

# GENDER IDEOLOGIES AND LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES ON FACEBOOK FEMINIST PAGES

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- **ABSTRACT:** The present study deals with issues of relations between gender ideologies and language ideologies, with a view to discussing the hypothesis of the convergence between linguistic hegemonies and the hegemonic order of gender, underpinned by Western ethnocentric tradition. It has been developed using examples extracted from two feminist activist Facebook communities. These communities have been the object of a virtual ethnographic study since 2013. This research focuses on the metapragmatic function carried out by the comments of the participants in those communities. It is guided by an understanding of language as social action (BAUMAN; BRIGGS, 1990); and of the concepts of “language ideology” (WOOLARD, 1998), discursive conflict (BRIGGS, 1996) and “metapragmatic attack” (JACQUEMET, 1994). The understanding of processes of identity construction in relation to power dispute and control in the contexts of interaction and the social world (SIGNORINI, 1998; MOITA LOPES, 2010) also plays a key role. Gender/sexuality hegemonies as well as linguistic hegemonies are co-articulated in space-time, thereby fulfilling the purposes of (dis)crediting arguments, face-saving (or threatening), and (re)orientating interactions. This occurs particularly when attempting to develop a set of language-use norms, which evokes a school-related cultural model and is capable of establishing relationships between said model and the ability of individuals to understand the gender- and sexuality-related issues under discussion.
- **KEYWORDS:** Gender ideologies. Language ideologies. Metapragmatic attack. Discursive conflict. Facebook.

## Introduction

This study presents a fragment of a broader virtual ethnographic study underway since January 2013 on Facebook pages characterized by their militant position in favour of feminist and anti-homo/trans/lesbian-phobic causes. Initially, we examined the aforementioned pages as lurkers,<sup>1</sup> with a view to assessing the meanings attributed

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<sup>1</sup> A “cultural attentive observer” (a cultural lurker), a reader who does not publish messages – meaning assigned to the term by Hine’s Virtual Ethnography (2000, p.24).

to gender and sexuality as (co)constructed by participants. We were also aiming to enhance our understanding of the dynamics of identity (de)construction in contemporary linguistic practices.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, the daily follow-up of posts and interactions also led us to acknowledge that some participants' comments posted during discussions exerted a metapragmatic function. In other words, a "function embracing not only description and assessment, but also conditioning and orientation of language use in either oral or written production" (SIGNORINI, 2008, p. 117). More specifically, they were responsible for recontextualizing institutionalized graphocentrism-related regulations on language, while also revealing socioculturally established norms on gender, and (re)orienting interaction within those spaces.

By examining such dynamics, we were able to highlight a new issue of particular interest in applied linguistic studies, and one that serves as the focus of this study: metapragmatic function exerted by participants' comments, in addition to the hypothesis of convergence between linguistic hegemonies and other established hegemonic orders, particularly those of gender and sexuality, underpinned by Western ethnocentric tradition. In order to deal with the aforementioned issue, we were immersed in those spaces and guided by the following research questions: What are the language ideologies that appear on the pages? What are the gender ideologies<sup>3</sup> that appear on the pages? How do these ideologies (gender and language) interrelate on the pages?

In light of the multiple linguistic and sociocultural devices brought into play by the participants in their language use, which also, in turn, present a number of ideological connotations, we discuss "conflicts" (BRIGGS, 1996) and "metapragmatic attacks" (JACQUEMET, 1994) related to two cultural co-dependent values occurring with a high degree of frequency on the pages studied: 1) concepts of masculinity/femininity; and 2) standard-language and linguistic correction ideals.

Initially, we present our research methodology, followed by a brief contextualization of the Facebook feminist pages under investigation. Thereafter, we focus on the theoretical basis of our study before finally discussing two sequences resulting from two posts published by the moderators of pages "*Moça, você é machista*" (Lady, you are sexist) and "*Diários de uma feminista*" (Diaries of a feminist). As further demonstrated, confrontations not only evoke a formalized school-related cultural model of language use, but also reveal relationships between said model, gender/sexuality-related ideologies, and the abilities of individuals to understand the issues and participating in the discussion.

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<sup>2</sup> Outcomes of analyses are published in: Biondo (2015) and Biondo e Signorini (2015).

<sup>3</sup> We use the term "gender ideologies" in this study to refer to any ideological issues and power relations that permeate male and heterosexual hegemony in our society. Furthermore, we made the choice to use it deliberately to counteract the pejorative appropriation of the term in Brazil, currently being applied, by which the field of gender studies itself is disqualified.

## Research methodology

Research guiding the discussions developed in the present study was carried out on eight different Facebook pages characterized by their activist stance on gender causes. Out of those pages, six had been closely observed since January 2013. In June 2016, two pages were added to the investigation. All eight pages have in common the fact that they refer to themselves as “communities” with the primary goal of taking a militant/activist position against prejudice, inequality, and any form of violence somehow connected to certain minorities: usually women, homosexuals and transsexuals; but also black people, children, and other groups considered marginalized. All these pages are available to public view and may be liked and followed by any Facebook user. Based on Virtual Ethnography (HINE, 2000), we followed discussions published on the investigated pages on a daily basis in the role of lurker only, that is, without writing any posts ourselves.

According to Hine (2000), Virtual Ethnography implies the researcher’s immersion in online spaces of interaction, studying the relationship between online and offline spaces. Although it is grounded in traditional ethnography, since its central focus has shifted to online settings, virtual ethnography requires some reconfiguration, particularly regarding perceptions of space, place, time, and identity. In virtual ethnography, these perceptions must be guided by the specific situation under investigation, as well as by the sociocultural context in question – both in tune with how research itself is understood from the standpoint of virtual ethnography.

In short, the constructs of space, place, time and identity only exist (from this perspective) as a “field of relations” structured according to the social and cultural aspects of a given situation; under no circumstances existing as predetermined and fixed concepts prior to practice (HINE, 2000). Additionally, time and space are under determination, thus consisting in “space-time” – always determined by the social action in progress, underpinned by an abundance of material and discursive resources, and immersed in relations of power (LEANDER; MCKIM, 2010). Whenever investigating online space-time, as is the case with the Facebook pages assessed herein, Hine (2000) believes it is necessary to assign considerable importance to language and established interactions as substitutes for the researcher’s long-term immersion in physical space, as required by traditional ethnography.

### *Feminist pages under investigation*

For the present study, we selected two out of the eight pages comprising our corpus: “*Moça, você é machista*” (Lady, you are sexist) and “*Diários de uma feminista*” (Diaries of a feminist). Our choice was based on the fact that both pages received the most likes and had the highest number of followers at the time of this analysis (Table 1). The former was created in April 2012 and is described simply as a “page created

by feminist queer theorists.” The latter, on the other hand, was created in October 2014 and is presented as an “intersectional-Marxist feminist page” publishing “not only didactic texts and posts, but also humorous feminist content: counter-discourse and irony.”<sup>4</sup> The table below shows the data collected from the communities, within the pre-established timeframe, in order to compile a register for the present research (from June to September 2017):

**Chart 1** – Data on the two feminist pages investigated in the study

|           | <i>Lady, you are sexist</i>      |  | <i>Diaries of a feminist</i>     |  |
|-----------|----------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|--|
|           | 860,000 likes; 851,000 followers |  | 741,000 likes; 740,000 followers |  |
| 2017      | Posts                            | Addressed themes   | Posts                            | Addressed themes   |
| June      | 20                               | paedophilia, religious indoctrination, secular state, abortion, rape, current politics, homophobia, transphobia, stereotypes and violence against women, sexism, queer, racism, etc. | 202                              | paedophilia, inversion of stereotypes, sexism, female beauty standards, homophobia, current politics, racism, misandry, etc. (most of which addressed with mockery and irony). |
| July      | 15                               |  | 0                                |  |
| August    | 24                               |  | 53                               |  |
| September | 12                               |  | 197                              |  |
| TOTAL     | 71                               | 452  |                                  |  |

Source: Author’s elaboration.

This study focuses on those posts that received the most reactions (Like, Love, Haha, Wow, Sad, Angry) and comments, as well as those most often shared during the selected months, among those which attracted comments of with a metapragmatic function, particularly in relation to cultural values of masculinity/femininity and linguistic correction.<sup>5</sup> We also selected posts by virtue of their being representative of confrontations of a metapragmatic nature, presenting gender and language ideologies in globalization-related space-time.

### Language ideologies and language use metapragmatics

As stated by Woolard (1998), our definition of language is also a definition of our relations with the sociocultural universe, since it reveals how we comprehend human beings organized as individuals within institutions and interrelationships. Despite the several ways in which the concept of language ideology may be understood, depending on research tradition, the author opts to define it as “representations, whether explicit or implicit, that construe the intersection of language and human beings in a social world” (WOOLARD, 1998, p.4).

<sup>4</sup> Information available on pages investigated herein. Data update on 12/10/2017 at 5:45pm.

<sup>5</sup> Both pages were highly interactive during the months of investigation. Some posts published on “Lady, you are sexist” received up to 10,000 reactions, with more than 800 comments and 30,000 shares. Some posts on “Diaries of a feminist” received over 5,000 reactions, 500 comments and 1,000 shares.

Language ideology, as stated by Woolard (1998), is, therefore, understood in its relationship with a set of shared beliefs and notions about the structure and forms of rationalization used by a given language, articulated with sociocultural aspects. Hence, the author reminds us that the term might be referred to as “linguistic ideology,” “ideology of language,” or “language ideology,” all of which are taken as interchangeable, although a few research traditions consider them to be distinct. The present study, however, draws particularly on the research tradition originating in linguistic anthropology. It focuses on language ideology, with a special focus on the analysis of linguistic structures, as well as social and discursive aspects. In general, such studies are grounded in the concept of metapragmatics, presented through both explicit and implicit comments on the reflection and use of language (SILVERSTEIN, 1979).

In a more recent paper published in Brazil, Moita Lopes (2013, p.20) highlights the discursive nature of language, discussing the concept of linguistic ideology in terms of its relationship with both the sociocultural language models used by speakers and writers of Brazilian Portuguese in routine practices, and Brazilian Portuguese used by scholars in the field of language. For the author, “linguistic ideologies are multiple and come from specific political, cultural and economic perspectives” (MOITA LOPES, 2013, p. 21); they are structured from socio-historically situated and related practices, including the epistemological perspectives of their respective times. Thus, the author argues, linguistic ideologies can respond to the interests of specific social groups and can only be comprehended locally. In this way, it is necessary to consider that “to qualify the way a language is spoken is a political decision, a piece of anthropological data, an ideological product par excellence” (BAGNO, 2013, p. 323).

According to Signorini (2008, p.119), language ideologies are cultural systems of ideas and beliefs that belong to our social practices, and that speakers articulate in order to assess language use from a moral and political standpoint. This is done in such a way that these ideologies end up determining the “inclusion/exclusion of speakers in networks, practices, and institutions.” Thus, they relate to discourses of metapragmatic function; in other words, discourses that, whether directly or indirectly, explicitly or implicitly, eventually “describe, assess, condition and guide” language use in social interaction (SIGNORINI, 2008, p. 117). As stated by the author,

The metapragmatics of language in use within a given space/time is always heterogeneous and dynamic at different levels. This is because it results from a synergy of interconnected factors ranging from reflective property of language itself, combined with speakers’ metalinguistic and metacommunicative abilities, to socio-historical-cultural as well as political-ideological dimension of oral and written practices of language use, and discourse on how language use is/should be within social interaction. (SIGNORINI, 2008, p. 119).

Indeed, according to the author, metapragmatics guides political-ideological disputes, comprising the speakers' assessment of the language being used in interactions. Whether disputes are explicit or not, they are responsible for describing and regulating what is valuable or not, appropriate or not, suitable to be said/written by particular people or groups or not, according to "contextual circumstances" and social networks of power and authority (SIGNORINI, 2008).

Disputes of a political-ideological nature occurring in specifically situated interactions, as dealt with by the author, evince the character of language use as social action (BAUMAN; BRIGGS, 1990). Since language in use is a situated, political and ideological phenomena in terms of space-time, the reflective nature of languages plays a key role in acting with and on language in various day-to-day socio-interactional situations (SIGNORINI, 2008). Subsequently, the forms of language use we deal with particularly are discursive disputes and reflective action, understood as "conflicts" and "metapragmatic attacks."

### *"Conflicts" and "metapragmatic attacks"*

As Briggs (1996) reminds us, the process of differentiating an "Other" from a "Self" is crucial not only to the construction of identities, but also to the creation of communities. On the Facebook activist pages examined herein, these processes are clearly demonstrated in discursive disputes in confrontational contexts, whereby participants are constantly (re)negotiating their social universe, (re)defining and (de)constructing their sexuated and gendered identities in the face of otherness (BIONDO; SIGNORINI, 2015).

Thus, the pages draw attention to what Briggs (1996) named discursive "conflicts." According to the author, it is the process of conflict, or impasse, which matters when presenting social formations: "it is in the context of confrontation – when persons negotiate their social universe and enter into discourse about it – that the character of that system is revealed" (BRIGGS, 1996, p.5). Negotiation of the social universe via ideological confrontations /conflicts within social interaction is also discussed by Briggs (1996) in relation to the character of the social action imprinted on language use. Hence, the author discusses the need to clearly comprehend that language use not only reflects, but also constitutes relations of power and dominance. This is recognized by examining manipulation strategies used by interactees engaged in conflict, whether consciously or unconsciously, for the purpose of serving their own interests, on the one hand, and establishing norms and rules on the other.

An example of the use of sociointeractional dominance strategies is presented by Jacquemet (1994) in the context of trials. As shown by the author, those who take part in confrontations in court usually juggle with language use with a view to strategically keeping face or threatening their opponent. And their action in so doing is embedded in local communal values, codes of honour, and other resources exploited to achieve

the goals of enhancing their claim to credibility in terms of what is being said and reaching a dominant position in the interaction. The individuals involved in such cases draw on sociointeractional resources and cultural values, using social concepts, such as masculinity, to gain respect and manage the impressions elicited to suit their own ends. In general, they do so based on what Jacquemet (1994) calls “metapragmatic attacks,” by means of linguistic performances organized around certain ideologies. By producing their effects on a speaker’s individual consciousness and perception of interpersonal relations, some examples of language use turn out to represent real “ideological exhibition” functioning as “metapragmatic attack” in certain contexts.

Nevertheless, in order for a metalinguistic comment to be considered a metapragmatic attack, it is necessary to take into account its perlocutionary effect within the participation framework at hand. The speaker’s intent alone is not enough; either the recipient or the audience must acknowledge – be it directly expressed in an utterance, or indirectly through affective posturing or dramatic communicative shifts, such as silence, interactional withdrawal or dramatic reaction – that a metapragmatic event has indeed taken place (JACQUEMET, 1994).

In any case, the explicit use of metalanguage, whether acknowledged as a metapragmatic attack or not, is responsible for shaping and structuring the situated context through which social reality is construed. It is through such action that communicative boundaries determining who is “in” and who is “out” (social identity), who “has” and who “hasn’t” (social and class relations), who “can” and who “can’t” (power structure) are established, as clearly emphasized by Jacquemet (1994, p.303).

## **Gender ideologies and performativity**

In a sociocultural context typified by transient and incomplete identities, easily identifiable in marked contact with otherness, that comprise globalization-related space-time, the feminist Facebook communities investigated in the present study represent the plurality of discourse forms, cultures and sociabilities that clash and, in so doing, (re)define identities in this space-time (BIONDO, 2015).

According to Moita Lopes (2010), particularly because the internet broadens the possibilities of making contact with the Other, reducing identities to one particular meaning has become increasingly difficult. They should, therefore, be understood based on a complexity array of positionings, thus undermining essentialist categories and moving towards a “post-identity” movement. This is the direction pursued by post-modern feminist epistemology: undermining the categories of woman, gender and patriarchy, while questioning their constituent notions of power (SARDENBERG, 2002; NARVAZ; KOLLER, 2006, among others).

A post-modern feminist framework, the theory of gender performativity (BUTLER, 2003[1990]; LOURO, 2008; MOITA LOPES, 2007) enables identity to be examined in connection with language. Such framework emerged from Austin’s (1962) speech

act theory, and the its subsequent expansion into theories of performativity, particularly noteworthy in the 1970s/1980s. Understanding language use as social action implies, among other things, valuing indexical over referential or symbolic meaning, with a close focus not only on relations established between the micro and macro contexts of communicative processes, but also on dynamic and situated language use. Therefore, there is room for the investigation of meanings other than those established by Western ethnocentric tradition, thus allowing the hegemonic order of language and society to be questioned (BAUMAN; BRIGGS, 1990).

It is from this perspective that the theory of gender performativity was developed, questioning the “norm of intelligibility of gender” (BUTLER, 2003[1990], p. 39) supported by modern culture, which seeks to establish objective relationships between sex, gender and social behaviour: if one is born a “woman,” one should behave as such, have “feminine” traits and maintain a relationship with a “man.” Such norms are subverted by Butler (2003[1990]) as the author claims that gender identities do not exist outside social action; they are, rather, performatively constructed through action and underpinned by power structures: “There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; identity is performatively constituted by the very ‘expressions’ that are said to be its results” (BUTLER, 2003[1990], p. 48).

Thus, even if some gender identities are considered “illogical” on account of the established norm of a given culture, it is the very existence of said norm that enables the subversion and questioning of its regulations, and the presentation of alternative pathways along which to consider gender identities. Therefore, such identities can only be taken from within the ideological expressions in which they are immersed – whether they are binary and compulsory expressions (male/female; man/woman; heterosexual/homosexual); or whether they transcend the ideological expressions, as a result of being driven by instability, resignification and the questioning of the power formation supporting gender hierarchy.

In any case, gender expressions and constructions are usually guided by language performance, as argued by Butler (2003[1990]). According to the author, whenever we utter “it is a girl” at the birth of a child, we are acting, while naming this child, and initiating a process of “being a girl” within the social world. A set of ideological assumptions about being a woman is thus released as a regulatory force on this child’s existence, based on the norms and pre-established rules inherent to this side of the binary opposition. Conversely, by exploring other possibilities (performances) of being a woman, the ground for subversion and resignification of norms is broadened. From this perspective, gender is always a construction, subject to instabilities, continuously and endlessly being formed throughout one’s life. Gender construction is achieved through several learning and social practice-related experiences, in a “thorough, subtle, never-ending” process (LOURO, 2008, p. 18).



## Metapragmatic confrontations on feminist pages

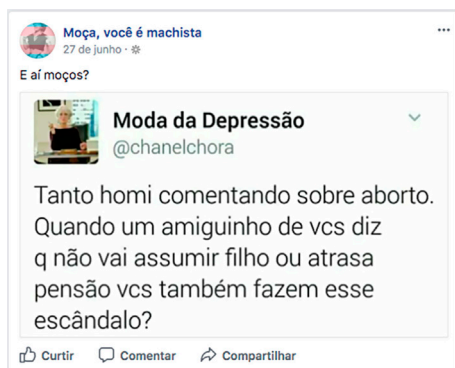
The participants of interactions on the Facebook pages investigated herein usually juggle with two strategies: those serving to assert and stand up for the activist purposes and ideals of the aforementioned pages, and those aimed at questioning and undermining these ideals. The strategies are organized through a number of metadiscursive resources ranging from one participant retrieving and assessing their own previous utterances, to observing and criticizing utterances made by other participants. Ultimately, they account for the interactional dynamics of those spaces which, according to Biondo and Signorini (2015), are characterized by repeated attempts to dispute and negotiate opinions, beliefs and world views, aimed at (de)stabilizing essentialist notions of what is culturally allowed in terms of being man and being woman in our society.

The confrontations reveal that participants use sociocultural codes related to the issues of identity addressed by the pages, drawn from established codes on those pages and communicative strategies linked to the ideal of “credibility,” with a view to achieving three interdependent goals: lending reliability to the arguments presented; undermining other arguments; and reaching a dominant position in the interaction. In order to achieve the aforementioned goals, they resort to several sociocultural devices whilst engaged in linguistic performances organised around the ideological connotations embedded on the pages. In order to analyse these devices and performances within the utterances made on the feminist pages, we were also guided by the concept of indexicality, which allows us to indicate the relationship between these performances and their discursive aspects, whilst also accounting for the historical, social and cultural aspects that both mobilize and provide them with visibility (BLOMMAERT, 2006).

Indexicalization is a theoretical-analytic construct through which semiotic resources can be analysed as indexes, guiding the process of signification, both on a micro and macro contextual scale. Thus, according to Silverstein (2003), linguistic tags/indexes that can be apprehended locally in the enunciation, signal the actions of the participants in it, and are always guided by conventions and projections of a textual, semiotic and social nature. The interpretation of a given discursive situation is, therefore, always contextualized, and it signals (indexes) local and shared cultural aspects. Thus, what we call “indexical fact” relates to the rules of use and social rules indicated by certain signs, since any indexical sign is capable of creating and presupposing specific contexts, pointing to such contexts and the regularizations that characterize them (SILVERSTEIN, 2003).

Two of the devices – socially and culturally apprehended through indexicality – most frequently used by the feminist communities’ participants and which present particular interest to us, are: 1) those relative to social concepts of masculinity/femininity; and 2) those relative to ideals of standard language and linguistic correction. Both are frequently recurring cultural values in the communicative strategies used in these spaces, serving not only to achieve the goal of reliability, but also to undermine opinions and arguments. This is illustrated by the below example, transcribed from “*Moça, você é machista*” (Lady, you are sexist):

**Figure 1** – Post published by “*Moça, você é machista*”  
(Lady, you are sexist) page moderator.



Source: <https://www.facebook.com/MocaVoceEMachista/> Access on: Oct. 14. 2017.

*Lady, you are sexist*

*June, 17<sup>th</sup>*

*Hey, dudes!*

*Depression Fashion*

*So many dudes commenting on abortion. When that little friend of urs says he won't acknowledge his children or won't pay child support, do u freak out, too?*

*Like/Comment/Share*

### Example 1<sup>6</sup> - comments<sup>7</sup>

**Tadeu:** Don't have any friends with kids, none has fallen into the pregnancy trap 😊

**Talita:** Guess why ur friends don't have kids 😊;) )

<sup>6</sup> Based on criteria that excluded similar comments and those not addressing the post's theme, we transcribed some of the 62 comments responding to this post between June 27<sup>th</sup> and October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017. Based on those criteria and also due to lack of space, we also omitted some parts of specific comments and used [...] instead. Participants' names were replaced, and comments transcribed exactly as the original ones.

<sup>7</sup> In the original:

**Tadeu:** Nao tenho nenhum amigo q tem filhos, nenhum caiu no golpe da barriga

**Talita:** Adivinha pq nenhum dos seus amigos têm filhos ;)

**Caren:** Queridinho, Punheta não engravida ninguém. Todo mundo sabe que seus abiguinhos bolsominions são virgens e provavelmente nunca deixarão de ser. E não adianta descarregar a frustração de vocês nas mulheres, eu sei que é mais fácil culpar as feministas, a internet, a sociedade mas não adianta tapar o sol com a peneira: vocês são ridículos e mesmo que conseguissem uma mulher para transar não saberiam o que fazer com ela nos 10 segundos de empolgação. Agora vai fazer o dever de casa antes que mamy te coloque de castigo. Paspalho.

**Denise:** Migo, é porque comer o bumbunzinho dos parça não engravida ninguém.

**Tadeu:** Oi? Kkkkkkkkkm quando a sexualidade entrou em pauta? Que legal, só falar algo pra uma fêmea mimizenta q não concorda, q os comentaristas sobre sexualidade começa kkkkkkk como se gay nao tivesse amigos heteros... melhorem femeas frustradas

**Carla:** Jesus....a humanidade está realmente perdida... golpe da barriga, fêmeas frustada. Deus, me diga por que não criou limite para ignorância e intolerância humana?

**Helena:** Para de falar merda fio. Golpe da barriga? Coitados de vcs, tão inocentes! Nem sabem como se faz um filho, como se evita...

**Caren:** Darling, jacking off doesn't get anyone pregnant. Everyone knows your bolsominion<sup>8</sup> little buddies are virgins and probably will be forever. And it's no use taking your frustration out on women, I know it's easier to blame feminists, the internet, society but it's no use trying to hide the obvious: you are ridiculous and even if you got laid with a woman you wouldn't know what to do with her in your 10-second frenzy. Go do your homework before ur grounded by mommy. Douchebag.

**Denise:** Buddy, that's because fucking ur dudes' little ass doesn't get anyone pregnant.

**Tadeu:** WTF? hahahahaha when was sexuality on the agenda? So cool, start saying something to a whining female who doesn't agree and comments on sexuality begin hahaha. As if gays don't have hetero friends... get a life u cheesed-off females

**Carla:** Jeez... humanity is definitely lost... pregnancy trap, cheesed-off females. God, tell me, why didn't you set limits on human ignorance and intolerance?

**Helena:** Enough being full of crap son. Pregnancy trap? Poor u, so naive! Don't even know how to make a baby, birth control...

**Tadeu:** Whoever doesn't know about birth control is dumb... poor women, never got pregnant to catch a male, eh?! In my class I know about 5... dumb males deserve to get screwed over.

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*Tadeu: Quem nao sabe evitar filho é burro... coitada das mulheres, nunca engravidaram pra segurar macho ne?! So na minha sala conheço umas 5 ... macho burro tem q se fuder msm*

*Denise: BURN!*

*Ana: Uma pessoa de minoria (gay) destilando preconceito. Menino, você precisa aprender a viver! Reseta esse ódio de mulher pq tá bem deplorável.*

*Tadeu: Deplorável quando uma "minoria" acha q todaa tem q swr igual, colocando sempre essa "minoria" como santa imaculada... dai quando tu fala q mulher nao é santa, que existe mulher tão sem vergonha quanto homem, é odio por mulher... santa paciência*

*Ana: Não imaculei nada. Só penso que quem sente na pele o preconceito instaurado socialmente pelo que é simples e fisiologicamente poderia ter mais empatia. Você não falou que mulher não é santa, você taxou as mulheres de serem tão dependentes de macho a ponto de dar "golpe" da barriga. Te contar, Você é muito jovem ainda, dá tempo de ter empatia e também de entender que as mulheres não concentram a sua vida em dar golpe em omi ou fazer deles o centro de suas vidas. Beijas*

*Tadeu: Ana vc sabe que existe casos de mulher engravidar pra segurar macho, e não são poucos... como eu disse na minha sala são 5... dois dos casos sao bem proximos a mim, mas o que ves gostam de fazer é colocar a mulher como santa e o homem o malvadao... igual os próprios gays, gays santos e heteros malvadao, gay provoca ate levar uma coça, pra depois gritar homofobia... exiate sim motivação diferente pra violência em gays e mulheres... mas eles participar dessa "minoria" não faz eles santos. Empatia eu tenho com a dona maria q apanhou do marido, da melissa que está na prostituição por falta de oportunidade, pq uma mulher trans na empresa, estraga a empresa, para o próprio feminismo que se fala tanto de empatia, ridicularizar falando q é um homem maquiado e vai chamar ela por nome social sim...*

*Vânia: Golpe da barriga é ótimo kakakaa ta bom criança. Você já provou que é um dos homens citados. Toma aqui seu biscoitinho*

*Ana: Minha Deusa, vai aprender a escrever suas opiniões e depois você volta. Nem entendi nada do que você disse acima. Como disse a moça, pega teu biscoitinho de macho, um leite quente e vai nanar criança.*

*Tadeu: Mimimi vai aprender a escrever kkkk alem de td é sinica kkkkkkk*

*Ana: Cínica 🤔😏*

*Tadeu: Como vc preferir*

*Anita: Tô vendo o golpe da barriga onde o pai do bebê mora com os pais, não tem ensino médio, não tem emprego e não tem onde cair morto... puta golpe da barriga esse!!! Kkkkkk*

*Tadeu: O golpe da barriga é so algo financeiro? Kkkkkkkkk*

*Ivo: Vcs são todos muito mal educados viu, que discussão horrível de ler...*

*Tadeu: Ivo a minha educação depende da sua educação...*

<sup>8</sup> Reference to a Brazilian politician known countrywide for his nationalist and conservative ideas. He's supportive of a military dictatorship regime and a fierce critic of the left party (Jair Bolsonaro); also reference to the American animation (Minions).

**Denise:** BURN!

**Ana:** Someone from a minority group (gay) oozing prejudice. Hey boy, you gotta make something of your life! Reset this hatred of women 'cause it's really pathetic.

**Tadeu:** Pathetic is when a “minority group” thinks everyone needs to be equal, always taking this “minority” as holy and immaculate... then when ya say women ain't saints and that some women are as perverted as men, it's hatred for women...God give me patience

**Ana:** I haven't said a word about being immaculate. I just think those who deeply experience socially established prejudice because of something simple and physiological could have more empathy. You didn't say women aren't saints, you labelled women as being so male-dependent to the point of making them fall into a pregnancy trap. I'll tell you what, you are a baby, you still have time to develop empathy and understand that women don't focus their lives on trapping dudes or setting their lives around them. XOXO

**Tadeu:** Ana u know there are cases of women getting pregnant to catch men, and the numbers are not low... as I said in my class there are 5... two people are close to me, but what you like doing is putting women on a pedestal and making men the bad guys... just like gays, gays are saints and heteros are bad boys, gays tease till they get beat and then they yell homophobia... sure, the motivation for violence against gays and women is different... but being part of this “minority group” doesn't make them saints. I have empathy for maria who is beaten by her husband, melissa who is a prostitute because she doesn't have opportunity in life, cause a transgender woman ruins a company, for feminism, that talks so much about empathy, to mock her and say she's a man with makeup and will call her by her social name for sure...

**Vânia:** Pregnancy trap is great hahahaha yeah, right, kiddo. You've proven you're one of those men. Have a nice little cookie.

**Ana:** My Goddess, go learn how to write your opinion and then come back. I don't get any of what you wrote. As the girl over there said, get your man's little cookie, some warm milk and go to sleep, u baby.

**Tadeu:** Boo-hoo go learn how to write hahaha besides, she's synical hahahaha

**Ana:** It's cynical 🙄🙄

**Tadeu:** Whatever 😊

**Anita:** I can see the baby daddy's pregnancy trap – living with his parents, hasn't finished school, has no job and is completely broke...what a pregnancy trap!!! hahahaha 🙄

**Tadeu:** Pregnancy trap is all about money? hahahahaha

**Ivo:** Ur all so rude, what a terrible discussion to read...

**Tadeu:** Ivo my manners are determined by yours...

In the aforementioned example, the post shared by the page moderator in June 2017 triggered discussion on the theme of abortion, addressing, with mockery, those men who expressed an opposing opinion on the page. Mockery can be inferred from the non-standard lexical choice *HOMI* (variant *OMI*), translated into English as “dude,” which

is often used in online communities to refer to sexist, immature men. Immaturity is a social value, of the order of indexicality, referred to frequently by participants. This can be seen in the discussion following the use of “*OMI*,” as shown in the aforementioned comments, in which Caren, Denise, Ana and Vânia use linguistic resources, such as diminutive words (“little buddies”, “little ass”, “little cookie”), as well as terms that refer to a childhood-related semantic field (“warm milk”, “little friend”, “baby”, “child”, “mommy”, and “Bolsominion”) to undermine the arguments made by Tadeu, who is taken as an example of “*OMI*” (“You’ve proven you’re one of those men”) and to whom most comments are addressed – men who oppose the ideas supported by the community, in general, by women, and who are taken as sexist.

It is Tadeu who triggers the discursive conflict by posting his first comment, which opposes the ideas of the community, and in which he uses a rather popular expression for insulting women accused of getting pregnant to “trap men” – in this case, to “catch” men (“Don’t have any friends with kids, none has fallen into the pregnancy trap”). He continues doing so at different points during discussion, while using other expressions with similar meaning, indexing sexist values that refer to a patriarchal culture (“catch a male”; “women ain’t saints”, “saints and immaculate”; “dumb males”) or to general accusations made against feminist women in general (“whining female”; “cheesed-off females”).

As a reaction to Tadeu’s comments, Talita, Caren, Denise, Helena, Carla, Denise, Ana and Vânia resort to several linguistic and interactional resources in an attempt to discredit the “*OMI*” who caused the conflict by undermining the argument in the post. Besides using diminutive words, the following resources have called our attention: Carla resorting to indexicality values of ignorance and human intolerance (“God, tell me, why didn’t you set limits on human ignorance and intolerance?”); the reversal of responsibilities conventionally assigned to women in patriarchal culture, as seen on the post published by the moderator, which brings the issue of men’s co-responsibility for children to the fore (“When that little friend of urs says he won’t acknowledge his children or pay child support, do you freak out then, too?”); the reference to the concept of misogyny by Ana (“Reset this hatred for women, ‘cause it’s really pathetic”).

The use of diminutive words and, in turn, the value of immaturity, is associated with another indexical value frequently used in the feminist communities under investigation: masculinity. In the example transcribed from the community “*Moça, você é machista*” (Lady, you are sexist), the entire discussion is framed in the form of an “attack” on Tadeu’s and his “little friends”’ masculinity, not only through the use of diminutive words, but also by questioning their sexual “performance,” as demonstrated by Caren (“your bolsominion little buddies are virgins and probably will be forever; and even if you got laid with a woman you wouldn’t know what to do with her in your 10-second frenzy”) and, particularly, through the use of marked-gender forms, as done so by Ana, when addressing Tadeu (“My Goddess”). The latter example, which is of particular interest to us in this study, clearly transgresses a rule in the Portuguese language – which itself reveals gender-related linguistic and social normativity. In doing so, Ana’s

comment functions as “metapragmatic attack,” thus alluding to Tadeu’s masculinity and operating as an affront to conservative religions, which usually represent God as a male figure. Conventionally, the unmarked grammatical gender is a morphological linguistic index commonly used to refer to male subjects, while the terminally-defined gender is conventionally used to refer to female subjects. In violating this rule, one draws attention to the indexed value of femininity traditionally pejoratively related to homosexuals and to Christian value given to the male figure.

Metapragmatic attack is also triggered by Ana’s comment aimed at Tadeu, not only when addressing him using a feminine form, but through her explicit use of another indexicality value with a view to questioning and undermining her interlocutor’s arguments: linguistic normalization/correction. In this case, the fact that Ana relates Tadeu’s ability to write his opinions coherently with his right to take part in the discussion/community (“go learn how to write your opinion and then you come back”), as well as her personal evaluation of Tadeu’s writing based on her own ability to understand it (“I don’t get any of what you wrote”) have called our attention. At this point, it is clear that linguistic ideologies of correctness and purity of language, traditionally schooled, are related to the gender ideologies in the communities investigated, being used to suggest that those who fail to dominate in the hegemonic order of linguistic correction, also, automatically, fail to dominate when it comes to ideological issues and knowledge about gender and sexuality.

The metapragmatic attacks are further confirmed in the conversation by the addressee himself, when Tadeu retrieves Ana’s comment while mocking and accusing her of being cynical (“Boo-hoo go learn how to write hahaha besides, she’s synical hahahaha”). Nevertheless, shortly afterwards, Ana once again corrects Tadeu’s writing by resorting to a graphocentrism-related/orthographic regulation. She does so with a view to showing the word used by Tadeu to offend her should be spelled, in the Portuguese language, with a “C” and an acute accent on the “I” (in Portuguese, “*Cínica*”). She does so with mockery, as inferred from the use of the winking emoticon.

Hereafter, discussion is undermined and followed by only four to five short comments without strong argumentation or attacks. It then comes to an end, as revealed by the comments transcribed above. Similarly to several other examples taken from interactions happening in the investigated communities, the manner by which events unfold is rather common: metapragmatic attacks undermine discussion, and although there are attempts to keep it on firm ground by means of authority discourse e.g. space and time examples related to what is understood to be real and “reliable”, these attempts usually trigger a more passionate tone e.g. vulgar language, mockery, poor argumentation, and the interactional withdrawal of interlocutors. This is blindingly obvious on the feminist pages when attacks explicitly refer to the indexicality values of linguistic correction and normalization. Generally speaking, the latter are also attempts to determine who has and who doesn’t have the “right” to take part in interactions happening in that globalization-related space-time.

Curiously, in these cases, the use of the linguistic ideology of correction and normalization is usually mobilized indexically by feminists and defenders of community values. In the same way, they are the participants who usually make metapragmatic attacks - albeit almost always in defence, responding to the initiation of discursive conflict by those who position themselves in opposition of feminist ideals. Contrary to the very dynamics of plurality that guide and constitute the struggle for the subversion of hegemonic notions of gender in activist spaces, language is used by feminists in a totalitarian and homogeneous way, referring to a linguistic ideology based on normative and scholarly values. It seems to us, therefore, that the defence of plurality and resistance to the established hegemonic order, in these spaces, does not apply to language.

**Figure 2** – Post published by the “*Diários de uma feminista*” (Diaries of a feminist) moderator.



Source: <https://www.facebook.com/diariosdeumafeminista/>. Accessed on: Oct. 14. 2017.

*Diaries of a feminist*

September, 19<sup>th</sup>

**“IF YOU’RE A FEMINIST, THEN PAY THE RESTAURANT BILL”**

*I pay mine/my guests’, but before that I say:*

**YOU SHOULD PAY IT WITH THE 30% HIGHER SALARY YOU GET JUST FOR BEING A DUDE.**

*Like/Comment/Share*

## Example 2<sup>9</sup> - comments<sup>10</sup>

**Valmir:** 30%?????? Source: *carta capital, quebrando o tabu*<sup>11</sup> blablabla...

**Beatriz:** Who do you think you are, lady, to depreciate the work of *carta capital*'s employees?

**Valmir:** It's "mister," Beatriz. I know u are all confused with your own sexuality and how you should handle gender, with your leftist mental illnesses, but the photo shows I'm a man. The "work" done by *Carta Capital* is to lick and polish Lula's balls and implement the entire agenda of Brazil's left party. I'm not devaluing anything, they do their job quite well, creating misinformation, lying, defaming people, spreading sewer culture.

<sup>9</sup> Based on the same selection criteria applied in example 1, we transcribed some of the 32 comments made in response to the post between September, 19<sup>th</sup> and September 20<sup>th</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> **Valmir:** 30%?????? Fonte: *carta capital, quebrando o tabu, blablabla...*

**Beatriz:** Quem é a senhoriça pra desmerecer o trabalho dos funcionários da carta capital?

**Valmir:** É "senhor", Beatriz. Eu sei q vcs são confusos com a própria sexualidade e como devem tratar os gêneros, com suas doenças mentais de esquerda, mas pela foto percebe-se que sou homem. O "trabalho" da Carta Capital é lamber e polir o saco do Lula e promover toda agenda da esquerda no Brasil. Não estou desmerecendo, eles fazem o trabalho muito bem, criando desinformação, mentindo, caluniando pessoas, espalhando cultura de esgoto.

**Beatriz:** E a senhora pode provar essa acusação sobre eles?

**Valmir:** Beatriz, não enquanto vc não aprender a ter algum respeito. Vcs exigem respeito, mas na hora de se dirigir a uma pessoa ficam com essa porrinha... se falar comigo direito, falo com vc direito. Se continuar a falar com respeito, vá à merda.

**Beatriz:** Enquanto vc for escrota eu vou debochar da sua cara 🙄💔 Além do seu argumento vir apenas do fato de não concordarem com a sua visão política, vc não é absolutamente ngm com intelecto e conhecimento o suficiente pra falar assim de alguém que estudou pra fazer o que faz. Se manque, imunda.

**Valmir:** Beatriz, ok, eu vou dar a sua resposta, mesmo vc sendo uma escrota do caralho e faltando com respeito, só pq é divertido fazer vcs passarem vergonha. Todo mundo sabe que a porra da Carta Capital é esquerdista. Quer falar de intelecto? <https://oglobo.globo.com/.../odebrecht-emprestou-verba...>

**Valmir:** Folha tb noticiou, seu animal. <http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/.../1875168-lula-e-mantega...>

**Beatriz:** Entao pq a carta capital é de esquerda eles tem menos créditos que a palavra de um professor de piano? ATA LKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKKK

**Beatriz:** Como provar que a carta capital nao tem credibilidade: Pega uma notícia dizendo que em 2007 um político ajudou financeiramente.

**Valmir:** Foi no meu perfil pessoal fuçar minha vida???? huahuahuhua vc é mais vulgar e escrota do que esperava! Eu não sou o assunto, retardada! Eu não tenho site, não promovo porra nenhuma! Foda-se se sou professor de piano, esse não é o argumento. Vc reclamou que queria que eu provasse a acusação, eu dou a prova e vc muda o argumento pra quem tem mais crédito!!!! Caralho, é de fuder a lógica heim!!!! Quem recebe propina NÃO TEM CRÉDITO, sua imoral cretina, não interessa minha vida particular, eu não perguntei a sua, quero q vc se foda, se for professora ou prostituta, caguei. Queria a prova, tá aí.

**Beatriz:** Muito prostituta sim ❤️ Na vdd vc nn provou absolutamente nd. E o que ser vulgar tem a ver com abrir uma ft de perfil e ler comentários?

**Valmir:** Beatriz "um político"?? Vc é analfabeta ou só cretina mesmo? Eu disse q a revista puxa saco do Lula e tem delação mostrando que Lula deu dinheiro. Não é "um político" qualquer, vc pode fingir demência, mas não é um político qualquer. Bom, já dei atenção demais pra vc. Estava sendo babaca, e mesmo assim respondi, vc conseguiu ser mais babaca e mudou o argumento por pura diarréia mental.

**Beatriz:** O dia que vc conseguir provar realmente que os funcionários da carta capital dão notícias falsas vc vai poder TENTAR debater. E pq ficou tão putinha? Tá infeliz com a sua vizinha de professor?

**Beatriz:** Ue gente, Lula não é político não? Que estranho

**Valmir:** Tem tudo a ver. O debate só é debate no campo das ideias. Qd vc começa a fuçar a vida das pessoas pra ter argumento, vc é um animal baixo, vulgar, e burro que não tem capacidade de argumentar sobre o assunto, acha q tem q vencer pela depreciação pessoal. Enfim. A prova tá aí. Não gostou, enfia o dedo e se rasga. Não tenho mais o q responder pra vc. Adios.

**Beatriz:** "Diarréia mental" BERRO

Como uma pessoa tão tapada consegue ensinar algo a alguém? KKKKKKKKKKKKKKKL

**Beatriz:** Ta ofendido pq professor não tem a capacidade de se meter em assunto de jornalista?

**Beatriz:** O mais engraçado é vc falar que eu sou vulgar por ir olhar seu perfil mas veio numa Page feminista só pra causar briga.

**Beatriz:** Professor tao bom que não tem nd melhor pra fazer numa manhã de quarta feira além de brigar no facebook (?)

<sup>11</sup> Brazilian magazines known for having ideals associated with the left party.



**Beatriz:** Can you, lady, prove this accusation against them?

**Valmir:** Beatriz, not while u insist in not learning to have some respect. U demand respect, but whenever you address someone you come with this shit... have manners when talking to me, and I'll have manners talking to u. If you continue to disrespect me, go fuck yourself.

**Beatriz:** While u go on being a cunt I'll mock you 🍑💔 Besides that your argument only results from the fact that people disagree with your political view, u have absolutely no intellect or knowledge to speak like that about someone who has studied to do what s/he does. Cut it out, you filthy xxx.

**Valmir:** Beatriz, ok, I'll give you your answer, even with u being a stupid cunt and lacking respect, just 'cause it's fun to make u feel embarrassed. Everyone knows fucking *Carta Capital* is leftist. Want intellect? <https://oglobo.globo.com/.../odebrecht-emprestou-verba...>

**Valmir:** Also news on *Folha*, you stupid animal. <http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/.../1875168-lula-e-mantega...>

**Beatriz:** So just 'cause *carta capital* is leftist it means they have less credit than the word of a piano teacher? WTF LOLOLOLOLOLOLOL

**Beatriz:** How to prove *carta capital* has no credibility: Get a piece of news saying in 2007 a politician supported it financially.

**Valmir:** Went through my personal profile to snoop on my life???? hahahahahahaha u are a more vulgar and stupid cunt than I thought! I'm not the subject here, you retard! I don't have a website, don't promote a fucking thing! Fuck it if I'm a piano teacher, that's not the argument. U complained you wanted me to prove the accusation, I give you proof and u change the argument to who is the one with more credibility!!! Fuck! Fuck logic, eh!!!! Who takes bribes HAS NO CREDIBILITY, u immoral cunt, my private life is none of your business, I didn't ask about yours, go fuck urself, if you're a teacher or a whore, don't give a damn. Want proof? There it is.

**Beatriz:** Big whore, yes ❤️💔 Actually, u proved absolutely nothing. How does vulgar have anything to do with opening a pic and reading comments?

**Valmir:** Beatriz "any politician"?? Are u illiterate or just a cunt? I said the magazine is Lula's ass kisser and there are accusations showing Lula gave it money. It is not "any politician," u can't pretend having dementia, but it's not any politician. Well, I've given u too much of my time. You were being a douchebag, and even so I replied, u managed to be even worse and switched the argument to pure mental diarrhoea.

**Beatriz:** That day u prove *carta capital's* employees publish false news u might TRY discussing something. And why were u so annoyed, little whore? Unhappy being a teacher?

**Beatriz:** What? Lula isn't a politician? Weird

**Valmir:** It all makes sense. A debate is only a debate in the non-material world of ideas. When u begin snooping on somebody else's life to have an argument, u are a low, vulgar, stupid animal with no ability to reason about a subject, u think u have to win by insulting other people. Anyway. Proof is right there. Don't like it, stick your finger in your ass. I have nothing else to say to u. Adios.

**Beatriz:** "Mental diarrhoea" SCREAM

How come someone so dumb can teach anything to anyone? HAHAHAHAHAHAAAA

**Beatriz:** Were u insulted 'cause a teacher has no ability to snoop in a journalist's affairs?

**Beatriz:** The funniest thing is that u said I'm vulgar for taking a look at your profile but you came to a feminist Page just to argue.

**Beatriz:** Such a good a teacher that you have nothing else to do on a Wednesday morning besides go on facebook to argue (?)

Example 2 shows confrontation being established between two participants only: Valmir and Beatriz. Differently from example 1, in this case, the “metapragmatic attack” happens right at the beginning of interaction, when Beatriz reacts to Valmir's comment. The latter provokes a discursive conflict when doubting the credibility of information presented by the community moderator (“30%????? Source: *carta capital, quebrando o tabu*, blablabla...”). Beatriz's reaction happens via a metapragmatic attack when she brings the indexicality value of masculinity/femininity into the debate, thus violating the Portuguese grammatical rule requiring unmarked gender for the male gender while intentionally using marked gender (normatively established for female gender) to address Valmir (“Who do you think you are, lady”). This is done so with a view to attacking his masculinity and undermining his arguments, as usually occurs in this space-time.

Attack is immediately confirmed by Valmir's reaction, which not only explicitly corrects Beatriz (“It's “mister,” Beatriz”), but also uses the fact that she violated a grammatical-linguistic gender rule to make connections between subversion and the socially accepted norm of gender identity/sexuality (“I know u are all confused with your own sexuality and how you should handle gender”). At this point, gender ideologies and linguistic ideologies are explicitly related, as Valmir, just as Beatriz, subverts the linguistic norm established for the grammatical gender, by using the feminine ending to refer to a subject considered as the male gender, also subverting the traditionally established norm of gender and sexuality – which is well established and does not allow “confusion” in the forms used to “treat genders”. The participant seeks to reaffirm his masculinity and his position against these subversions (“but from the photo you can see that I am a man”). Beatriz, in turn, remains in her position and continues to address Valmir with the use of the marked gender, which in Brazilian Portuguese is highlighted not only with female-oriented lexical choices, but also with gender inflection as in “*senhora*”, “*escrota*”, “*imunda*”, “*putinha*”, with “-a” signaling the feminine gender.

Valmir makes a connection between subversion and a left-wing political position (“with your leftist mental illnesses”) – which is also rather common in the communities investigated herein, in which feminist positions are associated with left-wing political ideology. This ideology, moreover, seems to bother Valmir even more than metapragmatic attacks. So much so that, when the feminist participant establishes another metapragmatic attack, related to the linguistic and knowledge standards intellectually “accepted” by the educational social order (standards even feminists tend to align themselves with, as we have shown), he does not reverse the attack related to these standards, but

responds only in terms of party political ideology. This is what happens when Beatriz says that he did not “study” and, therefore, would not have the right to position himself and give his opinion on the subjects under discussion (“u have absolutely no intellect or knowledge to speak like that about someone who has studied to do what s/he does”); and this is ignored by Valmir, who again frames the discussion in terms of party ideologies (“Everyone knows fucking *Carta Capital* is leftist”). It seems to us, therefore, that even for those who oppose the ideals defended in the community, there is greater invisibility when the question relates to the attack to the ideals of knowledge/education traditionally established..

Particularly relevant in this example is the metapragmatic attack occurring right at the beginning of the confrontation, as a reaction to the discursive conflict triggered by Valmir, which undermines the rest of the interaction. The latter is then ultimately structured by the use of swear words both by Valmir (“go fuck yourself”; “stupid cunt”; “retard”; “immoral cunt”, etc.) and Beatriz (“cunt”; “filthy”; “little whore”, etc). Due to having his masculinity attacked, Valmir feels such an attack, making it clear and feeling upset, and therefore acting passionately during the interaction while seeking to restore interactional power. In order to do so, he resorts to sources he believes to be more reliable than that presented by the moderator (“<https://oglobo.globo.com/.../odebrecht-emprestou-verba...>”; “Also news on Folha newspaper you stupid animal” <http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/.../1875168-lula-e-mantega...>”) with the ultimate goal of using authority discourse and aligning himself with a party political ideology contrary to the one he refers to as “mentally ill” (“with your leftist mental illnesses”) - that is, the advocates of gender plurality.

At this point, once again, we see relationships between ideological issues linked to gender and other hegemonic orders established in our society. This is because, in saying that left-wing feminists are confused about “their own sexuality” and with the forms used to “treat genders” with their “mental illnesses”, the participant mobilizes values of the indexicality order of homosexuality or any subversion of the traditional norm of the gender as being a disease. As we know, this value is very widely promoted today by reactionary forces strongly opposed to gender scholars and all those who take gender to be flexible, adopting a performative perspective.

Resorting to such discourse, however, is not enough to allow Valmir to restore interactional power. Thus, discussion remains undermined in terms of arguments until the end, when the participant Valmir interactively leaves the discussion (“*Adios*”). As in example 1, and in several others taken from the communities investigated herein, metapragmatic attacks usually strengthen discursive conflicts, undermine arguments, increase the likelihood of resorting to authority discourse and, frequently, trigger a passionate tone marked by the use of many pejorative terms and participants’ withdrawal from interaction.

It seems to us that these acts reveal a number of established relationships in the activist communities investigated, between language ideologies and gender-identity and sexuality ideologies, especially in relation to: the approximation gender subversion

and language subversion; ignorance on a linguistic (and intellectual) level and about gender-related issues; and finally, contradictions between resistance against gender hegemonies and the reinforcement of hegemonic structures in language.

## **Final considerations**

In the present study, we discussed two of the many confrontations taking place in the gender-activism-related Facebook communities under investigation since 2013, taking a virtual ethnographic approach. Based on a new issue subject to investigation since late 2015, we focused on the metapragmatic effect of some of the comments made by participants in those communities. In doing so, we revealed language ideologies that are grounded in the description and assessment of language use, and aimed at conditioning and guiding these uses, as argued by Signorini (2008).

As shown in the examples analysed herein, participants juggle extensively with language, not only for the purpose of standing up for the ideals proclaimed by these activist pages, but also of undermining them. Importantly, this is achieved through the use of several sociolinguistic and metadiscursive resources, particularly by retrieving previous utterances in order to question and strengthen them, or to change the pathway of interaction according to specific interests.

The cases assessed herein are representative of the dynamics established in most confrontations and conflicts occurring on the aforementioned feminist pages. In other words, dynamics structured according to socioculturally determined codes and behaviour, linguistic performances grounded particularly in ideological devices relative to the ideals of masculinity/femininity, and views on the appropriateness/inappropriateness of language use in our society.

In being co-articulated in those modalities of space-time – which afford significant visibility to notions of power that encompass the setting up of identities, social classes and dominance structures – hegemonies of gender/sexuality as well as linguistic hegemonies identified in the communities herein respond to the sociointeractional goals of (dis)crediting arguments, keeping face and (re)orienting interactions. In view of those goals, comments not only evoke a school-related cultural model of language use, but also establish a relationship between this model and the ability of individuals to understand issues of gender and sexuality. Those are the models that end up determining who is and who is not authorized, and how, to take part in discussions held on the pages, depending on identity and language-related criteria grounded in social structures of power.

BIONDO, F. Ideologias de gênero e ideologias de língua(gem) em páginas feministas do Facebook. *Alfa*, São Paulo, v. 63, n.2, p.303-325, 2019.

- *RESUMO: O trabalho tematiza a questão das relações entre ideologias de gênero e ideologias de língua(gem), de modo a problematizar a hipótese de convergências entre hegemonias linguísticas e a ordem hegemônica de gênero, fixada pela tradição etnocêntrica ocidental. A partir de exemplos de duas comunidades ativistas feministas da rede social Facebook, investigadas desde 2013 em um estudo etnográfico virtual, o trabalho focaliza a função metapragmática exercida por comentários de participantes dessas comunidades, orientando-se pela compreensão da linguagem como ação social (BAUMAN e BRIGGS, 1990), pelos conceitos de “language ideology” (WOOLARD, 1998), de “conflito discursivo” (BRIGGS, 1996) e de “ataque metapragmático” (JACQUEMET, 1994) e pela apreensão dos processos de construção de identidades em suas relações com as disputas de poder e controle na interação e no mundo social (SIGNORINI, 1998; MOITA LOPES, 2010). Nesses espaços-tempos, as hegemonias de gênero/sexualidade e as hegemonias linguísticas se atravessam mutuamente, atendendo aos propósitos de (des)credibilização de argumentos, (não) preservação da face e (re)orientação das interações. Isso ocorre sobretudo nas tentativas de normatização do uso da língua(gem), que invocam um modelo cultural escolarizado e estabelecem relação entre esse modelo e a capacidade dos sujeitos de compreensão das questões em discussão, sobre gênero e sexualidade.*
- *PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Ideologias de gênero. Ideologias de linguagem. Ataque metapragmático. Conflito discursivo. Facebook.*

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