As Mbembe (2018: 75) explains:

> We can draw out the deepest consequences of the racial dimension, the way it was structured, of modern colonization. Presenting indigenous people as savages and barbarians directly implied the superiority of colonizers over the colonized. Thus, indigenous people and their lands became objects of free conquest. (Mbembe, 2018:75).

Analyzing the relationship between racism, necropolitics, and language teaching, the concept of languages as war instruments is explored. The Portuguese colonial occupation, seen as a war policy reflecting necropolitics (Mbembe, 2018, 2019; Pelbart, 2018), involved racializing indigenous and African populations. Necropolitics, as a race-centered war policy, used racialization and hierarchization to control and exploit, with racialized humans seen as enemies to be exterminated. Mbembe connects modern slavery, colonial predation, and contemporary extractivism, highlighting capitalism's technological escalation. Although Mbembe doesn't address language education directly, he suggests it can be part of educational decolonization, critiquing institutions and knowledge to prioritize multiplicity over unity. We now summarize the methodology of the study forming the basis for our paper.

Case Study Outline

Methodology

The study, conducted between 2016 and 2019, consisted of two stages: a Pilot Project in 2016 with 22 beginner Portuguese students and a longitudinal fieldwork phase over three academic years (2016-2019) with 18 adult Portuguese learners. Both groups included "false beginners", those with underestimated language skills based on their initial level. All participants came from Official Language Schools (EOI)[4], a unique system in Spain that awards official language proficiency certificates. Students anonymity is protected by using pseudonyms.

The study utilized a variety of qualitative methods, including surveys, visual and textual narratives, focus groups, and classroom observation. Surveys were chosen for their ability to collect quantifiable data on students' initial perceptions (Kalaja, Dufva & Alanen, 2013). Visual and textual narratives provided deeper insights into personal experiences and attitudes towards learning Portuguese (Kalaja, 2016). Focus groups facilitated interactive discussions, and classroom observation offered a real-world context for observing student behavior and interactions.

The pilot project, conducted in 2016, involved 22 students at the A1 level. Data collection was done in a single phase in July 2016. Although the pilot project's findings are not analyzed in-depth in this paper, they served as a guide for the longitudinal study.

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[4] These schools are distributed throughout all the autonomous communities of the country.

Conducted between 2016 and 2019, the longitudinal study involved three academic years, progressing from level A1 to B2. Data collection activities are summarized in Tables 1, 2, and 3. Class observations were systematically conducted on data collection days to ensure an objective record of classroom dynamics.

The study faced limitations such as a small sample size and a specific geographic focus, impacting generalizability. Data triangulation from multiple sources enhanced validity, while involving multiple researchers in analysis mitigated potential bias. Grounded in the works of Bakhtin (1982) and Vygotsky (1978, 1982), the study analyzes language as a contextualized communicative phenomenon, emphasizing dialogue as a creative zone for co-constructing intersubjective spaces and highlighting its connection to the social functions of language.

Table 1 – Course 2016-2017 level A1.2/A2.1: first of three years

Activities	Dates	Objectives
Online survey	03/10/2016	to map the profile of study participants
Visual narrative	12/12/2016	to observe what learners think about learning the target language
Reflective, semi-structured text	26/04/2017	to give the subjects time and space to express their opinion about what they perceive in relation to Portuguese and ask them to write a reflective text in their own language. (PAVLENKO, 2007)

Source: authors' own elaboration

Table 2 – Course 2017-2018 level A2.2/B1.1: second of three years

Activities	Dates	Objectives
Visual narrative	09/10/2017	to collect drawings in which students express the meaning of learning Portuguese, with the aim of finding out if there have been changes in this aspect with respect to the previous year
Reflective, semi-structured text	24/01/2018	to ask students to write a reflective text on the relationship of the subject to the target language and its speakers, in order to observe whether or not there have been changes in relation to the previous course
Focus group	23/05/2018	to discuss your experience learning Portuguese, compare your personal learning progress to the previous year, and share your expectations for the next year

Source: authors' own elaboration

Table 3 – Course 2018-2019 level B1.2/B2.1: third of three years

Activities	Dates	Objectives
Visual narrative	03/10/2018	to collect drawings about what the learners think about the changes compared to previous years, taking into account the Portuguese language and themselves
Linguistic biography	21/01/2019	to compile a short linguistic biography inspired by that of the European Language Portfolio: accredited Spanish model no. 06.2000. (EAQUALS-ALTE)
Individual interview	08/05/2019	to conduct an individual interview with the last three learners in the study. That is, the trainees who have followed the course from level A1 to B2 (2016 -2019) of the longitudinal study

Source**:** authors' own elaboration

Results and discussion

The study observed how systems for teaching and learning additional languages are still significantly influenced by colonial legacies at various levels. Below are highlighted some examples that demonstrate the persistence of colonial influence in these systems.

The first example is the transcription of the response from Activity 3 (2016-2017) at the A1 level Portuguese course (written text) from the participant using the pseudonym CARMEN. In response to the question "How do you feel about the Portuguese Language?" the student answer.

Example: 1 response from activity 3 (2016-2017) at A1 level Portuguese course by participant CARMEN (own translation of the original Language):

> I believe that, speaking of characteristics, naturally, the Portuguese are conquerors and warriors, diplomats, traders, and very spiritual and sensitive.
> Conquerors throughout history, and warriors and laborers afterward when they become emigrants across Europe and other continents.
> Diplomats, with great skill in establishing good relations worldwide.
> Traders, a nation of merchants with a business-savvy imagination, although they may not have known, from my point of view, how to export and promote excellent cuisine, at least in the way the French or Italians have done, and recently the Spanish.
> Finally, sensitivity and a certain "mysticism" in their culture. Alongside Pessoa, Saramago, Eça de Queirós, Sophia de Mello, or Camoes, great poets of the Portuguese language... their cinema also shows great sensitivity, almost more akin to poetry than a narrative with images, as does their music.
> Also, the Portuguese language is a synthesis of musicality and sensitivity. Its cadence seems very beautiful to me, and I hope, with my studies, little by little, to learn to enjoy it much more.
> Finally, I have to say that, emotionally, I feel very close to this culture because, through my daughter's marriage to a Portuguese man, I enjoy sharing a new Lisbon family, and above all, a granddaughter who will soon begin to babble her first syllables in Portuguese.
> (Written text from the participant using the pseudonym CARMEN in the activity 3 (2016-2017) at the A1 level Portuguese course.

In particular, we would like to draw attention to this perception that emerges from CARMEN's discourse, as her narrative expresses what Noya (2002:16) refers to as a perception

resulting from direct or indirect contact over centuries between cultures; conditioned, consequently, by human or sociodemographic flows, such as emigration and tourism, material and economic flows, such as exports or investments, or, in our case with more relevance, symbolic flows like language. This typology of perception is what Machado & Pageaux (2001: 61-63) call the typology of representation of the other, based on the capitals attributed to the culture of the other, in this case, the positively imagined foreign cultural reality, without hierarchical relationships. Raciolinguistics addresses how certain racial stereotypes are linked to linguistic characteristics. In the learning context, this can result in unfair prejudices and expectations about the language skills of students based on their ethnic background.

Example 2: visual narrative from activity 1 (2017-2018) at A2 level Portuguese course by informant ALEX

The second example is the visual narrative from Activity 1 (2017-2018) at A2 level Portuguese course. The visual narrative provided by the student using the pseudonym ALEX. In response to "What does learning Portuguese mean to you?" (Figure 1)

Figure 1 – Activity 1 (2017-2018) at A2 level Portuguese course by the student ALEX

Source: Students' own elaboration

The visual narrative by ALEX illustrates the student's engagement with the Portuguese language, reflecting both personal and cultural connections. This narrative should be interpreted within the framework of visual methodologies, which allow for the exploration of learners' perceptions through non-verbal means (Kalaja, 2016).

We continue the analysis with more examples of the perception of the Portuguese language, now associated with one nation, one way of speaking Portuguese and one Portuguese culture:

The third example consists of a group of sentences taken from different activities worked on during the study. The details of the origin of each sentence are given at the end, in brackets.

Example 3: group of sentences from different activities (own translation of the original Language)

> [...] I believe you grow as a person, you immerse yourself in another culture. (excerpt from Activity 1 (2017-2018) at A2 level Portuguese course, informant MARC).
> [...] also, by doing it, you immerse yourself in another culture and start something new from scratch. (excerpt from Activity 1(2017-2018) at A2 level Portuguese course, informant NURIA).
> The Portuguese language is a joyful language, and I believe it represents the Portuguese people very well. In short, I consider that our language is the mirror of the people who use it. (excerpt from Activity 4, Pilot projec, informant FEDE).
> I want to be able to communicate with Portuguese and Brazilians. (excerpt from Activity 4, Pilot project, informant EMA).
> They in Portuguese (or Brazilian) and me in Spanish. (excerpt from Activity 4, Pilot project, informant ENRIC's Activity).
> I have never been to Portugal or Brazil, but I wanted to learn a new Romance language. [...] I understand Brazilian Portuguese conversations better than Portuguese from Portugal. (excerpt from Activity 3, (2017-2018) at A2 level Portuguese course informant MARC).
> Of course, I would recommend everyone to study Portuguese; the class is my first contact with the Portuguese language. (excerpt from Activity 2, (2017-2018) at A1 level Portuguese course statement 25, informant MIKE).

These responses highlight learners' perceptions of Portuguese as a singular language associated with specific cultures. Sometimes, perceptions associated with a heterogeneous Portuguese language stem from common and, in some cases, illusory principles. In the fragments of the narratives, learners tend to overlook the perception of the Portuguese language spoken in different continents and by various people. Despite awareness of the linguistic diversity within Portuguese-speaking regions, learners often perceive the language homogenously. This finding is consistent with the observations of Mbembe (2018) and Pelbart (2018) on the construction of national and cultural identities.

In the study, we have not been able to pinpoint the reason for this phenomenon, but we presume that, due to the international landscape, some Portuguese-speaking countries have negligible influence globally. This weakens the potential assertion of the language, as it depends on other powers, including economic, technological, scientific, and political powers. Adding to this, its

geographical dispersion makes the unity of Portuguese, in the transnational space where it exists, somewhat unstable.

From a perspective of exclusion and marginalization, necropolitics, in an educational context, could manifest in practices that exclude certain ethnic or linguistic groups, limiting their access to meaningful educational opportunities. From our standpoint, the modernization of perceptions would be relevant, given that, for example, in Brazil, there are other languages[5], and the concept of nationality associated with a mother tongue was a product of the 19th-century Romanticism, with the use of these languages by renowned poets and writers. Part of this is also attributed to curriculum content.

Language curricula have often been designed from a Eurocentric perspective, prioritizing European languages and their literatures at the expense of local languages and cultures. This approach perpetuates the colonial view of knowledge and culture. Nevertheless, educational policies inherited from colonialism have often created and perpetuated inequalities in access to language education. Indigenous or minority populations may have fewer opportunities to learn their mother tongues in formal educational settings. In some cases, colonialism has contributed to the suppression of local languages in favor of imposing the colonizer's language. This has led to the loss of linguistic and cultural diversity. In the educational realm, through raciolinguistics, which analyzes how categories of race and language are interconnected, this translates into the observation of how certain languages are valued more than others, creating linguistic hierarchies often linked to racial categories.

It is important to replace the association between language, nation, and state since language alone does not create a nation. While a language can serve as one of the unifying factors of a nation, it is not the sole determinant. In this regard, following the principles of necropolitics, one should avoid the assumption of a global Lusophone culture and the apparent monolingualism. Despite appearing monolingual, Portuguese encompasses multiple multilingual countries. It's crucial to differentiate between multilingualism, which involves knowing or being familiar with various languages in society, and plurilingualism, the active development of this language repertoire driven by the desire and efforts of individual speakers.

Regarding perceptions of the Portuguese language, the third example relates to the learner's language hierarchy. In other words, the Portuguese language, the first languages (Spanish and

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[5] Brazil, the only Latin American country where Portuguese is the main language, is home to approximately 250 languages, including indigenous, immigrant, and Afro-Brazilian languages. The *Institute of Research and Development in Language Policy* highlights that the exact number of languages is uncertain. Census data indicate around 180 indigenous languages, which exceeds commonly cited figures. Furthermore, descendants of immigrants, now in their third generation, speak 56 different languages (Source: http://e-ipol.org).

Catalan), and additional languages (English, French, and Italian) mentioned in the study are objects that follow a hierarchy based on ease and social, economic, and historical prestige.

This is observed in the transcription of the response in Activity 3 (2016-2017) at A1 level from the student with the pseudonym DAVID: "How do you feel about the Portuguese language?"

Example 4: response from activity 3 (2016-2017) at A1 level by participant DAVID (own translation of the original Language)

> For many years, I thought about studying Portuguese, but I never had the chance to enroll at [...]. Finally, on the third attempt, I was able to register.
> I like languages, although I can't say I'm particularly gifted for learning them.
> In recent years, I have focused mainly on English. I had studied French during compulsory education.
> In fact, I have come to the conclusion that it was better to focus on languages of international communication and leave the others aside.... I have studied Italian a little, but since I have Italian friends, I understand it and can have bilingual conversations. On the other hand, I had never studied Portuguese, although it is a sister language, at least I could read... in short, my intention is to "deconstruct" Portuguese to make sure that, as a sister language, I never perceive it as an impenetrable language in the future. I don't know how far I'll get.

The narrative from DAVID highlights the impact of language hierarchies, often rooted in colonial structures, on language policies in Catalonia. Former colonial languages, such as French, tend to hold higher social and economic status in educational settings. However, in Catalonia, English is notably prioritized over French as the primary second language. This linguistic preference reflects broader sociopolitical dynamics and can be viewed through the lens of necropolitics, where the choice of certain languages influences the vitality and status of others.

The decision to emphasize English in Catalonia aligns with global economic and cultural trends, emphasizing its perceived utility and prestige on a global scale. This preference is considered a manifestation of necropolitical forces, shaping a sociopolitical narrative that places higher value on English proficiency, potentially tied to economic opportunities, international communication, or cultural influence. Historically, this emphasis is rooted in British imperialism and the subsequent global spread of American culture post-World Wars, which positioned English as the dominant lingua franca, often at the expense of other languages' inherent value.

The consequences for language learners in Catalonia are substantial. The prioritization of specific languages not only influences the distribution of resources but also shapes societal attitudes toward language proficiency. Students' motivation or discouragement in language learning is linked to the perceived prestige or utility of chosen languages, illustrating how language policies, influenced by necropolitics, impact individual language learning experiences.

In summary, the text elucidates how the interplay of necropolitics, racialization, and language policies in Catalonia is evident in the emphasis on English as a second language. This

underscores how sociopolitical factors influence the linguistic landscape, affecting language choices and experiences for learners in the region.

For instance, the imposition of a dominant language and the marginalization of minority languages can be forms of symbolic violence that reinforce existing power structures. In this sense, Portuguese holds a more affective value for the research informants. For them, languages can be more valued, useful, and important based on their beliefs and/or personal interests. Racial-linguistic hierarchies manifest in the social valuation of certain languages, influencing the perception of Portuguese compared to other languages. This can limit job and economic opportunities for those who choose to learn languages perceived as less prestigious. English, for example, emerges in the study as a language of international communication and linked to pragmatic value, leading to the stigmatization of Portuguese compared to English, i.e., the stigmatization of non-prestigious languages.

Languages that are deemed to have lower social prestige often experience stigmatization, leading to a decline in learning and an eventual loss of these languages in favor of more esteemed ones. This concept is evident in the excerpts extracted from students' narratives, which are part of the responses to Activity 1 in a longitudinal study. This specific section, located in the final part (Section 6 of 6) of the online questionnaire titled "My Opinion", posed various questions to participants, one of which was: "What language is the most important in the world? Why?"

Almost unanimously, learners have declared English as the most important language in the world. This suggests to us that the relationship of languages with the economy is increasingly garnering more interest due to the needs of the knowledge society we are in, characterized by a constant increase in the volume of data, information, and knowledge. Studies on the economic value of language acknowledge that the positive externality of sharing a language, understood as a tool for communication and mutual understanding, reinforces its value and its impact in exchanges with the outside. Please see example below.

Example 5: response from activity 1 "What language is the most important in the world? Why?" (own translation of the original Language)

English is the most spoken in the most powerful countries (by CARMEN)
English is the international language of the scientific community (by SUSI)
English is useful for traveling (by POL)
English is used by many people in their work, international language (by ROSER)
English is the most spoken language (by REMEI)
English is the official global language (by ANGI)
English is the most important in the world of work and in travel (by PEDRO)

In the examples above, there is a tendency to think that languages are considered more or less important in relation to utility, prestige, and ease of learning. Among the perceptions of the

students in the study, English is likely one of the universal languages for work and science. Moreover, considering that most commercial relationships between countries currently occur in that language, it is used for contact with groups from other countries, and various websites are often in English, among other possible examples. English emerges as a facilitator of job opportunities, and in this sense, the social prestige of a language can influences employment opportunities. In many cases, certain languages are valued more in the job market, motivating people to learn them to enhance their professional prospects. Below are additional text excerpts for illustrative purposes.

Example 6: group of response to "How do you feel about the Portuguese language?", accompanying text question. (own translation of the original Language)

> It would be amazing to travel through both countries without the need for English or waiting for them to understand you, given their similarity. In Spanish, for this reason, I believe I have a perfect opportunity to start learning Portuguese.
> I don't consider it an important language in the world; there are many other languages that I consider much more important, such as English, Spanish, Chinese, or even German, although the latter is only spoken in one country in the world that I am aware of. [...] I only associated the Portuguese language with Portugal, which is very small and economically not very significant globally. (Activity 4, excerpt from informant PÉREZ's statement)
> Well, in Latvia, no one my age with a certain cultural level speaks less than four languages. (Activity 4, excerpt from informant CARLOS's statement)
> For that, I establish contact with agents from Brazil, and it's very 'ugly' to have to answer in English when we understand them perfectly in Brazilian Portuguese. (Activity 3, excerpt from informant ANGI's statement)
> [...] I don't see Portuguese as a reference language like English or even German and French because it is not a distinct language when it comes to business but its relevance has increased after Brazil's economic growth in 2012 and the current upswing of Portugal in the European job market. (Activity 3, excerpt from informant PEDRO's statement)

Regarding the hierarchy of languages, English holds a prominent position as a prestigious language globally, valued as a universal language useful for global communication and vital for economic and social development. PÉREZ's response highlights the perception of Portuguese as less significant compared to other major world languages, reflecting colonial legacies and current global power dynamics. The idea of English as a language with high pragmatic value is reinforced, making it evident to students that English is the most important language due to its utility in powerful countries, its status as the international language of the scientific community, its usefulness for travel, and its dominance in the global job market. This perception is historically rooted in British imperialism and the global spread of American culture post-World Wars, which established English as the preeminent lingua franca. Consequently, this leads us to reflect on the supremacy of English in the students' imagination.

From our perspective, it seems clear that there is a prevailing imposition of a pseudo-scientific and cultural monolingualism of English as the sole international language in sciences (the international language of the scientific community, economics, the most powerful countries, the job

market, and travel (the most important in the world of work and travel). This scientific and cultural monolingualism, emerging from our respondents' answers, appears to be a phenomenon recognized and accepted by almost all of them. However, we have not been able to determine, based on the responses, whether the subjects are aware of the consequences of this linguistic phenomenon—the influence of English on their mother tongues. For example, the simplification of international communication due to the habitual reading and publication of scientific papers in English and access to major technological advancements, also in English, is altering the way subjects express themselves in their mother tongue.

The social prestige of a language impacts the self-esteem of its speakers. Those who speak languages with lower prestige may experience a decrease in linguistic self-esteem, influencing their willingness to learn and use the language. The prestige hierarchy among languages can affect social dynamics and interactions among speakers of different languages, influencing language practice and usage in everyday contexts. The perception of a language's prestige can influence an individual's linguistic identity construction, and those who speak languages with lower prestige may experience identity tensions affecting their relationship with the language. In this sense, language learning does not fulfill the liberal promises of social mobility but functions as a mechanism of segregation.

Our reanalysis of the previous study data reveals that the systems of teaching and learning additional languages are influenced by colonial legacies, as evidenced by the homogeneous and idealized perceptions of Portuguese and its culture among students. This homogenization reflects Mbembe (2018) and Pelbart's (2018) analyses on the construction of national and cultural identities through the imposition of a dominant language. These findings impact language teaching in contexts such as Catalonia. Educators need to be aware of how colonial legacies and linguistic hierarchies can affect students' perceptions, motivation, and success in language learning. It is crucial that language curricula include a critical perspective that addresses these influences and promotes an inclusive and diverse understanding of languages and cultures. Additionally, prioritizing English as a global lingua franca and perceiving its pragmatic superiority can limit learning opportunities for other languages, such as Portuguese. Educational policies must be reevaluated to promote linguistic equity and value all languages equally, not just for their economic or scientific utility, but also for their cultural and social worth. Finally, it is essential to foster a learning environment that recognizes and celebrates linguistic and cultural diversity, challenging linguistic hierarchies and encouraging greater appreciation and respect for all languages, thereby enriching students' educational experiences and contributing to a more inclusive and equitable society.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper delved into the intricate intersection of necropolitics, raciolinguistic hierarchies, and language education, shedding light on the complex dynamics that influence language acquisition and valuation. The sociolinguistic exploration highlighted the impact of race-based policies and power structures on language learning, revealing the role of political decisions in shaping language supremacy and perpetuating socio-economic inequalities.

From a necropolitical perspective, the study observed how students' perceptions of the Portuguese language contribute to the collective construction of stereotypes, reinforcing existing power structures. The notion of race as a useful fiction, as discussed by Mbembe (2018), plays a pivotal role in bioeconomy, allowing the identification and definition of population groups based on differentiated risks. The study emphasizes the force of Mbembian thought, situating the colony not as an archaic power premise but as central to the structuring of contemporary power relations.

The social prestige of languages emerged as a significant factor conditioning language learning, influencing not only the learning process but also the socio-economic status associated with those languages. The study underscored the importance of addressing language equity, emphasizing the intrinsic value of all languages in teaching and learning processes. Access to educational resources, economic opportunities, and social interactions are intricately linked to the socio-economic prestige of languages, highlighting the need for inclusive language policies.

We conclude by advocating for inclusive and critical approaches to address these challenges, challenging linguistic hierarchies, and resisting colonial dynamics in the educational system.

In spite of the inherent limitations, this paper significantly contributes to the field of language perception studies within the framework of necropolitics and raciolinguistics. The concepts explored here offer valuable insights for the development and improvement of practices in the teaching and learning of additional languages. It also prompted reflection on the authors' perceptions of their own additional languages, both in the teacher-learner and researcher contexts, highlighting the challenges of translating knowledge into practice. In this context, this paper sought to understand how necropolitics and raciolinguistic hierarchies can contribute to reproduction of stereotypes and inequalities in society, reinforcing pre-existing power structures. It is a crucial field of study that analyzes how race-based "policies" and power structures influence language acquisition and valuation. Furthermore, it examined the complex intersection between political decisions affecting the supremacy of certain languages and linguistic practices that reflect and perpetuate racial and socio-economic inequalities.

Another crucial aspect to highlight pertains to students who may not have received plurilingual instruction as outlined in the Common European Framework of Reference for

Languages (CEFR, 2002). Consequently, it becomes essential to conduct a comparative study in subsequent years to assess how perceptions of languages evolve. This approach allows for a more precise evaluation of language policies. These students have undoubtedly undergone their formative years within a monolingual education system that inherently prioritizes a monolingual perspective, with English often assuming a predominant position among other languages.

This concluding reflection reinforces the importance of ongoing research in this area and the continual refinement of language education practices to promote inclusivity, challenge stereotypes, and foster a more equitable linguistic landscape.

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