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THE DECOLONIAL DEBATE EXPRESSIONS

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THE DECOLONIAL DEBATE: EXPRESSIONS
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PROJECT

SABIÁS DIVINE: PATHWAYS FROM THE GLOBAL SOUTH IN LINGUISTIC ANTHROPOLOGY
OS SABIÁS DIVINAM: VIAS DO SUL GLOBAL NA ANTROPOLOGIA LINGUÍSTICA
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Abstract

The poet Manoel de Barros dedicated a great part of his work pointing out the limits of rationalism and, through poetry, proposed insurgencies. Therefore, the first topic of this article intends to theorize about the intrinsic coloniality of classical/hegemonic studies of language arising from the Western and European tradition, with its imperialist and anthropocentric principles embedded and consubstantial with linguistics. The second and third topic deals with some of the proposals of insurgency approaches throughout the history of linguistic theory through linguistic anthropology in contact with indigenous languages. Addressing the deprovincialization of language from its eurocentric bias highlights the ontological axes of differentiation between linguistic natures in the Global South. Thus, this article aims to rethink and deepen anthropological and linguistic discussions across the Global South, using the qualitative analysis of bibliographies as its main met.

Keywords: Decoloniality, Theoretical linguistics, Linguistic anthropology, Global South

1   Introduction

When the Brazilian poet Manoel de Barros (1916-2014), a *boy from the woods*, wrote, he knew nothing, and only through the blessing of his ignorances was he able to achieve full *knowledge of the expository grammar of the land*[1].

> Science can classify and name all the organs of thrush but cannot measure its charms.
>
> Science cannot calculate how much horsepower there is in a mockingbird's charms.
>
> Anyone who accumulates a lot of information loses the ability to guess: divine.
>
> The sabiás divine.
>
> (BARROS, 1996, p. 53, our translation).

I reclaim that his poetic work serves as a call for linguistic reconsiderations of decolonization by the reality of the Global South, taking their knowledge and beings into language studies. Thus, seeking space in science for sabiás to divine, not tearing up old and rubbery practices, but renewing the sciences, just as Barros wrote: "I think of renewing man using butterflies" (Barros, 2022, p. 24, our translation). To enable the paths of poetic absurdity in scientific practice or as mentioned by Barros: "Unlearning eight hours a day teaches the principles" (2016, p. 15, our translation). All to contemplate "some words that do not yet have a language." (Barros, 2016, p. 15, our translation), seeking to understand what Barros uses as the axis and articulator of a re-enchantment of words, "the delirium of the verb" (2016, p. 17, our translation). Thus, reiterating that linguistic science needs to have a cosmic openness to contemplate the fullness of the power of language outside of eurocentric parameters, I affirm with Manoel that: "only creeping things celestialize me" (1996, p. 31, our translation).

The methodology used in the development of this article consists of the qualitative analysis of bibliographies relating to linguistic anthropology in the Global South, as well as transversal themes, philosophy, linguistics, epistemic decolonization, indigenous languages, and the poetry of Manoel de Barros. In this regard, we bring epistemic approaches to be articulated, these being the deprovincialization of language, the axes of ontological differentiation, and ethnosyntax.

2   The coloniality of the being

How much of the prefiguration of what a human is and can be has affected and affects our conceptions of the language's power? Joana Pinto (2013) discusses the almost imperceptible dependencies that the prescription generates in the linguistic description within our Brazilian Portuguese and the consequences of colonial naturalization. The linguist writes that "[t]he boundaries between

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[1] The italicized excerpts in the first paragraph refer to published books by the poet.

descriptivism and prescriptivism are blurred when hegemonic discourses about the Portuguese language are left untouched and the social categories used to support the alleged criteria of scientificity are not subjected to criticism." (Pinto, 2013, p.129, our translation).

According to Harris (1981), these undefined limits are due to the constant maintenance of myths about (and in) language by European colonial traditions through "two great instruments of European education, the grammar book and the dictionary" (Harris, 1981, p. 12, our translation). Such metalinguistic resources, according to Pinto (2013), have created and recreated "language effects" that legitimize themselves and propose to regulate linguistic delimitations. Both in the languages of the colonized people of the Global South and in the languages of the colonizers of the Global North (Errington, 2001; Makoni & Pennycook, 2007; Mignolo, 2003; Quijano, 2005).

Makoni and Mashiri claim that "Dictionaries, during the colonial era, were part of a process that encouraged Africans to internalize European epistemology about themselves, creating a new vision of their current affairs and superimposing new values on their past." (2007, p. 77, our translation). Going even deeper, Makoni points out that "[t]he very notion of languages as distinct units, or 'boxes', is a product of European positivism reinforced by literacy and standardization" (2003, p. 141, our translation). However, the consolidation of human sciences, like linguistics, occurred concomitantly with the increase of invasions and cultural rapes of colonization, and together with the internal geopolitical movements in Europe of heterogenization of its nations (Errington, 2001; Mignolo, 2003; Camacho, 2010; Amorim Filho, 2023).

It is not, however, exclusively within the scope of establishing and defending a prescriptive norm that the ideological process tends to interfere in the domain of language. The theory of language can itself be based on certain fundamental values, which rely on the limits of ideological content and present, in this case, a curiously normative character, even if it rejects it at first. If, in fact, we try to evaluate the contribution that linguistics made to changing this conception, the results do not go beyond the line of the alleged criterion of scientificity, through which it is common to oppose linguistics to normative grammar based on the descriptivism/prescriptivism dichotomy. (Camacho, 2010, p. 143, our translation).

Michel Foucault, in his famous debate with linguist Noam Chomsky (2015), spends much of his rhetoric demonstrating that there was an archetypal necessity imposed by the metaphysical conditions of rationalism in "scientific conditions". However, going beyond this philosophical current, such self-imposed need went below the radars of several later philosophical criticisms, as well as much earlier philosophies, when the formal study of grammar also took place, a proto-linguistics, whose study of "should be" or "ideal" as stated by Marcos Bagno (2016) and Bárbara Weedwood (2002) were the core that everything else orbited. According to Foucault, it was in the bourgeois model that the symbol of the proletarian utopia of communism was projected (2015, pp. 54-55), just as the symbol of decolonial utopia can be projected in the colonial model. There lies the danger. Using colonial instruments, colonial data, colonial metalinguistic resources, even with decolonial intentions, the specter of what fostered the formal organization of the study of grammar in the Hellenic world is constantly hanging over science.

In his work *On the Way to Language* (2003), the German philosopher Martin Heidegger deals with the ontology of language, indicating that it is intertwined with the most essential part of human ontology. For him, "language itself is language" (Heidegger, 2003, p. 8, our translation) and this is not a tautology, but the fact of the singularity that its nature presented. Language, for the philosopher, is neither about "expression" nor about human "activity", but about the very conduit of the realization of reality and, therefore, "language speaks" (Heidegger, 2003, p. 14, our translation).

In short, "if the only way to talk about language is through language, wouldn't it, therefore, have some interference in the understanding of itself and its essence?" (Gruber, 2023, p. 28, our translation). In this struggle to seek the essence of language, Heidegger declares himself incapable of finding a conclusion, but, therefore, aims for a path towards it. So, by postulating that "it is the word that grants being to things", he coins his famous sentence: "language is the house of being" (Heidegger, 2003, pp. 126-127, our translation). That is, what touches us "in the most intimate articulation of our presence", since, for Heidegger (2003, p. 121, our translation), even any theorization, expression, implementation, and affection about the living experience of being human, its essence or pragmatic, depends on language and its essence.

However, in the third chapter of his work, the European philosopher recounts a crossroads he encountered when entering into a deep dialogue with a scholar and native speaker of the Japanese language about the concept of the "house of being" and the translatability of ethos and cultural essences. One can easily see the limits and abysses between their languages, their "houses" of heterogeneous natures. It is said that "if, through language, man lives in the claim of being, then we Europeans, apparently, live in a totally different house" (Heidegger, 2003, p. 73, our translation). But just mentioning this is not enough, there is a laconic discussion throughout Heidegger's work and life that compromises him. Their lack of perception and interest in the coloniality of being (Maldonado-Torres, 2008; Mignolo, 2003) presupposes a universe of beings that are structurally asymmetric in their powers, cultures, knowledge, and bodies.

Frantz Fanon (2008) states: "to speak is to exist absolutely for the other" (Fanon, 2008, p. 33, our translation), and a tremor occurs, as the tectonic plate from which ontological certainties about language were raised is greatly displaced. A new axis is revealed. When Molefi Kete Asanti (1988) says that "All language is epistemic" (*as cited in* Gonzalez, 2018 [1988], p. 78, our translation), Linguistic Anthropology awakens a new way of thinking about these sciences. Fanon explains that:

> The black Antillean will be whiter, that is, he will get closer to the real man, to the extent that he adopts the French language. We don't disregard that this is one of man's attitudes towards Being. A man who possesses language possesses, in return, the world that this language expresses and that is implicit to him. (Fanon, 2008, p. 34, our translation).

If language is the home of being, colonization would enable the invasion and occupation of these homes and even their destruction. The need to appropriate the language of the colonizer while serving as a white mask over the black skin of the colonized reiterated and reiterates its place in the zone of non-being of racialized people in the Global South, as stated by Gabriel Nascimento dos Santos (2023). This is reminiscent of the powerful discussion that bell hooks (2008) raises based on a poem by Adrienne Rich who writes: "This is the language of the oppressor, yet I need it to speak to you", which leads hooks to reply: "Like desire, language breaks, refuses to be enclosed in borders" (hooks, 2008, p. 857, our translation). And in what seems to agree with the intimate relationship between the ontology of language and being, she continues, "it itself speaks against our will in words and thoughts that intrude, even violate the most secret spaces of the mind and body" (hooks, 2008, p. 857, our translation).

For Maldonado-Torres (2008), the visceral hamartia that led Heidegger's ontological philosophy to endorse the epistemic racism of Nazism was the oblivion of the geopolitics of knowledge, the topology of beings and the coloniality of powers, all intertwined. Likewise, the Puerto Rican philosopher mentions that not even among his greatest opponents of the time, such as the Jew Lévinas, was imperialist logic transcended. According to Hardt and Negri, the Empire "is fundamentally characterized by the absence of borders", always aiming for "a regime that effectively encompasses the entirety of space" (Hardt & Negri, 2004, p. 14, our translation). Thus, when thinking about a single homogeneous plane extended to all beings, known or not, it becomes impossible not to have a decantation process that establishes vertical hierarchies between beings, thus enabling projects of selective sacrifice of the most irrelevant layers. However, as we saw in Fanon (2008), there is an awakening in academic dens. Mignolo summarizes:

> Science (knowledge and wisdom) cannot be separated from language; languages are not just 'cultural' phenomena in which people find their 'identity'; they are also the place where knowledge is inscribed. And since languages are not something that human beings have, but something that human beings are, the coloniality of power and the coloniality of knowledge engender the coloniality of being. (Mignolo, 2004, p. 633 *as cited in* Maldonado-Torres, 2008, p. 89, our translation).

3   The deprovincialization of language

For Jan David Hauck (2023), the ontological turn (Holbraad & Pedersen, 2017) "challenges Western conceptual foundations, such as nature, culture, humanity or the notion of person, in the face of ethnographic realities from other places" (Hauck, 2023, p. 42, our translation) little was heard in Linguistic Anthropology. This fact is, at the very least, dangerous when recalling the epistemic weight that conceptions of language have in the formation of other concepts and sciences (Bauman & Briggs, 2003, p. 257).

Ethnographies have roused increasingly distinct ontological notions about language that challenge the postulates of classical linguistics and cause shivers in the hegemonic Intellectual Academy for disrupting centuries of colonial tradition (Hauck, 2023, p. 42).

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To implement these data, Bauman and Briggs suggest the "deprovincialization of language" (Bauman & Briggs, 2003, p. 68), that is, ceasing the dependence on European assumptions, theories, and proposals in the representation of non-European experiences and concepts in academic practice (Chakrabarty, 2000; Maldonado-Torres, 2008; Pinto, 2013).

For Chakrabarty, such an understanding of what language is, or can be, has functioned as the "silent referent" upon which linguistic practices are evaluated, allowing amputated views of their integrality (Chakrabarty, 2000, p. 28). In line with this, Bauman and Briggs (2003) point out a form of consecration of structural and institutional inequalities through the twin processes of the ideological purification of language (where language is seen as autonomous in its representations and indexical traits with conceptions of humanity, nature and, social set). Added to all this is indexical hybridization, which makes language increasingly understood as the ways of speaking of "ideal" figures, that is, in the various elitist conceptions.

What Jan David Hauck (2023) proposes with great caution and humility is the condition that the decolonial proposals of the Global South are neither projections nor even antitheses, of the scientific-ideological theses of the Global North. The ontological dependence of the antithesis resides in the thesis it opposes. Strictly speaking, this points not to a denial of Northern science, nor to using its weapons to fight against it, but to the method of deprovincialization of language, in the face of the provincialization of Europe.

The efforts of various indigenous communities to fight to revitalize their languages at risk of extinction through forms of standardization and institutionalization based on concepts and conceptions of European language; several other communities that strived and continue to strive bravely to adopt the colonizer's language; Would this be a misrecognition, a mere "colonization of your consciousness"? Hauck (2023, pp. 47-49) escapes this naivety and states that there is a great difference in survival and resistance practices of communities that demand the life of the entire forest they are part of and the surrender to the Global North, the need and the imperial attack do not share the same foundation.

Makoni and Pennycook (2020) also reiterate that seeking an alternative vision of language also depends on constantly, and exhaustively, explaining what they are alternatives to, always bringing along the ghost of the Global North to every new path, making it almost always an internal debate from the North to the North. His exhortation culminates in the Global South "seek alternative forms of knowledge for renewal" of Anthropology (and) Linguistics (Makoni & Pennycook, 2020, p. 58, our translation).

4   The axes of ontological differentiation

Now, how to deal with indigenous languages in the Global South and Brazil, knowing their ontological weight as houses of being, the heterogeneity and coloniality of being(s), and the paths of language deprovincialization?

Thinking about ontological differences must be "first and foremost an invitation to pause" in linguistic anthropology, it is an invitation to "Abandon our a priori assumptions about what language is and remain open to language in another way", taking into account that the assumptions "about the agency, subjectivity or materiality of the linguistic and human 'resources' involved" are provincial (Hauck, 2023, p. 63, our translation). What we point out here as being fully open to the experience of the absurdities and manoelesque[2] charms of the non-dissection of the charms of sabiás.

We don't propose a typology of language ontologies, but, recognizing the multiple ontologies, it is necessary to think about axes of linguistic ontological differentiation (Gal & Irvine, 2019; Hauck, 2023), paying attention not to the myriad but to the torsion point between the discussed ontologies. Some examples of how this can happen were also collected by Hauck (2023).

In the south of Chile, the *Mapuche* people are bilingual, usually speaking Spanish and *Mas cited inungun*, which have an asymmetrical relationship between them, making it a lack of respect to use Spanish in contexts such as rituals. This is because the *Mas cited inungun* language is, for the Mapuche people, coextensive with the newen, constitutive force of all beings (Course, 2011, 2018). The axes of ontological difference can be seen in its nomenclature, while Spanish is called *winkadungun* (*winka* refers to the invading

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[2] Neologism to name what derives from Manoel de Barros and his poetics.

white people), *mas cited inungun* is not classified as the language of a group of humans, but the language/speech (*dungun*) of *mapu*, which is the land itself.

To say that language has its own "force" is not to personify it or deny that it can serve the speaker's intentions, but rather suggest that its excess or potentiality is of the same kind as, or continuous with, the essential force of which all things are manifestations. (Course, 2011, p. 796, our translation).

Course reflects that this asymmetry should categorize Spanish and Mas cited inungun as "fundamentally different types of things", since the first is seen as a system of representation in signs of an arbitrary overview of the world, while the second is a constituent part of the world, going beyond human agencies and intentions (Course, 2018, p. 12). Therefore, "[the] two 'languages' do not come together at a higher level as different specimens of the same type (language), but must be understood as having different linguistic natures" (Hauck, 2023, p. 59, our translation), just like, Heidegger (2003) pointed out between German and Japanese.

Studying the Sakhas, people of Siberia, Ferguson reports that the words of their language are considered to have "a very real agentive power in the world" (2019, p. 22, our translation), as they are endowed with a type of guardian spirit called ichchi, which would be a spiritual essence such as exists in the lake, in the tree, in the fire, there would be the tyl ichchite (guardian spirit of language).

> This lively, or soulful, character of language, in turn, implies a certain relationship with the speaker; For the Sakha who hold this belief, language has both its own intrinsic power and the power that has been imbued in it by the speaker of the words; Acting in the world through language thus assumes certain agentive qualities. (Ferguson, 2019, p. 28, our translation).

In this way, for the Sakha nation, language is not just a technique used for and by human beings in talking about things and their states, but language itself is a being endowed with agentive interventions. Thus, it would be part of a "broader ontology that configures land, language, ancestors, and creatures that would understand such language as parts of an integral system" (Ferguson, 2019, p. 99, our translation).

> We may thus be faced with two axes of ontological contrast that intersect. On the one hand, the linguistic nature of language in general in these communities differs considerably from that in the West; on the other hand, different languages used in these communities may also be of different linguistic nature. I suspect that most often we will find multiple axes of differentiation within a given community, and elucidating their relationships requires careful analysis. (Hauck, 2023, p. 60, our translation).

Other cases that greatly contribute to the understanding of the plurality of axes of ontological differentiation are linked to the understanding of language as a substance, such as the Dogon nation, located in Mali, who understand words as one of the bodily fluids, which is located in the clavicle, and to be spoken they are heated in the liver, evaporated into the lungs, and expelled through the larynx and mouth. Meanwhile, in the interlocutor's ears, they are absorbed and re-condensed (Calame-Griaule, 1965, pp. 58-74).

Emanuele Fabiano (2015) researches people whose speech, in the format of songs, is also considered a type of fluid. Walker (2018), based on this research, comments on baau, a type of healing song for children victims of magic from spirits and other non-humans, among the Urarina people of the Peruvian Amazon. For healing to occur, Walker (2018) describes that someone experienced in baau must whisper into a bowl of liquid, such as breast milk, and when the words enter the body they "dye" the child's blood, thus relieving their symptoms. Thus, "words are considered subject to direct absorption by the body, rather than interpretation by the mind" (Walker, 2018, p. 16, our translation). Here there is a very relevant point: with both the Dogons and the Urarinas, words are not only endowed with fluid substantiality, but they have agentivity, strength, and a certain degree of soul autonomy (Calame-Griaule, 1965, p. 32; Walker, 2018, p. 16).

Something fundamental that the ontological turn needs to convey concomitantly with its epistemic turn (or as called by Maldonado-Torres (2008), decolonial turn), is to start from the perception of the maximum completeness of the reality studied, which inevitably implies realizing that the conception of ontology of language enter into larger "assemblies" of other internal ontologies, with their own dynamics (Kroskrity, 2018, p. 134), because linguistic understandings are inseparable from other understandings. Hauck (2023)

summarizes: "We cannot simply try to discover multiple ontologies of language while leaving the rest of our metaphysics intact." (Hauck, 2023, p. 61, our translation).

In this regard, we can mention the work carried out by Durazzo and Bonfim (2023), where it is argued that areas of great multilingual contact are considered cultural areas by Amerindian Ethnolinguistics, where there is a typical wealth of linguistic exchanges between different trunks, such as the Upper of Rio Negro and Alto Xingu, have not taken into account areas where linguistic vitality has been maintained thanks to non-human beings, such as the Northeast. There, "enchanted masters" not only show their knowledge of indigenous languages, but have guaranteed its continuity (Durazzo & Bonfim, 2023, p. 130). Such languages are called enchanted languages, a category that brings the "ethnolinguistic recognition of different dynamics and native categories observed among the original people of the region, namely, their socio-ritual and cosmopolitical processes" (Durazzo & Bonfim, 2023, p. 131, our translation).

In Bruce Albert's famous ethnographic record of Yanomami cosmology through the voice of shaman Davi Kopenawa (2019), something constantly discussed is the highly divergent feature of the *Napë's* people language (white people) and *Teosi* (primordial ancestor who rejects the forest), as this is linked to Omama (primordial hero ancestor) and the *xapiris* (protective spirits of the forest).

For Kopenawa (2019), the language of the Napë is portrayed as the "word of goods", which guide the mind and ethos of the invading people who have caused endless genocides against their people, while their language is constantly seen as consubstantial with the forest in which they live: "The white people might think that we would stop defending our forest if they gave us mountains of their goods. They are mistaken. (...). We would lose our own words and that would lead to our death." (Albert & Kopenawa, 2019, p. 354, our translation). Discussing the effects of language, whether invasive or endemic, means always discussing the vitality of the Yanomami people.

The "phantom language" of the *napë* obstructs and dries up thoughts, which prohibits full existence (Albert & Kopenawa, 2019, pp. 226, 227, 353, 355). It is noted that the *Yanomam* language in connection with the forest, its spirits, and its Ancestor allows the full presence of its people and nation, and in an axis of ontological differentiation the language of its executioners "fails" such presence, which makes it a non-present presence, therefore, "ghost" (Albert & Kopenawa, 2019, pp. 227, 353, 354). Much could still be discussed about the xapiris language, which is also ontologically distinct from the *Yanomam* language.

What has been proposed so far is the possibility of accessing poetic experience through a decolonial turn in linguistics in coherence with the ontological turn. That is the permission that cosmopolitics brings to make everything participatory and dynamic in the cosmos. This poetic experience does not reside in processing several figures of speech simultaneously, but in experiencing them or at least allowing them to exist denotatively, thus breaking the scientific/poetic dichotomy. We have, as the poet Manoel de Barros says: made Nature "Get sick of us", putting "affliction on the stones (As Rodin did)." (2016, p. 18). "*Things* no longer want to be seen by reasonable people: They want to be looked at in blue — Like a child that you look at from a bird." (Barros, 2016, p. 18, emphasis added by the author, our translation).

Regarding this argument, Amorim Filho (2023, p. 107) writes that "[the] capitalocene is a consequence of the establishment of a regime of total objectification of the world. "Things" are understood as phenomena that persist and have static images." Disseminating the conflicts of the dichotomy mentioned before (scientific/poetic), an even deeper point from which this root is summarized in what the author calls the "dictatorship of things" (Amorim Filho, 2023, pp. 107, 108, 111, our translation). The "thing" is a substantial part of the Cartesian program of science where reality is seen mechanically in axes of thing and movement, which unfold even in space and time, and in our grammar as a noun/subject and verb/predicate. However, when discussing polyrhythmic policies, it is argued that what differentiates the thing from the being in its static nature is nothing more than a fallacy that has found constant maintenance by the market power that governs geopolitics and social contracts.

Things are perfectly capable of becoming commodities. Buildings and mountains are things, they can be bought and sold. You can buy a bag of ice, but when it turns into a puddle, its market value disappears. In capitalism, the degradation of things serves the purpose of creating new things. Long duration is discarded in the name of manufacturing novelties, a logic that, ultimately, turns everything into profit or waste. (Amorim Filho, 2023, p. 108, our translation).

Something ironic arises when stating that the emergence of humanist theories takes place precisely in societies with the greatest power of slave regimes, which left an endless legacy of structural racism (Amorim Filho 2023, p. 108), which awakens Krenak's question (2019, p. 13) if it is worth fighting to be part of the club of what is called humanity. To say that the geological collapse of the planet is due to the human category, when referring to humanity only a tiny portion of capitalists with immeasurable destructive power can represent it, is hypocritical, to say the least. If, for Amorim Filho, the freedom of the "current scientific episteme" that disregards "the ethical equivalence of beings" must occur in the dissolution of the dictatorship of things by the "democracy of beings" that must be "widening the scope of the category of beings to diverse phenomena considered as things, recognizing their agencies and relativizing the supposed power of humans" (Amorim Filho, 2023, p. 108, our translation).

Krenak reiterates this principle when commenting: "When we depersonalize the river, the mountain, when we take away their senses, considering that this is an exclusive attribute of humans, we free these places to become residues of industrial and extractive activity" (Krenak, 2019, p. 49, our translation). In his work *Futuro Ancestral* (2022) it is said:

We have always been close to water, but it seems that we learn very little from the words of rivers. This exercise of listening to what water courses communicate produced in me a kind of critical observation of cities, especially large ones, spreading over river bodies in such an irreverent way that we no longer have almost any respect for them. [...] This grandfather-river of ours, called Rio Doce by white people, whose waters flow less than a kilometer from my house's backyard, sings. On silent nights, we hear his voice and speak with our river-music [...] We feel so deeply immersed in these beings that we allow ourselves to leave our bodies, this monotony of anthropomorphy, and experience other ways of existing. For example, being water and experiencing this incredible power that it has to take different paths [...] respect water and learn its language. Let's listen to the voices of rivers because they speak. (Krenak, 2022, pp. 9-16, our translation).

Buzato and Severo, commenting on this passage, write that "In this context, the status of what counts as language and communication is conferred on all entities that are validated as members of common life" (Buzato & Severo, 2023, p. 21, our translation). However, it is essential to note that the "democracy of beings" can fall into tremendous naivety if any attempt is made to establish any equalizing scale parameter.

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> The serious implication of temporalities, occurrences, durations, and rhythms, in short, causes a different and even more comprehensive equalization between things, beings, and events of all nature. All things and beings are subject to transformations over time, but the understanding of this fact escapes us in everyday perception because we are immersed in our own temporal scale. If we consider the different scales, it is possible to conceive, for example, (on the geological scale) the "birth" of a mountain at the moment of its formation. (Amorim Filho, 2023, p. 109, our translation).

Possibly, the most relevant implication of the cosmopolitics that polyrhythms imply is to propose these "ethical-aesthetic alliances with other beings/events on different existential scales" (Amorim Filho, 2023, p. 111, our translation) to the point of shaking the Cartesian structure of perenniality static. But how can we now proceed when we notice that our own most basic categories of grammar reproduce and maintain Cartesian ideologies that relegate the category of things and movements, nouns, and verbal phrases to the described universe? How would it be possible in the process of theoretical linguistics to encompass such developments? How to operate in the face of the cosmos of indigenous languages that do not participate in the limitations and commitments that have shaped our conceptions of language, its ontology, and its naturally humanist, racist, and speciesist scientific organization?

5   The role of ethnosyntax/semantics of grammar for Brazilian indigenous languages

In his book *Memórias Inventadas*, Manoel de Barros (2009) writes a prose poem called *Gramática do Povo Guató*, where he recounts his encounter with the indigenous Rogaciano who teaches him the founding aspect of grammar "poorer in length and richer in essence", based on a single idea "[the] verbs serve to amend nouns".

And he gave examples: Bentevi spat on the ground. The verb spit connects bentevi with the ground. And more: The dog ate the bone. The verb eat spliced the dog into the bone. This is what Rogaciano explained to me about the Grammar of his people. He gave two more examples: Mariano asked: – Do you know how to make a canoe? – Danger Albano does. He responded. Rogaciano himself

didn't know anything, but he taught this speech without connectors, without a cane, without props to the kids. I think I liked listening to Rogaciano's nothings didn't know. And that not knowing made me curious to study linguistics. In the end, the Shaman of Guatós seemed to me to be as wise as Sapir. (Barros, 2009, p. 105, our translation).

Both Sapir (1956) and his student, Whorf (1979), marrying ethnography with linguistics, announced that "the 'real world' is to a large extent unconsciously built upon the language habits of the group", because "The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached", thus "We see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation". (Sapir, 1956, p. 69)

When Barros (2009), also in his provocative poetics of the absurd, explains the function of verbs that amend names, he invites us to think about the limitation that our terminologies have in representing the whole of the Guató language, which projects in its translations poetic experiences that inspire him in his, self-styled, agrammatic that seeks to dethrone regency.

In the article *Pre-establish categories don't exist: consequences for language description and typology Haspelmath* (2007) invites theoretical linguists to realize that bringing pre-made conceptual boxes from one culture to analyze another compromises the data, as these boxes already included diverse assumptions and concepts.

Instead of fitting observed phenomena into the mold of currently popular categories, the linguist's job is to describe the phenomena in as much detail as possible. A consequence of the non-existence of pre-established categories for typology is that comparison cannot be category-based, but must be substance-based, because substance (unlike categories) is universal. (Haspelmath, 2007, p. 119).

That is, proposing that language must have given grammatical categories of its language for it to be validated as a language is highly problematic. Enfield (2002) mentions that the culture of grammarians is constantly projected onto the languages described because the idea of language as a method of expression is still permeated rather than a way of ontological and epistemic connection to reality (Whorf, 1979; Mignolo, 2003; Gonzalez, 2018 [1988]). In such a context Anna Wierzbicka (1979, 1997) and Ken Hale (1966, 1986) began to formulate what was called ethnosyntax or semantics of grammar. Which would seek to extend itself to a "theoretical perspective that addresses the study of linguistic phenomena intrinsically linked to aspects of different societies", which "revisits the postulates of Sapir and Whorf", stating that "without linguistic knowledge, the ethnographer would fail to understand of a culture" (De Paula, 2014, p. 107, our translation).

Such developments had an important impact on studies of Brazilian indigenous languages, and here I mention three works: the dissertation *Uma floresta de universos além: a decolonialidade e a etnossintaxe como dever para com as línguas indígenas* by Gruber (2023), where ethnosyntax is applied for analyzing Mehinaku descriptions. The book *A língua apyãwa (Tapirapé) na perspectiva da etnossintaxe* by Eunice Dias de Paula (2014), with one of the most detailed descriptions of the analysis process.

In her article *Os xerente akwén, os animais e as plantas: uma revisita aos inalienáveis com a semântica da gramática*, Silvia Lucia B. Braggio analyzes the relations of intrinsic inherence grammatically marked in various descriptions, this is customary in indigenous languages regarding body lexicon and kinship, however in a more funneled way for the akwén xerentes they reach perceptions about voice, sounds and feelings (Braggio, 2011, pp. 445-446).

The morphological marking of inalienation, treated in the three works, is in complete connection with his ethnography of life, thus creating a "grammatical semantic" class, with the participation of plants and animals in morphosyntactic constructions that index voices and feelings, which we do not infer metonymic, metaphorical or prosopopeic value. This implies that talking about the tree's pain (*wde=sɛki*), or that the petal would be the lip of the flower (*rɔm=nîrnã=sdawahɨ*) are not approximations, nor poetic borrowings of human characteristics.

Added to this factor, the semantic-social relationship of inalienation needs to be highlighted. The ontology of entities is established or manifested in their linguistic functionality when the use of inalienable categorization is noted. Such a word indicates the non-existence of what is referred to independently of belonging, something very defined. [...] In this, we affirm that *Imiehünaku* understands, feels,

thinks, and lives his home, his body, his social interactions, and with inalienable entities in a different way from the researcher who speaks a language capitalized by hegemonic science. The proposal to use body terminology for housing must go beyond mere prosopopoeia understanding, just as several people have expressed their desire for understanding beyond figures of speech. Considering the possibility of merging the language of animate entities with inanimate entities as a poetic or metonymic resource has led to a merely folklorized or primitivized understanding of indigenous realities. (Gruber, 2023, pp. 128-129).

This triggers an understanding that when describing *pãi talalaka-pi* as the ribs of the house (walls), *pãi-tʃa'na-tɨ* as the mouth of the house (door), *pãi-tsewe* as the teeth of the house (beams), it is not about a connotative contribution, to the point of perceiving the relationship of the uterine idea in *pãi-jãku* which indicates a seclusion room that is culturally used as an environment where there is a form of gestation (seclusion) until birth for a new social function after the period (Gruber, 2023, p. 128). What can be proposed when analyzing morpho-semantic-syntactic elements is that they should indicate ontological characteristics of the nature of what they describe, having a profound relationship between how the ontology of the language expands or suppresses aspects of its axis of differentiation.

6   Conclusion

There is a primordial need to understand that the eurocentric metalinguistic apparatuses of grammar and dictionaries were ideological weapons on the prefiguration of linguistic ontology, and for the Global South to bring new proposals for epistemologies that go beyond the prisons that these can impose, we depend on a contribution that goes beyond the applied to theoretical linguistics, including linguistic anthropology. To reverberate the limits that science imposes on poetry, and that poetry imposes on science. It is not about measuring the charms of the thrush, as Barros (1996) warned, but rather allowing the sabiás to divine.

This article articulated an attempt to mend the colonial fracture between art and science by questioning the delimitation that the object of study of linguistics has had. To do so, we recover the intrinsically ontological and epistemic potential that any practice of/in language has and what its role has been in the dispute over the coloniality of knowledge and beings.

From this, we proposed to rethink language outside of the European provincialism that has epistemically monopolized the sciences, seeking the non-invasion of one ethnographic language ontology to another, we seek to move towards what Hauck (2023) named the search for axes of ontological differentiation to expand the realities of what language is in different cultures of the Global South such as the Mapuche, Sakha, Dongo, Urarina and Yanomami.

Finally, we propose methodological paths to deal with the description and analysis of languages from the Global South seeking a linguistic ethnography, and thus briefly present Ethnosyntax and its contributions to new linguistics.

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