



# Literacies in Times of Crisis: A Trioethnography on Affective and Transgressive Practices

## *Letramentos em Tempos de Crise: Uma Trioetnografia de Afetos e Práticas Transgressivas*

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**ABSTRACT:** Utilizing duoethnography (NORRIS; SAWYER, 2012), the authors explore challenges and opportunities for critical language teaching in times of crisis. Following a brief introduction of research methodology, the authors’ trioethnography dialogically examines three topical areas of particular concern in Brazil and Canada: 1. The potency of affect and its relevance for applied linguistics and language teacher education; 2. The re-emergence of “literacy wars” in education, with attention to their ideological and epistemological interconnections to social power relations; 3. Emerging implications for language and literacy pedagogies in which the authors share classroom experiences and transgressive strategies informed by plurilingual and affective insights. The complexity and variety of settings discussed in this final section help promote the possibilities for critical research and teaching in these difficult and dangerous times.

**KEYWORDS:** language education; critical literacies and pedagogies; affect; duoethnography.

**RESUMO:** Utilizando a duoetnografia (NORRIS; SAWYER, 2012), os autores exploram desafios e oportunidades para o ensino crítico de línguas em tempos de crise. Após uma breve introdução à metodologia de pesquisa, a trioetnografia utilizada pelos autores examina dialogicamente três áreas temáticas de particular interesse no Brasil e no Canadá: 1. A potência do afeto e sua relevância para a linguística aplicada e a formação de professores de línguas; 2. O ressurgimento das “guerras de letramentos” na educação, no que diz respeito às suas interconexões ideológicas e epistemológicas com as relações sociais de poder; 3. Implicações emergentes para práticas de ensino de língua e de letramentos, por meio das quais os autores compartilham experiências de sala de aula e estratégias transgressivas informadas por abordagens plurilíngues e afetivas. A complexidade e variedade de aspectos discutidos neste artigo ajudam a promover as possibilidades de pesquisa e ensino críticos nestes tempos difíceis e perigosos.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** educação linguística; letramentos e pedagogias críticas; afeto; duoetnografia.

## 1 Introduction

The theme of this special issue of RBLA is on language education in times of crisis, and it invites, challenges, perhaps even demands of us that we question our conventional ways of understanding and responding to events within and beyond our classrooms and research settings. Our response is in the form of a trioethnography, which is based on duoethnographic research principles (NORRIS; SAWYER, 2012; BREAUULT, 2016). We believe that duoethnography offers a principled research methodology with which to approach the transgressive goals we have set for ourselves as language educators and researchers. Similar to other more experiential and reflexive modes of inquiry in applied linguistics and language teacher education such as narrative inquiry (BARKHUIZEN, 2017) and autoethnography (YAZAN; CANAGARAJAH; JAIN, 2020), the personalized and conversational style of this type of writing potentially resonates and inspires in ways unrealized by more abstract forms of scholarly writing. Arguably, the intimacy and situatedness of such research offers a more practitioner-friendly pathway towards recognition of the effects of discourses and ideologies on the construction of our subjectivity and our (un)common sense as citizens and teachers, even at the level of the unconscious and the latent desire that motivates us (cf. LACAN, 1977, *apud* MOTHA; LIN, 2013). Still, there are limits to what we can know and discover about ourselves irrespective of our best intentions. Without other voices differently positioned and dialogically

engaged, a close and sustained reading of oneself can become too insular and professionally paralyzing, especially when informed by post-structural thought and the kinds of epistemic skepticism and hyper-reflexivity it can engender (e.g. FERRAZ; MORGAN, 2019; NORTON; MORGAN, 2020).

A duoethnographic approach, as Norris and Sawyer (2012) state, comes to the problem from a different vantage point. In comparison to autoethnography, “duoethnography locates the researcher differently. It is ultimately not about the self. [...] duoethnographers are the sites of the research, not the topics” (p. 13). The juxtaposition and counterposing of voices and experiences is a key methodological strategy, a form of writing that “disrupts the implicit structural metanarrative of a solitary writer” (p. 16). Whereas most scholarly writing predictably claims original spaces and ultimate truths, “duoethnographies don’t end with conclusions. They continue to be written by those who read them” (p. 21).

These key aspects of duoethnography are notably well suited for the crises we now face. An example to consider is the COVID-19 pandemic and the growing awareness of its devastating links to race, gender, poverty, and the capacities and (in)competencies of local and national governments. Research and action that ignores this intersectionality and plurality of impact is unlikely to help the most vulnerable in society. Another example, close to home for our work, is the rise of authoritarian governments and their imposition of language policies and curricula designed to suppress social justice work in schools. Both the conditions of suppression and the opportunities to mitigate and/or resist their imposition are also highly localized and may not be easily perceived by those too close and habituated to their development. As Norris and Sawyer (2012) note, “duoethnographers make explicit how different people experience the same phenomenon differently (p. 17). An “outsider’s” perspective, juxtaposed to amplify tensions and differences, may suggest localized perspectives and strategies previously not considered.

Certainly, there are challenges in this type of inquiry, as we have experienced, particularly in the non-linear, recursive nature of dialogue and the need to revisit and reconsider one’s identity-informed perspectives as they evolve or as they follow unexpected trajectories. Each of us forms our own theoretical and pedagogical articulations, alignments or assemblages in our understanding of Norris and Sawyer’s work (see also BREAULT, 2016). Freire’s dialogue and *conscientização* (critical consciousness) are especially

prevalent, as are the heteroglossia and addressivity of Bakhtin (1986; 1993), the rhizomatic thinking of Deleuze and Guattari (1987), as well as the ethics of Levinas – in that a good duoethnography requires careful and close listening and the difficult suspension of one’s pre-existing categories of belief and assessment. It helps that we have been down this research road before, having negotiated numerous collaborative and (trans)national projects and publications (e.g., ROCHA; MACIEL; MORGAN, 2017) including an earlier trioethnography (MORGAN; MARTIN; MACIEL, 2019) and polyethnography (BRUZ; MOURA; MACIEL; MARTIN; MORGAN, 2021). We invite readers to appraise and interrogate our efforts below – and to continue to write their own “conclusions” for these difficult times.

A brief note to readers: In the sections below, there are two different types of texts. Following duoethnographic representational practices, individual participants will be identified in bold font and their conversational moves differentiated from dialogue partners. In contrast, collective statements, such as sectional introductions and conclusions, will be marked in declarative voice and an alternative font. We should note that the appearance of individual authorship is slightly misleading. Many of the trioethnographic passages in this paper have been collaboratively discussed and (re)constructed with the affordances of new digital tools such as Zoom teleconferencing and Google docs.

## 2 The Potency/*Potência* of Affect

*In this section, the authors take up the challenges of duoethnography and examine the power of affect to transform conventional practices in applied linguistics and language teacher education.*

**Brian Morgan:** Let’s start with a description of methodological purpose in respect to language and literacies in times of crisis. Following Norris and Sawyer (2012), our task as duoethnographers is to “encourage readers, through example, to disrupt their individually constructed metanarratives of themselves and their world and make counterpunctual reading the norm” (p. 17). They argue that this self-disruption is ultimately outward-looking and transgressive: “Duoethnographers are the sites of studies about beauty, power and privilege, [...] *the act of having dangerous conversations* (p. 13, emphasis mine).” The theme of this special issue is indeed

about literacies and crises and how we talk about them and experience them as researchers who have often collaborated in transnational ways. Perhaps one of the most dangerous conversations we could have involves our own biases about language as well as its centrality in all aspects of our work. It's a linguacentric worldview with many limitations and blind spots, one of which would be the heretofore lack of attention to affect in the socio-semiotic construction and/or representation of crises in on-line/off-line public domains. What do you think?

**Ruberval Maciel:** A linguacentric worldview is not just a problem for applied linguists and language educators. It's worth mentioning here that critical theory since the mid to late 20th Century has been dominated by a concern about language. In this sense, Ott (2017, p. 9) calls attention to the fact that the linguistic turn in philosophy relied on the "recognition that the structures of language delimit what can be said and, by extension, what can be thought". Likewise, this linguistic turn proposes that language does not mirror reality but instead shapes our understanding of what is real. Moreover, literary and cultural studies have also focused on universal textualism as one could observe in the famous quotation – "there is nothing outside the text" (DERRIDA, 1997, p. 158). All these movements have contributed to reinforcing the idea of the primacy of language. Consequently, two main effects from both structuralism and poststructuralism can be highlighted: first, in this post-Cartesian and post-humanist world view, we are no longer autonomous but, instead, "disciplined" subjects of discourses and ideologies; second, especially via poststructural thought, the partiality and textuality of knowledge has and continues to be an intellectual concern.

**Cláudia Hilsdorf:** It takes courage to challenge borders and to live polyphonically and trans-semiotically – especially when you're a language teacher/researcher and applied linguist. We're biased to think that language permeates everything and is the most important element of our existence. I do not deny its power. But I believe that our existence seems bigger than language, somehow. Affect seems to be an intrinsic and equally powerful part of our *linguaging* and our ideological becoming, as I discussed previously (ROCHA, 2019, 2020). Affect cannot be limited or strictly equated either to the symbolic or to cognition. It is not the case of saying that affect is *prior* to language or cognition. The idea is the very opposite. It is to find a way to look at the complex interrelation of affect (affect, emotions and feelings), language and cognition which could disrupt the centrality of any of these

three domains when it comes to the process of our (coming into) being in this world. An *affective* response to, within, and across language practices is to be seen as a multiform, dynamically borderless, meaningful whole, I guess.

So, as I see it, affect has been neglected in our recurrent and rationalist understanding of language practices and of the world. Affect has generally been seen from an essentially cognitive point of view, which seems limited and limiting because it fails to consider the power affect has to potentially enable us to enact and perform language and thus to engage in social practices. As Brian Massumi (2015) sees it, based on Spinoza's theories, affects are ways of connecting – to others, to objects, to situations, to places, to the world. It is then our *angle of participation* in processes that are *larger than ourselves* and that create a sense of being and (not) belonging and are therefore culturally embedded in a *larger field of life*, in Massumi's words. I think it makes great sense when Massumi also explains that affect is much more than a personal feeling and that it should be seen as the *virtual co-presence of potentials*.

**Ruberval:** Claudia, I completely agree that affect has to have an important place in this discussion in order to consider literacy studies from a broader, ideological and discursive perspective. To follow up on your discussion, there are two major, disciplinary perspectives on affect to consider: the first, coming from psychology and neuroscience, has treated affect as an elemental state comprised of fixed, basic emotions (i.e., happiness, sadness) intrinsic to all human subjects; the second, which is of more importance here, comes from philosophy and humanities, in which affect is considered to be an intensive force that arises from and changes through bodies in contact. Affect is a dynamic force, which can be either positive or negative or both at the same time, as you note, a co-presence of potentials that can increase or decrease the capacity to act – which makes it critically important for fostering agency in our work as language educators in times of crisis. Regarding the second perspective, the works of Spinoza,<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> As discussed in Ott (2017), Spinoza's notion of affect, which was highly influential on Deleuze and Massumi, involves both the intensive force that bodies exert upon others, increasing or decreasing the capacity to act (*affectus*), and the elemental state generated by an encounter between one or more bodies (*affectio*). This helps us think beyond rigid structures – of bodies and of languages – and moves affect into the realm of action power (*potência de ação*) in respect to all forms of meaning making.

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) and Massumi (2015) are especially relevant for our dialogue (see e.g., OTI, 2017). Their conceptualizations of affect help us rethink the processes of meaning making in ways that are not usually explored by language teachers and applied linguists.

**Cláudia:** I would say that the idea of affect, as a kind of driving force that comes into being through encounters between bodies, may be aligned with Bakhtinian principles. First of all, it is interesting to point out that Bakhtin (2003a, 2003b) also challenges the concept of the body as something limited to its physical and biological nature. Bodies are also socially and culturally constituted. Thus, there is an internal body, which can be sensed and controlled, and an external body, which is influenced by others through interaction. As Tihanov (2012) explains, such limits, however, are not rigid nor complete, but always fragmented and dynamically constituted. Besides, the internal and the external bodies should not be seen as two autonomous elements, but as something that can only come into being dialogically. In this regard, Azevedo (2014) proposes that we conceptualize the body as *discourse*, which I think is a way of expanding views. From this perspective, I also agree with Nascimento (2018), who approaches the signifying materiality of the body, in relation to historical and social aspects. As I see it, such ideas confront rationalism and, therefore, offer an interesting, alternative way of looking at our existence.

Bakhtin (2017) would also suggest all that touches us ends up coming to our consciousness, allowing us to make sense of ourselves, of others and of reality. It does not mean that we are always aware and in control, of course. It means that everything we experience in contact zones is singularly assimilated; that is, everything that comes from the mouths and actions of others will have a singular “new” affective tonality and will be reevaluated by us. We are affected by others, by the world, by everything around us and, as we experience all this, we *affectively* respond to it, which makes it possible for us to singularly engage in this dialogic chain of languaging and ideological becoming. This is a process of incessant coming to be, which is indissociably affective and linguistic, and which will make it possible for us to reconstruct our identities, our repertoires and therefore, to (en)act and live. All I am saying is that our centralized focus on *language practice* tends to make invisible the power of affect and experience when it comes to forms of existing and producing meaning and knowledge in the world and with the

world. So, to me, when we talk about widening our understanding towards language, so that we challenge more traditional or conservative views, we should also try to broaden our minds and question the very centrality of language in this whole process of meaning-making. Affect and language ideologies go hand in hand. We need to think strategically about how we feel and how our sensory and semiotic resources can be interpersonally or socially incited. This strategic awareness could help us have a deeper and wider understanding about the social and linguistic realities we have built and which we have been living in nowadays.

**Brian:** So, Claudia, Ruberval, what you are suggesting, I think, is that it is more a case of *how* we understand (and teach) language rather than language itself that is the issue. Or, in other words, we don't need to "give up" language in order to engage with the kinds of worldly, ideological and embodied connections you propose. The references to Massumi's co-presence of potentials and to Bakhtin's work (1986, 1993) (heteroglossia, for example), which both of you have explored elsewhere (ROCHA; MACIEL, 2015) clearly extend our linguistic boundaries and resulting pedagogical parameters in language teacher education (LTE) and additional/foreign language teaching. This "productive/restrictive" link between conceptualization and actualization in language work is really crucial, in my opinion, and reconnects with earlier research on language objectification (REAGAN, 2004), language disinvention (MAKONI; PENNYCOOK, 2007), and language ontologies (ORTEGA, 2018). Matthew Clarke and I (MORGAN; CLARKE, 2011) explored these types of concept-action linkages around social justice language teaching and identity negotiation. When language is understood as objectified, decontextualized code, teachers are subsequently positioned as technicians, applying the sterile prescriptions of outside "experts". If, however, the ontology of language is immanent and locally and dialogically constructed/negotiated (i.e., Bakhtin's notion of addressivity), then teachers come to see themselves more as active meaning makers, empowered (in theory, that is, and not necessarily in school-based policy!) to make curricular decisions more responsive to situated realities. How we respond to such local opportunities, as you indicate, is very much an affective issue – of "contact zone" experiences and entanglements as recent work on language teacher emotion labour suggests (e.g., BENESCH, 2017; MILLER; GKONOU, 2018). Moreover, it poses real challenges for LTE and



language teaching in general: how does one integrate or accommodate affect in language curricula? Is affect primarily a reactive phenomenon, peripheral to meaning making, or can it be formalized in any sort of programmatic, curricular way? What are your thoughts on this under-addressed challenge?

**Cláudia:** I would say it is high time we looked critically *at* and *into* affect, so that we could debate politics and language ideologies *beyond* languages and other semiotic resources alone, disrupting rationalist ways of approaching people, social relations and structures, meaning making, the world, and so on. It is high time we integrated an *affective turn* in our language teaching, following Sardar Anwaruddin's (2015) recommendation for critical literacies. It is important to highlight that, by affect, we do not always mean *conscious* emotions. Likewise, a politics of affect, as Brian Massumi would call for, or an affective turn, in Anwaruddin's (2015) view, does not imply approaching emotions and feelings from an idealist and emancipatory perspective. Rather, taking into account the power of affect in our daily lives – whether they are lived in institutional or non-institutional spaces – this means adopting a discursive and socio-emotional stance towards our emotions and feelings. This orientation would potentially allow us to recognize that we are not always aware of what and how we feel and that we should be open to the unknown and to the unconscious in the tense relations we experience with others and with the world. As Ahmed (2004) and Anwaruddin (2015) argue, affect and emotions should not be seen in terms of something *I* or *we have*. They should consequently not be seen as something present *in* the individual or the social. Rather, they produce realities and then make more visible the boundaries that allow the individual and the social to exist.

I believe that the affective turn in humanities and social sciences would allow an alternative chronotopic form to come into being (BAKHTIN, 2018). The modern Western, time-space formation, which has brought us to the dangerous and utterly destructive times we are living in now, would potentially allow some room for a pos-abysal and more communal form of existence. As Ailton Krenak (2019) tells us, we are addicted to modernity and that everything we do and invent to make our lives better reflects our attempt to reinforce our power over things and other living creatures on this planet. The anthropocene boils down to our greed for power and for keeping our delusional desire to go on existing beyond time and beyond our bodies.

If we add all this to destructive capitalism in contemporary society, we will see that such power is concerned with creating and maintaining abyssal lines not only between human beings and other living creatures and elements, but also between people themselves, by means of structural racism and other oppressive forms of divides.

**Brian:** Yes, the devastating effects on the environment from human activity and arrogance – rooted in modernist, Eurocentric systems of scientific reason and exacerbated by global capitalism – is clearly apparent and increasingly dangerous for marginalized communities and nations without the wealth to purchase the temporary illusion of control. And speaking of oppressive divisions, structural or systemic racism is on the current fault line of American politics. Just last year, former President Trump sought to ban diversity training for federal agencies, specifically labeling reference to critical race theory and white privilege as anti-American propaganda (<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-54038888>). I'm reminded of the Bolsonaro government's populist/nationalistic hostility to what they pejoratively refer to as “radical feminism” in schooling and public life. Meanwhile, in the USA, unprecedented public support for the Black Lives Matters organization can be seen in the ongoing protests against police violence as witnessed in the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Daniel Prude, to name but a few. Trump and Republicans, in general, staked their re-election prospects on framing anti-racist demonstrators as anarchists and domestic terrorists, stoking the fears of suburban white voters and promising to silence opponents through tougher law enforcement, on the one hand, and the implicit encouragement of right-wing, and often-armed vigilante groups, on the other, as a way of intimidating and disrupting peaceful protests. The January 5th, 2021, violent attack on the US Congress by Trump supporters underscores the fact that we indeed live in dangerous times, with disturbing echoes of re-emergent fascism (see STANLEY, 2018), yet your reference to the notion of the Anthropocene reminds us of much longer scales of human folly.

**Cláudia:** We could say we have always lived in difficult times. Times have long been dangerous for a number of different reasons. To cut a long story short, as I was saying, humanity, as the Anthropocene shows us, has ever since posed a danger to itself due to our absolute incapacity to break free of our radical sense of individualism and delusional dependence on

exerting power; on controlling; on colonizing thoughts, minds, knowledges and lives; and on inflicting suffering and violence on every human and non-human individual on this planet. As almighty humans, we have proven our infinite power of destruction.

Things get unimaginably worse, when such wars are created and lived under pandemic times of political and health crisis, as we are facing nowadays, because it brings light to the brutal inequalities upon which our world has been built. Many philosophers, sociologists and other theorists struggle to explain such a complex and dark period we are facing today from different and sometimes contradictory standpoints (KAYSER, 2020). Nonetheless, a commonplace seems to emerge from all this, and it has to do with the urgency of us all letting go of power discourses in order to start anew from a more communal lens towards political, economic, social and cultural systems and relations. We have to face the need to radically reinvent ourselves and this unbearably heavy world of ours if we really want to survive and to be able to live up to the unmistakable right everyone has to live a full, dignified and peaceful life.

At this time, I would say that reinvention could be focused on two issues we've discussed: dealing with crises and dealing with language. Regarding the first, we need to promote greater social solidarity and less individualism in dealing with crises such as pandemics, racial and economic oppression. Regarding the second, we need to rethink the boundaries and purposes of language – what is often referred to as a process of undoing or decentering rationalistic, structural and colonial foundations in language studies. Towards these outcomes, the importance of affect has until recently been downplayed though it seems to be an extremely potent constitutive element of our practices and discourses, as I said before. I would argue that much of this reinventive path could be built upon the power of affect. Do you think that the affective turn offers these possibilities, or does it simply represent old wine in a new bottle?

**Brian:** You've raised a crucial set of issues around the need to radically reinvent ourselves and our understanding and approach to language in these times of crises. You have me thinking about my own teaching experiences in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses. So much of my classroom time is devoted to helping students provide and integrate evidence in support of their exposition or argumentation in formal essays. We teach careful

documentation of research through quotation, paraphrase, summation and citation, and we tell them that readers will be persuaded by such efforts. In a sense, there's this idealistic, naive belief that these procedures – with language as the neutral and transparent medium of deliberation – are the necessary conditions by which superior arguments prevail, ultimately contributing to our social and intellectual progress. We also hold debates, again re-affirming a belief in the intrinsic merits of “superior” ideas arising through impartial, rational exchange.<sup>2</sup>

Yet outside the university, anti-intellectualism is rampant. Certain populist and neo-nationalist politicians and their supporters contemptuously reject the evidence-based findings and processes that are foundational to our academic identities. They ignore “inconvenient” research about pandemic conditions, environmental destruction, police brutality, or socio-economic injustice. The affective turn is not just an abstract construct we theorize but also one we personally experience through fear, anxiety and profound disorientation in the face of repressive policies (e.g., *Escolas Sem Partido* in Brazil; the compilation and public circulation of lists of “unpatriotic and dangerous” professors in the USA (STANLEY, 2018, p. 40-43)). And so an important question might be to ask ourselves how we recognize and harness our own emotional and affective fragility in productive ways related to our teaching and research. The “disruptive power of affect” – as manifest in the current harassment of academics and intellectuals – definitely seems like “old wine”. Finding ways to curricularize these intensities of feeling suggests something newer off the vine, given the development of new digital technologies, informational flows, and translingual/multimodal pedagogies and literacies that we must now negotiate as teachers.

**Cláudia:** I couldn't agree more. I have been thinking a lot about how to approach affect in language education and policies in a more disruptive way, so that we could be more open to a new logic, a new way of sensing the world; new in the sense of rupture with hegemonic forms of knowing, of

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<sup>2</sup> Such assumptions reflect the persistent ideals of modernity, for example, as reflected in a Habermasian universal discourse ethics (WELLMER, 1991). However, from a post-modern and decolonial perspective, these same deliberative and meritocratic assumptions/ideologies serve to uphold white privilege and disguise the historical role of race and racialization in the construction of linguistic theories and dominant approaches to English Language Teaching (HSU, 2017; KUBOTA; LIN; 2009; MOTHA, 2014; SHIN; STERZUK, 2019).

educating, of learning, of relating to others and the planet and so on. We respond to life affectively, and I believe that our engagement in language and social relations occurs, not only, but in a very profound way, as sensorial and affective experiences. It therefore seems so important and so urgent to dive into our emotions and feelings, so that we can better understand how we are affected and why that happens in one way and not in another. It is high time we made a better sense of alternative ways to transform what limits our power to act in and with the world in a communal and collaborative ethics. We need some ideas and approaches which can be more inspiring and able to heal our sufferings and wounds and those of others as well. Massumi (2015) talks about the political, discursive and ideological force of affect, and I strongly believe we should pay more serious attention to it. It seems to me that a powerful way to think of alternative epistemologies and pedagogies would be to open paths for us to challenge authoritative discourses that romanticize and weaken love and, this way, to help us live our lives in the forms of a decolonial onto-epistemology, as a radical form of re-existence, as Boveda and Bhattacharya (2019) suggest.

Paulo Freire also talked about this radical, grounding force of love (ARAÚJO FREIRE, 2010). To live it to the full, I guess, it is necessary to humbly open ourselves to take risks, to really listen to others, and to be brave enough to come out of our comfort zones and collectively unlearn, so that we can reinvent ways of reconnecting with people and everything else that makes part of our existence on this planet. Pedagogically, I believe it means to mine inflexible discourses (our own, as well), to challenge legitimized ways of explaining and assessing language, and engage in equity and collective work strongly connected to the social fights and interests of minority and non-legitimized groups or collectives. I think that we still have a long way to go because it takes unlearning to be able to live the ecology of knowledge (SOUSA SANTOS, 2007). And letting go of our beliefs and finding alternative ways to make sense of our emotions is difficult and hurts. Transformation is not given and, in a way, it is not reachable. It demands time and a complete surrender to the unknown. So, reinventing the world and ourselves is not something easy to experience. To be truly *interested* in doing so, as teachers, as individuals, seems more important and a more possible path to follow.

**Brian:** I also couldn't agree more. Both of you have raised what seems to me a whole range of affective and sensorial dimensions of meaning making that have only recently attracted consideration as integral features of literacy awareness and instruction. Ethical ones, too! As you suggest, it's often in times of crisis that we discover personal and collective bravery – as researchers, educators and citizens.

### 3 The Battleground of Literacies

*Literacies are a site of social conflict and struggles over social futures. In this section, the authors examine the political, socio-cultural and education implications inscribed within policy terms such as literacias and alfabetização versus letramentos in Brazil. Comparisons are made to current debates in mathematics instruction (i.e., experiential versus decontextualized memorization) as well as medical discourses and practices.*

**Brian:** In Brazil, my (ever evolving!) understanding of textual meaning making involves contested terms such as *literacias*, *alfabetização*, *letramentos*, each of which invokes a variety of teaching priorities and strategies, some more cognitive and supported by form-focused rote learning, and others more socially oriented and openly ideological, in which acts of reading/writing “competence”, of necessity, engage with issues of language and power. In Ontario, we've had a somewhat parallel debate around mathematics education with the current Progressive Conservative government proposing “back-to-basics” reforms (i.e., greater emphasis on formula memorization) as a corrective to the “discovery math” orientation of the previous Liberal government (HOLM; KAJANDER, 2019). These types of comparisons and debates, at least in Canada, are often more polemical and underpin political agendas rather than reflect actual classroom practices. In both Canada and Brazil, politicians can't resist manufacturing educational “crises”, which can serve as an excuse to impose greater policy control and/or neoliberal economic rigour over teachers and curricula (e.g, DUBOC; FERRAZ, 2020). As longstanding members of the Novos Letramentos group of Brazilian researchers what are your thoughts on these debates?

**Cláudia:** I believe that literacies have always been sites of (political, socio-cultural and educational) struggle, especially here in Brazil, a country with one of the highest rates of inequality in the world. Snyder (2008) refers to such struggles as literacy wars, and I believe she could not have come up with a better term to approach the ideological tensions we have always endured when it comes to writing as an instrument of control and power and, therefore, as a powerful technology (FOUCAULT, 1995; ORLANDI, 2001; DIAS, 2008).

I believe it is first worth talking a little bit about how this term emerged here. As Ruberval and I discussed in previous work (ROCHA; MACIEL, 2020), many Brazilian scholars (ROJO; MOURA, 2019, for example) state that the term *letramento*, in Brazilian Portuguese, was used by Mary Kato (1986) as a reference to the English word literacy. Magda Soares (1998, 2003) is also a Brazilian scholar who helped to make the literacy studies grow stronger here. She understood that this term was necessary in the late 80's and 90's in order to indicate the new educational demands in times of intense political, economic, sociocultural and technological growth in Brazil. It is also important to mention that, according to Soares (1998), in such times, the term literacy, in Brazilian studies, came usually together with the idea of “alfabetização” (alphabetization), We cannot forget to say that long before that, in the 70's, Paulo Freire strongly advocated in favour of a libertarian alphabetization project (FREIRE, 1970). Monte Mór (2015) also discusses the power of Freirean theories for literacies studies in Brazil, especially as far as the field of literacies and foreign language education is concerned (FREIRE, 2000, 2003, 2004, 2013, 2014). So, as I see it, these terms, alphabetization and literacy/ies cannot be understood from a static and rigid point of view. Their meanings will always be in tension and should be situated in time and space in order to be better understood.

Literacy Education is under attack nowadays in Brazil. New fascist and neoliberal discourses have gained ground by means of a far-right government which took over in 2018 and exploits nationalism and religion in order to take control. We are politically living what Achille Mbembe (2016) calls *necropolítica*. In the educational field, necroeducation (LIBERALI, 2020) has imposed a very conservative and authoritative ideology, dynamically making the abyssal line between the rich and the poor and, therefore, the dominant and minoritized groups, much bigger. The present government has oppressively attacked emancipatory philosophies and, therefore, literacy

studies and projects. Institutionalized language and educational policies have tried to impose the idea of *literacia* (the term used in Portugal) as a way to establish a conservative and authoritarian discourse in the field. As we can see, there is also a colonizing discourse in play. Far more important than the terms, however, seems to be our understanding of what and who is at war. As conflictive as these terms may seem, they cannot be reduced to one closed and static meaning. As Clecio Bunzen (2019) discusses, if the idea is to fight centralizing discourses and political practices, we should pay more attention to the way and the reasons why certain official and academic discourses use certain words to mobilize specific meanings. Sometimes I have the feeling that we, as scholars, get too attached to certain concepts and terms and transform them into regimes of truth (FOUCAULT, 2013). It is also a way to control things, people... because it controls knowledge. And the illusion of power can blind us all... what would you say about this?

**Brian:** Necroeducation is a very disturbing idea/word with connotations of decay and death at individual, social, and eco-systemic levels. It can't help but provoke a reaction, especially from teachers. Though we have been referring primarily to text-based literacies and authoritarian efforts to suppress their transformative potential, we might recognize a parallel logic of control in dominant ideologies of mathematics (BLOMMAERT, 2020). As I suggested above in respect to curricular "reforms" in Ontario, this type of control or conditioning would be applied via instructional models that prioritize the abstract rote learning of theorems over contextualized problem-solving and understanding. I would add to this list our discursive understanding of bodies, illnesses and "disabilities", and the specific medical interventions and authority structures these discourses advance (RAMANATHAN, 2009). The dominant, Western medical model foregrounds physiological functioning and expensive remedies through drugs and surgery. Yet, as we have witnessed with COVID-19, this model is likely to fail insofar as it ignores the social effects of racialization and poverty that contribute to the pandemic's spread. Across these fields of literacy (i.e., phonics-based), mathematics (i.e., taught solely by rote), and health/medicine (i.e., Western-centric) a consistent, foundational epistemology is apparent: one that constructs and reproduces these fields/disciplines as universal, apolitical, and superior to all other, subjugated forms of knowledge. Such partial and privileged knowledge constructions are



indeed necroeducational. From the perspective of the Global South, these correlated disciplinary practices reflect what Mignolo and Walsh (2018) describe as a colonial matrix of power.

As teachers, being implicated in these systems of control you describe can be depressing and overwhelming in the sense of powerlessness we perceive. Still, your reference to Foucault reminds me of what he described as *the microphysics of power* (1983), of how the subject is not only controlled/normalized but also *enabled* by discourses (and regimes of truth), made aware of contingent possibilities and small, local spaces (i.e., wiggle room) for resistance through her/his subject formation. In this Foucauldian spirit, I would be curious to learn more about the specific instructional tactics and techniques that constitute authoritarian textual curricula (i.e., *literacia*, *alfabetização*). Also, I wonder to what extent and under what conditions might these terms and constitutive practices be appropriated or leveraged in the service of emancipatory teaching in the pedagogical shadows/margins of the social and educational repression you describe in Brazil?

**Cláudia:** I believe that emancipatory language education happens from a multiplicity of perspectives and positions. It comes into being from a multiplicity of possibilities, all of which, in their uniqueness and singularities, can offer support for the creation of non-hierarchical power relations that challenge authoritative (i.e., colonial, neoliberal, racialized, ethnocentric, genderphobic, etc.) discourses and educational practices. I believe that there might be some core principles that could foster libertarian forms of existence and emancipatory learning spaces. When writing a philosophical biography of Paulo Freire, Walter Kohan (2019) mentions five principles which he believes are present in every freirean thought, work, word, and inspirational idea. Kohan tells us that such a way of reading Paulo Freire should not be understood as a rigid framework, but as an intertwined, open, and ever-changing cluster of principles and possibilities which can help us face contemporary educational problems from a transformative perspective. As Kohan (2019, p. 29) highlights, the term *principle* should not be understood as “fixed points, axioms or substantialities”. Rather, it encompasses “starting points, beginnings, ways to be born in the world, to begin to think and live, philosophically, a life which is interested in the meanings of a politics of education” (KOHAN, 2019, p. 20).

Very briefly, one principle has to do with *life*, because a political, transgressive education does not leave life outside. The transformative, emancipatory driving force of a libertarian education will always expand the potency of life, making it stronger, wider and critical towards everyone and everything, and, consequently, to the meaning of life itself. The principle of *equality*, in its turn, reminds us that no one is better than anyone and no knowledge is superior to another. That is, diversity and heterogeneity should be our most precious quality or condition and should not be used as a means to silence or to oppress. A third principle is *love* – towards people, towards all living creatures, towards every form of life, towards the planet and the universe towards who we are and positions from which we speak and act. Love is a most powerful, vital driving force and should never allow us to reduce the potentialities of life and of egalitarian existence in this world. *Wander (errância, in Portuguese)* is also a most important principle, because it reminds us of the importance, the possibility, and the urgency of change. It highlights that everything can be different and that there is no universal truth. Likewise, it also calls our attention to the fact that learning comes from faltering. By wandering, many encounters are made possible; in fact, meaningful encounters hardly ever happen without previous mistakes. Last but not least, *infancy*, as a principle, is meant to remind us that our process of growing, as human beings, is never complete or finished. Every time is time for us to start anew. Infancy, when linked to emancipatory (language) education, highlights the vital importance of libertarian transgression, of transformative curiosity, of a giving presence, of caring sensibility, and of serene restlessness.

How does it all sound to you both when it comes to a critical perspective regarding literacy and language education in difficult times increasingly marked by necropolitics?

**Ruberval:** I think that critical studies involving literacy and language education may be productively used in other academic and professional fields. In necropolitical times, I think it is also interesting to address the interface of language and health, an interface that has tended towards instrumentality and functionality rather than concerns with “libertarian transgression”, “transformative curiosity” or “serene restlessness”. Traditionally, health studies have benefited from multi-interdisciplinary studies with fields such as psychology, physical education, nutrition, physiotherapy, genetics, among

others, but not so much with critical literacies. Our current pandemic crisis, for example, has been exacerbated by fake news, lack of public health literacy and the devaluation of scientific expertise by some governments and their media backers. These conditions invite responses and interventions from critical applied linguistics. From my experience as an Applied Linguist and an instructor of English for Medical Purposes (EMP), I believe that critical literacies (letramentos críticos) can transgress the limits of health studies and the conventional ways in which medical professionals engage with bodies.

In the last six years, I have taught medical students and have supervised qualitative research on the interface of language and health. I have observed that health studies have traditionally employed cartesian-based research methodologies and practices. However, in recent years, this traditional view has been challenged by the Brazilian Guidelines for Medical schools, which were adopted in 2014. Nonetheless, the traditional approach, oriented by fragmented models of health attention, intervention strategies and health practices, still persists in most Brazilian hospitals and medical schools. Among these practices, one could highlight the biologist model restricted to curative features and pharmaceutical interventions. Such practices tend to limit individual and community healing processes, separating patients from cultural, historical and social support networks (MACIEL; BARBOSA, 2019). The 2014 Brazilian guidelines for medical education have adopted a more holistic and integrated approach (BRASIL, 2014). Towards this goal, the Brazilian Ministry of Health has created the humanizing policy of attention and management (*Política de Humanização da Atenção e da Gestão – PNH*). This orientation has required new philosophical and methodological views in the initial medical education with focus on the humanization of medicine (BRASIL, 2010).

In this regard, I believe that the affective turn has a role in helping practitioners rethink medical “standards”. In order to do so, affect requires a new view of the body; in particular, the Deleuzian notion of “body without organs” would be appropriate here. As Ott (2017) explains, a body is defined not only as the form that determines it. In other words, virtually, anything, human or non-human can function as a body so long it has the capacity to affect and be affected. So, a body without organs is not seen as an organic closed system but as an assemblage (cf. DELEUZE; GUATTARI, 1987), an open system integrating the human and non-human, material and immaterial world in dynamic tension. I think that the concept of body without organs

can help medical students to understand medical practices and the notion of human and non-human as relational and interdependent.

Future doctors, for example, might consider affective responses, such as fear and anxiety, more seriously when dealing with their patients. They might also consider the unpredictability and affective interactions that create these affective assemblages. Moreover, in their professional development, they would begin to focus more attention on the uniqueness of each patient they encountered. One relevant example would be in negotiating diagnoses and treatments with diabetic patients, whose levels and forms of literacy would vary considerably. It is the responsibility of the medical professional, whether student or doctor, to be understood by the patient (MACIEL; RUDD, 2019). In this regard, medical students can benefit from multisensorial, translanguaging and affective theories. They have to be aware that meanings and feelings in relation to diabetes may sound similar, but actually they are very different from patient to patient. Meanings and feelings are more than a set of emotions. As Lemke (2015) argues, meanings and feelings can be characterized as situated, distributed, active and specific to each culture. They are distributed because they are inserted among subjects, objects and environments. They are situated once they are located in a certain situation, and therefore, are dependent on that context. In a recent publication, Pereira and I (MACIEL; PEREIRA, 2020) call attention to the fact that meanings and feelings are not universal and therefore, each meaning may represent different perceptions according to the local cultural repertoire. So, in order to promote health literacy, applied linguistics and language theories can play important roles to interrupt the simplification of verbal/nonverbal binary representations in meaning making processes. Towards this goal, knowledge of translanguaging and affective assemblages could help mitigate the mismatch between student-doctors and patients in interventional projects on health literacy promotion (BARBOSA; SALOMÃO; PEREIRA; MACIEL, in press).

In sum, how we think about literacies has serious consequences for health care. But it is also a two-way street in that the experiences I have described in my EMP program has also transformed my understanding of critical literacies and has encouraged me to explore forms of meaning making outside familiar applied linguistic comfort zones (e.g., lexicogrammar, texts and genres).

*As this section has detailed, the differences between terms such as literacia and letramentos are not merely lexical and semantic. Rather, they are ideological, part of the literacy wars, and tied to how we understand and respond to worldly events (SNYDER, 2008). These terms authorize particular ways of seeing the world, seeing ourselves (e.g., discourses of embodiment and health), and acting responsibly in light of these ways of knowing. Such terminological choices related to literacies are, in effect, social practices, with material effects tied to power relations and collective futures.*

#### **4 Emerging implications for language and literacy practices**

*In this section, we explore emerging implications for language and literacy practices based on our experiences and recent interest in plurilingual and translanguaging approaches in support of critical citizenship. We include examples of actual curricular experiences in which affective elements shaped pedagogical strategies and outcomes.*

**Cláudia:** I believe that times of crises are times of potential change in every possible sense. Change eventually starts to come into being when we have the humility and courage to let ourselves be taken in a chaotic and painful process of resistance and re-existence, as Mignolo (2017) suggests. One of the biggest challenges we face is to overcome fear, I guess, and face the unknown, so that we can (dis/re)invent (linguistic) realities and create other possibilities of life and of being *human* on this planet. Once we have let go of our *need* of (being in) control, I believe that we can critically expand our views, move exotopically and allow alternative thinking to emerge. When it comes to language and literacy education, we will then eventually challenge, for instance, more conservative epistemologies which are based on rationalist and dualist perspectives and which tend to downplay the importance of affect and experience in language or, consequently, literacy practices. A complex and relational framework is urgently needed, so that we can explore the enactive, performative, aesthetic and affective nature of such practices.

I am inclined to agree with Aden and Eschenauer (2020), as they support a relational epistemology which can better approach the relation between self/other and environment (in bakhtinian space-time, I would say) that, by means of enactive-performative lenses and pedagogies, may

help us think of language and literacy practices from decentralizing points of view. Such a framework can be very interesting, because it “highlight[s] the power of experiential reality, the corporeality of language and thought and the transformative power of performance” (ADEN; ESCHENAUER, 2020, p. 107). From a situated and discursive standpoint, I would say that such an approach could help us expand our conception of language because it helps us focus on the meaning making process, instead of on named languages alone. This way, we may explore the idea of (trans)*linguaging* in such processes and, therefore, turn to the notion of repertoires as our ways of becoming in the world, that is, as the ideological, complex and dynamic manifestation of our experiences, biographies and resources as we exist in the world and relate to it and to others (BUSCH, 2012). I believe it is a transformative approach also because it may support an extended view on literacy practices, once they could also be critically and creatively thought in terms of the “sensorial, tangible and corporeal nature of both human experience and communication” (MILLS, 2016, p. 145). I also see this approach as intrinsically connected with a decolonial perspective towards (language) education, as AnaLouise Keating (2007) would suggest, because it would help us deeply challenge ethnocentric and racist views and allow us to be more aware of our relational nature as human beings, as well as of the relational nature of meaning making and knowledge construction processes. This movement could be thought of as decolonial in the sense that it would defy centralizing, oppressive stances and discourses, in favor of social justice. Do you also believe in the transformative power of performative, affective and sensory approaches to language and literacies? If so, could you expand on that? If not, what are your main criticisms?

**Brian:** I completely agree that we need to focus on processes of meaning making rather than the transmission and acquisition of isolated language structures. It reiterates the point above about language ontologies (ORTEGA, 2018) and how these beliefs/ideologies relate to the status and positioning of those who do language work. At the same time, and in the spirit of duoethnographic juxtaposition, I’d like us to consider a possibly more fundamental form of dualism and rationalism that we may inadvertently reproduce in our discussion; that is, the tendency to talk *about* literacies and pedagogies rather than *through* or *with* them. I would argue, following Kumaravadivelu’s terminology (2012) that this could be seen as

a form of collective self-marginalization on the part of second/additional language professionals, perhaps even a form of (neo)colonialism to the extent that we subordinate our unique ways of knowing/being/discovering to the norms of more privileged disciplines in universities. This could be called the dark side of transdisciplinarity, in which so-called “service” fields (e.g., Second/Additional Language Education, Language Teacher Education) are ignored in the academy, their research and theorizing left without “external” interlocutors, without cross-fertilization and without anybody to “write back” in ways that provocatively invigorate our own field/discipline. So, I’d like to pose a bit of a challenge in this section: to demonstrate or illustrate how our theories have informed our practice. Without this interconnection, and the local intervention of teachers/practitioners, a theory lacks the essential quality of “consequential validity”, in Jim Cummins (2021) terms. Can either/both of you think of any curricular innovation, lesson plan, assignment or the underpinning of teacher-student relationships that realize this consequential, theory/practice (i.e., praxis) relationship – not necessarily in causally direct or immediate ways but in terms of opening up resistant and/or transformative possibilities in these very difficult times?

In the previous section, we talked about the control of knowledge through literacy policies, mathematics instruction and medical discourses. As we know, this control is realized through lexicogrammatical choices and textual practices. In what ways – lexicogrammatical, translanguaging, semiotic – have we possibly subverted or resisted this control through our teaching and course designs? In asking this question, I’m reminded of the challenge Norris and Sawyer (2012) pose for us as duoethnographers. As they would ask, if not demand: to what extent are we *really* disrupting our own (too familiar and comfortable) metanarratives? It’s interesting how in one of our Zoom meetings, the issue of teaching practices and pedagogies came up: Would a prestigious Brazilian academic journal accept discussions of methods and practices, especially non-conventional or subversive ones, or would only theory be “heard” and welcomed by our scholarly peers? Ironically, perhaps, such beliefs (i.e., metanarratives) obstruct the kinds of agency that we seek to develop in critical times.

**Cláudia:** That’s a really good question. How open to subversive views (if we dared to call methods and practices “subversive”) we and the institutions that officially represent us really are? I believe that authoritarian

discourses also shape transgressive views and practices somehow. Bakhtin (1990, 2015) also reminds us how monologic institutional or scientific thought usually is and how hard it is to break through and promote centrifugal forces. As I see it, I believe that we could explain the mostly authoritative publishing culture of some journals in terms of a bad utopia. Gardiner (2010) explains that this kind of utopia, instead of really challenging the established social system, ends up legitimizing particular powers systems and relations and consequently, makes it difficult for alternative views and practices to be realized. I tend to think that a shift to a more critical form of utopia, as Gardiner (2010) suggests, is not something easily done because less oppressive ways of living and relating to people and the world are not known to us. We have to discover them collectively. Likewise, Hirschkop (2010), when discussing bakhtinian principles, discourse and democracy, highlights that to promote the subversive culture of laughter, institutions should try to fight monologism and create a more open relation between texts (seen as discursive practices) and people. In this sense, such relations would potentially produce and encourage “genuine solidarity” to take place (HIRSCHKOP, 2010, p. 124). To me, such a movement would favor a kind of new ethos, rather than reinforce the monologic culture of sharing texts that mostly echo authoritative ideologies.

I also do not feel we have been able to subvert course designs as much as we would like to. Schools and universities are institutions which, in general and as everyday formative spaces, seem to still find difficulty breaking up with a disciplinary and neoliberal logic. Transdisciplinary projects are not something easy to live up to in educational contexts where the habitus is deeply aligned with rationalist, normative, ethnocentric and conservative views of society and education. However, if we broadly see design as complex learning experiences, which are deeply imbricated in situated meaning-making practices, there is always space for rupture and change. I guess such changes in designing educational practices emerge from disciplinary border crossing and from reinventing realities collectively. How does it make sense to you?

**Brian:** Your perspective on design (applicable from policy to curriculum, syllabus and lesson plan) makes a lot of sense to me. Learning to recognize and mobilize pedagogical opportunities for rupture and change reminds me of Ana Duboc’s (2013) important discussion about fostering



“curricular attitude” in language teaching and teacher education. In spite of policy prescriptions and institutional controls, there are always small spaces and fissures in official curricular and disciplinary norms to work with and around. There are also supplementary readings, problem-posing questions and classroom interactions, where Duboc’s critical curricular attitude may be deployed. We’ve been talking about “conservative” methods that prioritize phonics and decontextualized rote-learning, for example, as aspects of ideological control (i.e., *literacia* versus *letramentos*). In an undergraduate course on phonetics and phonology, similar methods around phonetic description, analysis, and comparison of variation would be a normative expectation. Joel Windle’s course on English phonetics and phonology, instead, went much further, introducing awareness of *Pajubá*, a sociolinguistic formation identified with LGBTQ+ speakers and one that serves to challenge Brazilian neo-nationalist and heteronormative discourses (WINDLE; MORGAN, 2020). Joel’s affordance-rich approach to course design and student identity negotiation is an inspiring example of curricular attitude and critical citizenship pedagogies in action.

**Cláudia:** It sure is. Identity and agency have a lot to do with critically engaging in social practice and, likewise, are crucial elements for the design of critical pedagogies. I really agree with Bezemer and Kress (2016, p. 132) when they say that “design is prospective and therefore a necessarily innovative and transformative process, rather than a competent implementation of conventionally given practices”. So, I believe that design, as a site of learning and struggle, is a living practice, which brings together curriculum and pedagogies. From a critical perspective, course design, as a transformative experience and practice, may promote situated and meaningful learning. I have a very vivid memory of an English course I taught for ProFIS students some years ago. ProFIS is an Interdisciplinary Higher Education Program, which was implemented at the University of Campinas in 2011 as part of a Higher Education access widening policy. As I discussed in previous work (ROCHA, 2013), English for Academic Purposes was a key component of the ProFIS curriculum. One of the most difficult challenges was to design a course that could both help students develop the required academic literacies in an additional language and promote active citizenship as well (BENESCH, 2001).

Based on a plurilingual, plurivocal, and pluristylistic approach to language teaching and learning (ROCHA, 2012), students collaboratively engaged in redesigning and authoring practices, which encouraged them to actively negotiate their social and cultural identities and also widen their repertoires, while challenging common sense and established knowledge. Such experiences proved very meaningful, because their voices emerged very powerfully as they engaged in problem-based activities and took decisions on what collaborative projects to develop in order to raise community awareness concerning issues they considered relevant. At the same time, they were supposed to challenge the values which (academic) practices and relations tended to be based upon, in order to critically and creatively propose other (more equitable and socially just) ways of engagement in social life.

Breaking the teacher-centered model was not easy for anyone in class. The shift to a more critical, situated and less controlled teaching and learning practice demanded constant reflection and renegotiation of goals, as well as of values, ideas, identities and certainties. We also learned to think and act more collectively as we realized how little we know individually and how much we can do together. As I see it, we actively reshaped curriculum-pedagogies, while we also collaboratively redesigned the course as a critical, transgressive and meaningful (academic) learning experience.

**Brian:** It's an excellent example in respect to duoethnographic aspirations and affective domains. Disrupting dominant discourses and metanarratives regarding identities (e.g., the all-knowing teacher) and language instruction (e.g., maximum exposure in L2) are profoundly affective practices as they engage feelings of risk, anxiety and the potential for joy and pride when perceived obstacles are collaboratively overcome. The plurilingual, plurivocal, pluristylistic dimension is one I've been working on in my own teaching and course designs. For example, in the chapter that Joel and I wrote on "remix nationalism" (WINDLE; MORGAN, 2020), I describe an EAP course (ENSL 3800: Dealing with Viewpoint) whose content is related to media literacy and visual/digital rhetoric in support of citizenship practices. Increasingly, I've tried to integrate assignments that have trans-semiotic and plurilingual options for students. In the final assignment, for example, students select a current event or issue and analyze the language and images used by various media to frame and condition our

perceptions and possible responses. Over the term, students develop a set of lexicogrammatical and visual discourse tools with which to support their analyses. Over the past few years, I have encouraged students to research the same issue or topic from plurilingual, intercultural perspectives, applying critical analytic tools from their English texts to their L1 or primary scholarly language with the hope of fostering greater translingual critical awareness. The results have been quite promising. As we know, it is in learning second or additional languages<sup>3</sup> that we really come to appreciate the mediating and signifying function of any representational system in constructing a particular (and partial) understanding of “reality” – and one that is always implicated in social power relations.

From first-hand experience (i.e., a longstanding Glendon-UEMS research partnership), I recognize similar creative and critical possibilities in Ruberval’s integration of translanguageing and translingual practices in the field of English for Medical Purposes, a discipline whose ideological and (neo)colonial borders are not easily crossed.

**Ruberval:** Indeed, Brian. Our experience involving UEMS (Brazil) and Glendon (Canada) students in telecollaborative projects (MORGAN; MARTIN; MACIEL, 2019) may represent opportunities to rethink EAP curricula and (neo)colonial borders. From an initial 5 Ps approach – integrating postnational, posttransmission, postcolonial, post-method and poststructural elements (KUMARAVADIVELU, 2012) – we tried to foster telecollaboration in difficult times. In our fourth edition, the face to face telecollaboration project and the physical students’ mobility had to be redesigned due to the COVID-19 situation. Our syllabi had to be changed to accommodate the new online format, and Brazilian medical students

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<sup>3</sup> The construct of *consequential validity* (CUMMINS, 2021) also pertains to ongoing debates regarding the (dis)invention of discrete, enumerated languages (MAKONI; PENNYCOOK, 2007). While it is important to recognize the social and ideological construction of languages, as Cummins argues, it is equally important to consider the policy contexts in which “invented” notions of standard languages, mother tongues, cross-linguistic transfer, additive bilingualism, etc. have *real*, material effects that create the conditions for teacher agency. Such agentive responses, as Cummins argues, should not be qualified or trivialized for their “theoretical” inadequacy. Indeed, the construct of consequential validity suggests that equal or greater paradigmatic value/status regarding language (dis)invention be extended to local teacher agency and the pedagogical outcomes generated.

were the only available partners at that time. One of our challenges could be stated as – “como fazer do limão, uma limonada? [How can we make lemonade from lemons?].”

The Brazilian English for Medical Purposes classes – with focus on written and spoken academic genres – were reorganized to accommodate transnational issues involving medical contexts and crosscultural themes across two countries and hemispheres. Canadian students had also to adapt their themes to work with unfamiliar medical disciplinary knowledge. The interactions were facilitated by Microsoft Teams software, linking 2nd year Brazilian medical students and 3rd and 4th year undergraduate students in the Glendon College Certificate in the Discipline of Teaching English as an International Language (D-TEIL) from Canada.

In this collaborative scenario, both groups were developing expertise in their own disciplinary areas. The D-TEIL students were gaining confidence in their understanding of language and content-based instruction. The Brazilian medical students were learning key, emergent medical terms and vocabulary in English based on the global COVID-19 pandemic. Through translanguaging (MACIEL; ROCHA, 2020; MACIEL; GARCIA, 2019), the medical students went beyond simple denotation, using the telecollaboration as an opportunity to compare and contrast the sociopolitical and affective dimensions of the pandemic through the lessons that the D-TEIL students had organized. Issues raised included polemical debates over the efficacy of Hydroxychloroquine, and the scientific validity of information and transnational policies to promote health literacies, including translanguaging strategies for indigenous multicultural groups. Mental health and affect were other issues of importance. Both sides had the opportunity to share how the pandemic has increased their anxiety about their personal and collective futures.

*A key responsibility for duoethnographic researchers is to take risks, recognizing and embracing the consequences of “dangerous conversations” (NORRIS; SAWYER, 2012). Perhaps one of the most dangerous conversations academics may have involves the assessment of theory through the lens of pedagogy and the expertise of teachers (cf. consequential validity, CUMMINS, 2021). In this section the authors have explored these dangers through the re-telling of classroom literacies and practices informed by plurilingual, translanguaging and affective teaching strategies.*

## 5 Conclusions

We'd like to conclude by revisiting something that Claudia noted in one of our later Zoom sessions, regarding the bidirectional/interpersonal nature of affect. As she observed and experienced, through the trioethnographic research process, we came to appreciate first-hand how we might affect others who in turn might affect us. In this regard, the nature or substance of affect was not just a debatable theoretical statement but something we encountered and commented on in the long process of negotiating and composing this article. A trioethnography was an opportunity to venture further outside our “safe houses”. As Ruberval's experiences in EMP exemplify, engaging with other disciplines can become a source of innovation by which we expand our own critical and affective repertoires. As we all acknowledge, leaving our scholarly safe houses is not easy, especially because we have so much invested in the areas of scholarly expertise we claim. Brian hopes that we collectively explore the terrain of critical affective literacies, language teaching and innovative research methodologies (i.e., duoethnography) again – but perhaps not too soon from now, a sentiment also shared by Cláudia and Ruberval.

### Author's Contribution

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Data de submissão: 24/02/2021. Data de aprovação: 18/03/2021.