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# TENSÕES ENTRE PORTUGUESES A PARTIR DE METACOMENTÁRIOS DE ESTUDANTES INTERNACIONAIS DO LESTE ASIÁTICO NO BRASIL

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## TENSIONS AMONG PORTUGUESES IN METACOMMENTARIES FROM EAST ASIAN INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN BRAZIL

### TENSÕES ENTRE PORTUGUESES A PARTIR DE METACOMENTÁRIOS DE ESTUDANTES INTERNACIONAIS DO LESTE ASIÁTICO NO BRASIL

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#### ABSTRACT

The aims of this paper are to analyse how East Asian international students narrate tensions in Portuguese language, or *Portugueses*, through metacommentary, and to foster reflections on the counter-hegemonic potential that language learning comprises, particularly when thinking of the internationalisation agenda implemented by a Brazilian public university. To pursue that, we depart from audio-recorded semi-structured interviews, later manually transcribed, with a Korean and a Japanese undergraduate student during their sojourn. We observed that these tensions in *Portugueses* arose as students' communicative repertoires were put to the test, either by them or their interlocutors, in different spaces. Our discussion foregrounds how students, when engaging in various social practices on campus and off-campus, manoeuvre sociolinguistic scales in comments made by themselves or by their interlocutors about ways of speaking Portuguese. We considered that, overall, students resort to ecological factors when doing scales, whilst indexing dominant language ideologies. Moreover, it was also possible to conceive that metacommentary from their interlocutors, particularly from Brazilians, impact (negatively) on students' perception about their language learning and linguistic practices. To tackle these tensions, we advocate for an internationalisation agenda that envisages language education not only to international students, but also to home students and staff in order to promote different degrees of language and social justice awareness.

**Keywords:** internationalisation of Higher Education; metacommentary; international students; sociolinguistic scales; Portuguese as an Additional Language

#### RESUMO

Os objetivos deste artigo são analisar como estudantes estrangeiros do leste asiático narram as tensões no português, ou nos *portugueses*, via metacomentário, e suscitar reflexões sobre o potencial contra-hegemônico que o aprendizado de línguas detém, principalmente no âmbito da agenda de internacionalização implementada em uma universidade pública brasileira. Para tal, partimos de entrevistas semiestruturadas, gravadas e posteriormente transcritas, com uma estudante coreana e um estudante japonês em intercâmbio acadêmico na graduação. Observamos que as tensões nos *portugueses* surgiam quando os repertórios comunicativos dos estudantes eram postos à prova, por seus interlocutores ou por eles mesmos, em diferentes espaços. Nossa discussão destaca como os estudantes, ao se envolverem em diferentes práticas sociais no campus e fora dele, manejaram escalas sociolinguísticas nos comentários deles mesmos ou de seus interlocutores sobre modos de falar português. Em geral, percebemos que os estudantes recorrem a fatores ecológicos ao construir escalas, ao mesmo tempo que indexalizavam ideologias de linguagem dominantes. Além disso, também foi possível observar que o metacomentário dos interlocutores, principalmente de brasileiros, impacta (negativamente) a percepção dos estudantes sobre o aprendizado da língua e sobre as práticas linguísticas. Portanto, a fim de lutar por diferentes níveis de consciência linguística e de justiça social, insistimos em uma agenda de internacionalização que considere a educação linguística não só para estudantes estrangeiros, mas também para estudantes brasileiros e aqueles que trabalham na universidade.

**Palavras-chave:** internacionalização do ensino superior; metacomentário; estudantes internacionais; escalas sociolinguísticas; Português como Língua Adicional

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#### OVERVIEW AND AIMS

Migration experience is far from being new, yet discourses on the nexus between migration and language have come to be more emphasised, including in the field of Applied Linguistics, in the past decades due to space/

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time compression and transnational social fields (CANAGARAJAH, 2017). Despite some insightful research by applied linguists on the topic (BIZON, 2013; BIZON; CAVALCANTI, 2018; DANGIÓ, 2019), international student mobility, here considered as a type of migration (RAGHURAM, 2013), still remains underexplored in Brazil, particularly when the focus is set on students and their language learning experiences.

Student mobility scenario in Brazil entails a variety of international cooperation agreements and mobility programmes established between Brazilian universities and foreign institutions. Also composing this scenario are inbound/outbound mobility, diverse communicative repertoires, different mobility purposes (and length of sojourn) and a range of language courses – especially Portuguese as an Additional Language (PAL) –, depending on the university students opt to enrol at. In this paper, our focus is on undergraduate students who organised their mobile trajectories for purposes of language study. In other words, as Portuguese is used as language of instruction in most university courses in Brazil, the country is of particular interest to students from Area Studies or Modern Languages degrees mainly located in China, Japan and South Korea, who oftentimes choose Brazil as their year abroad destination in order to learn Portuguese. It should be pointed out that unlike international students who spend the whole duration of their course abroad, thus being included in the *Censo da Educação Superior* (Federal Higher Education Census), students participating in exchange programmes do not appear on this data as they would simply be considered “visitors”. Overall, little is known about the way international students<sup>1</sup> (long-term or short-term) experience academic practices and participate in university life in Brazil. Nevertheless, Bizon (2013), Bizon and Cavalcanti (2018) and Dangió (2018) offer a precise account of the lived experiences of long-term international students and the policies conducted by Brazilian universities to host these students.

On the one hand, considering the internationalisation policies in place at a specific Brazilian university and the language-oriented goal displayed by East Asian students, as mentioned above, we were interested in listening to their lived experiences in order to visualise what kind of tensions related to languages had arisen while they attended different modules at the university – including Portuguese as an Additional Language (PAL) ones –, and experienced their mobility exchange. We emphasise here that students built up multiple roles (KING; RAGHURAM, 2013) – students, part-time workers, interns, family members, activists, tourists –, which means they engaged in a multitude of social practices and spaces of socialisation off-campus during their academic sojourn. As we will examine, their communicative repertoires are often being put to the test in these different spaces, either by them or their interlocutors.

On the other hand, even though international student mobility is usually referred to as one of the key aspects of internationalisation of higher education institutions, the surge of interest in it, particularly from the point of view of institutions and organisations, is likely to be restricted to technical and quantitative factors, as argued by Buckner and Stein (2020). The combination of quantified approaches, the presence of international students, academic mobility and curricular changes summarises what the authors, examining Western examples, criticised as the “internationalisation imperative”. Other factors playing a role in this sum are, for example, world university rankings and bibliometrics (HAMEL, 2017), all of them setting the spatialities of knowledge up (RAGHURAM, 2013), thus producing supposedly global moulds of success. Following this rationale, cooperation agreements in the field of humanities or social sciences would have little to offer in terms of prestige and the so-called “development” when compared to partnerships in technology or engineering.

It is worth emphasising that, despite having different sociohistorical configurations<sup>2</sup> and being located in the Global South,<sup>3</sup> some Brazilian universities may also, to a certain extent, trace the steps of those universities in the Global North.<sup>4</sup> To tackle the process of internationalisation in public universities, it is necessary to pay attention to colonialism and patriarchy, intertwined to the webs of, and made visible through, capitalism (SANTOS, 2019). These forces can be embedded not only in the structure of universities, such as official (language) education policies, strategic plannings, courses syllabuses and mobility agreements, but also in its different actors, for we are all implicated in the maintenance of this violent system.

We see language as a focal point here. With the popularisation of higher education internationalisation in Brazil, particularly in the past decade, language policies also came to the fore (see Frazatto, 2020). According to

1. In this paper, we refer to students pursuing their year abroad also as “international students”.

2. The discussion here pertains only to Brazilian public universities in Brazil, as private institutions will operate very differently.

3. As Sousa Santos (2019) explains, the South is epistemological and non-geographical. There is not just one South and it rises wherever there are struggles against colonialism, capitalism and patriarchy.

4. Menezes de Souza (2019) points out that, as the business-model was exported from the North to the South, an “apparent homogeneity” (p.17) was created. However, universities in the Global South remain subservient to those in the North.

Marques and Schoffen (2020), there is an interdependency between the field of PAL and internationalisation in Brazil. Whereas the latter, especially due to academic mobility, has been contributing to the institutionalisation of the former in Brazilian universities, PAL's initiatives have been a key element for inbound mobility. When it comes to language policy, questions such as "what kind of role are language courses and language education playing in internationalisation projects?", "what kind of impact does metacommentary made by students' interlocutors have on their learning?" or "how is linguistic diversity tackled, considering that Brazilian universities gather students from all regions of the country as well as from different countries?" permeate our work, and in our perspective, should be at the core of debates about the internationalisation(s) of higher education.

In our paper, we respond to Cesar and Cavalcanti's (2007) call – also addressed by Pires Santos (2018) – for a conceptualisation of multilingualism that considers language as a kaleidoscope, where "language resources (the styles, registers and genres) associated with each language" (PIRES-SANTOS 2018, p. 107) are at stake, rather than a conceptualisation based on binary understandings of separate languages and dialects or separate languages and corresponding standard norms, for example. We do not forget, though, that these dichotomies are exactly the ideologies that inform the way policies and interactions may work. To César and Cavalcanti, when analysing language, we should, thus, be looking at multiplicity as well as linguistic and cultural complexities that come along with any community or speaker. This way, there would be no Portuguese, but *Portugueses*. Having this in mind, our aim in this paper is twofold: i) to analyse how students narrate tensions that emerge from their ways of speaking Portuguese (or *Portugueses*) through comments about language, that is, metacommentary (RYMES, 2014a, 2014b), and ii) to foster reflections on the counter-hegemonic potential that language learning comprises, especially when thinking of internationalisation agendas. As educators, we think it is our role to investigate and propose a critique of language education policy, coming to terms with what teaching a language stands for. For us, that includes not only bringing conflicts, ideologies and power struggles to the classroom, but also relating them to the way Portuguese-based resources are employed in certain circumstances, especially by assuming students are agents implicated in the circulation of knowledge.

Nguyen and Pennycook (2018, p. 2) note that focusing on problems and lack of institutional support that students encounter may "overlook the ways in which students develop their own support measures and carve out a particular space in social, cultural, and physical terms". On a slightly different note, we believe that by investigating students' interactions and their agency on and off-campus it is possible to uncover faulty internationalisation agendas.

The article is organised as follows: first we present the university setting and the participants. Then, from a performative perspective of language, we frame the relationship among metacommentary, sociolinguistic scales and language ideologies. Subsequently we head to the data, which for our purposes, was divided into three categories according to different spaces students inhabited during their sojourn i) travelling in the Southeast, ii) befriending Brazilians around the university and iii) befriending international students at the university. Then, we discuss the tensions among *Portugueses* and its effects on students' trajectories, as well as a proposal to address the relationship between these tensions and a form of internationalisation. Finally, we conclude reiterating our stance towards the need of a broad-scope language education, based on language awareness and social justice awareness.

## 1. THE CONTEXT OF (IM)MOBILITY AND THE PARTICIPANTS

The public university (henceforth, *University C*) where the study takes place is located in the state of São Paulo, in the Southeast region of Brazil. It often appears in higher education rankings in Latin America and worldwide. As in all public universities in Brazil, neither home students nor international students are required to pay any fee. Considering inbound mobility to University C from 2010 to 2020 (FRAZATTO, forthcoming), there were students arriving from all continents. In this period, Latin American students constituted the largest

group, distributed in undergraduate and graduate levels as well as short-term and long-term sojourns. As a matter of fact, the majority of Latin American students pursued their degrees on graduate level,<sup>5</sup> that is, they were not associated with any mobility programme. When it comes to East Asian students' flows,<sup>6</sup> however, we noticed that their mobility was usually linked to six-month or 1-year stays in undergraduate courses.

As stated before, Portuguese is the major language of instruction in Brazil. When it comes to PAL classes, many universities offer modules via *extensão*.<sup>7</sup> These modules are usually led by students or Teaching Assistants under supervision, or professors, and can have the academic community as target audience or the society as a whole. Yet, at University C, Portuguese modules have a different status. Firstly, they are part of a credit-based system (just as any other module) and have as its main target audience undergraduate students. Secondly, administrative and teaching positions in public universities are performed by career civil servants, which means these modules can only be taught by permanent staff. International students go through a language-level classification exam on their first week of study and are distributed along the following courses:

Table 1. Portuguese as an Additional language modules at University C

Module	Target Audience	
	Hispanic students	Non-Hispanic students
Portuguese For Spanish Speakers I	✓	
Portuguese For Spanish Speakers II	✓	
Portuguese for Foreigners I		✓
Portuguese for Foreigners II		✓
Portuguese for Foreigners III	✓	✓

Source: created from the list of modules available on <https://www.dac.unicamp.br/portal/caderno-de-horarios/2020/2/S/G/CEL>

Thus, the modules taught at the Language Centre are the main language policy covering Portuguese language for international students at University C. As it can be seen, they are limited and very general, which could also be a consequence of the shortage of staff – there are only two PAL instructors. Each module has up to 25 students, a rather large group considering language courses.

The data analysed here is part of a PhD research currently in its final stage, conducted by one of us (the first author of this paper). After approval by a Committee of Ethics in Research, audio-recorded semi-structured interviews with Chinese, Japanese and South Korean international students were conducted and manually transcribed. Interviews were conducted in Portuguese and took place in one of the campuses between 2018 and 2020. The first contact with students happened online or offline via mutual acquaintances. For this paper, we rely on interviews with 2 undergraduate students, Eduardo and Alice. Transcripts were translated to English and, just as we chose to not standardise the Portuguese spoken by students, we made the same choice for the translations in English.

Both students were in their early twenties and were doing their year abroad at University C. As generally is the case with students of this profile who are enrolled in Modern Languages or Area Studies in their home countries, as part of their undergraduate courses they had studied Portuguese for two years before travelling to Brazil. According to the interviewees, they studied Portuguese 10 hours per week in their home universities. The sojourn is often self-funded, but there are cases of students who are awarded with scholarships in their countries.

*Eduardo* is from Japan and decided to extend his sojourn in Brazil to three semesters. At the moment of our conversation, he was about to return to Japan and had already completed Portuguese II and III at the Language Centre. We met three times to talk about his mobility experience and he always contributed very openly to the conversation, both explaining his point of view and describing situations or feelings he had endured. His expansive

5. University C is nationally known for its role in research development, thus attracting students from around the country and abroad. Contrary to other public universities in Brazil, where the number of undergraduate students largely surpasses that of graduates, at University C the figures in each of these categories are very similar.

6. We will not have enough space to discuss historical or recent migration flows to Brazil from each of the countries (China, Japan and South Korea) that are part of the study. When it comes to academic flows, they are also motivated for different reasons, such as historical bonds between countries, economic relationships and soft power. Frazatto (in progress) has been looking at the latter with more details in her PhD dissertation.

7. *Extensão* (or Extension), is one of the pillars of public universities in Brazil (the other two are Teaching and Research). It can be understood as a way of linking universities and communities through courses and activities.

manners during the conversation could be attributed to several facts: Eduardo had attended modules on (Applied) Linguistics, freelanced as a PAL instructor to Japanese workers in Brazil and learned that the researcher had studied Japanese. Alice had come from South Korea four months before our conversation took place. We had one meeting, in which she, in a friendly, but more reserved way, keenly talked about the classes she was attending, her friends and her expectations. Her sojourn in Brazil lasted a year, but the mobility programme she applied for included a semester at the Brazilian university, followed by a work experience semester at a Korean company based in Brazil. When we talked, she was attending the Portuguese III module.

Contrary to other studies that observed international students' interactions unfolding mainly with other foreign students (NGUYEN; PENNYCOOK, 2018; SIN; TAVARES, 2019), Eduardo and Alice befriended international as well as Brazilian students. We call attention to the fact that students referred to a large set of out-of-class practices in which they engaged in, such as parties, trips, internships, informal work, all of them informing their experience in Brazil. These activities stress how students' trajectories cannot be reduced simply to their academic experience. At the same time, students pinpointed that while interacting in Portuguese, discussions and comments about their repertoires were recurrent, either on campus or off-campus.

Nonetheless, when it comes to their experiences at university, we find it pertinent to highlight how mobility can transform into immobility. Considering their language-oriented mobility goal and the limited range of PAL courses, described above, East Asian students experience certain immobility when it comes to these course offerings: they will either be enrolled in Portuguese II or III, as there are no other modules available. As a consequence, students sometimes can feel an imbalance in relation to their peers, saying that Portuguese II can be too easy, while Portuguese III would not be enough for their needs, such as dealing with academic writing. Additionally, according to the data we will present, we noticed that these courses do not seem to create enough awareness for students to reflect about their language learning experience, including coming to terms with hierarchical language ideologies that arise in their meaning-making practices. As will be pointed out in the discussion section, we observed that their experiences with language learning sometimes may also be felt as immobility due to way they are positioned by their interlocutors.

Lastly, despite hosting students with this academic profile for years – we have even witnessed an increase of East Asian students for a couple of years, which then dropped –, very little seems to have changed in the internationalisation policies implemented by University C, whether that relates to PAL or not; lastly, it is also noteworthy that there is a group of Brazilian students voluntarily welcoming and helping international students. Their engagement is welcomed by the university, although not managed by it in any terms. This group is often mentioned by international students for it works as a bridge to the first experiences on campus and connects international students to their peers.

## 2. TALK ABOUT TALK: METACOMMENTARY, SOCIOLINGUISTIC SCALES AND IDEOLOGIES

In her work with narratives, Threadgold (2005, p. 262) affirms that stories are “everyday linguistic performances”, since they “are both contextualised and framed by the contexts in which they occur and in turn contribute to the construction of those wider institutional and social contexts”. In a similar way, Jackson (2017) proposes that narratives about mobility experiences that students recount can facilitate a better understanding of individual dimensions and external elements. For instance, listening to students' narrative of their own mobilities, routine or challenges may illuminate how they experienced hospitality, the policies (not) being implemented by University C as well as their own values regarding the *Portugueses* being spoken in different spaces and the tensions indexed by these *Portugueses*.

These are the reasons why we conceive comments about language, or metacommentary (RYMES, 2014a, 2014b), as a promising framework, and propose its analysis in tandem with sociolinguistic scales and language ideologies. Below we discuss how these three concepts can relate to each other.

Rymes (2014a) points out that metacommentary operates both explicitly and implicitly, referring to Silverstein's concepts of metapragmatic discourse and metapragmatic functions. According to her, metacommentary is part of any act of communication: “In any interaction, metacommentary signals an understanding of what a sign means without necessarily arbitrarily systematising communicative elements, but by pointing to that sign's situated communicative value” (RYMES, 2014a, p. 303). A sign, of course, as Rymes explains, will not always be expressed in languages an individual may resort to, since communicative repertoires (RYMES, 2014b) are constituted by the accumulation of

many experiences and images, such as gestures, postures, dance moves, just to name a few. When we act in the world, being that speaking or gesturing, we are communicating about our repertoire or somebody else's.

Based on her data, Rymes (2014a) described several types of metacommentary, but made clear that those types are not restricted to the list she created. When analysing our data, two of these types were particularly salient. The first one was *marking code*, because when speakers communicate there can be "subtle repertoire elements" (2014b, p. 12) at play, which means, particularly in our context, that not simply an ideal Portuguese language is being triggered. The second one, *marking sounds of language*, called our attention because when students commented on their lived experiences of learning Portuguese and of mobility, pronunciation was a topic constantly referred to, as it led to various outcomes in their social lives.

When it comes to the potentialities of metacommentaries, Pizzighella and Rymes (2018, p. 62) explain that:

In gathering everyday metacommentary (Rymes, 2014; Rymes and Leone, 2014) of the types presented here, the goal (...) is to make circulating perspectives about language and people who use it apparent and to put ideologies of person, place, and language on the table, so to speak, for discussion, negotiation, recontextualization, and recirculation.

As elucidated, metacommentary can throw light to speakers' perspectives, which we understand as being built from the entanglement of sociolinguistic scales and language ideologies. Scales were first brought to sociolinguistics discussions by Blommaert (2007; 2010). Since then, several authors have been exploring this notion creatively, proposing various perspectives to it and linking it to repertoires (BADWAN; SIMPSON, 2019; CANAGARAJAH; DE COSTA, 2016), language policy (FLOWERS, 2021) and discursive productions (CAVALCANTI; BIZON, 2020; GONZALEZ; MOITA LOPES, 2018), amongst other uses. To Blommaert (2010), language resources would be entangled to norms and stratifications, thus being placed as either high scale or low scale. Concurring with Canagarajah and De Costa (2016, p. 2), we depart from the idea that scales can be seen as less rigid (or fixed) and as category of practice (and not category of analysis). Drawing on these two premises, it is possible to analyse scales "as they emerge from the practices of people and institution", that is, in their situatedness, and take into account the agency of speakers, not disregarding power relationships. With this in mind, we rely on what Badwan and Simpson (2019, p. 11, emphasis added) called the ecological orientation to sociolinguistic scale. According to these authors,

An ecological orientation not only attends to general ability for use, but also pays attention to socio-pragmatic and intercultural competencies, and to an awareness of appropriate and effective language use within specific discourses, which together significantly influence individuals' perceptions of the exchange value of their language (...)

This means, in our context, that different and complex interactional scenarios and the way they are inhabited by participants will result in them – and their interlocutors – scaling Portuguese in various ways, not restricted to a vertical, fixed way, or simply subject to social stratifications. There is a crucial point here. *Ecological* is understood as a way of resisting rigid high/low stratifications of language use. Badwan and Simpson (2019) explain that multiple ecological factors, such as interlocutors, place and the social norms in a specific setting, compose the interaction and the perception a person has about their repertoire. Consequently, the authors argue for the importance of speakers' awareness of ecological features in their speech.

Because of that, in our data, we considered it beneficial to link sociolinguistic scales to language ideologies. Cavanaugh (2020, p. 52) defines language ideologies as "the beliefs and attitude that shape speakers' relationships to their own and others' languages, mediating between the social practice of language and the socioeconomic and political structures within which it occurs." More specifically, Kroskrity (2015) defends that an important characteristic of language ideology is awareness, adding that people will have different degrees of awareness. To him, there is a direct link between being aware and agency, and forms of contestation.

In sum, metacommentary allowed us to better understand how these international students navigated sociolinguistic scales and what language ideologies were being invoked in their experiences, especially taking into consideration if/how ecological factors played a role in these interactions. Next, we investigate the tensions that arose in students' metacommentaries when they engaged in interactions in Portuguese.

### 3. WHAT PORTUGUESE ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

In this section, we chose some excerpts from Eduardo's and Alice's narratives to illustrate their journey through *Portugueses*. We follow their trajectories, permeated by sociolinguistic scales and language ideologies, in different spaces: i) travelling in the Southeast, ii) befriending Brazilians around the university and iii) befriending international students at the university.

#### I. Travelling in the Southeast

In Situation 1, Eduardo described a memorable moment he had during his academic mobility. He connected such a moment to language, but not before first asking whether he could talk about something unrelated to his experiences at the university. The experience happened when he travelled to two different states in Brazil, Minas Gerais and Rio de Janeiro. At these places, several people mistook him for a Brazilian who had come from the city of São Paulo because of the way he spoke Portuguese. Below, we unpack the meanings that could be associated with the situation:

##### Situation 1<sup>8</sup>

01	<b>Eduardo:</b> right, I'm going to talk about something that happened outside university, can I? I
02	travelled with my friends to Minas Gerais and to Rio de Janeiro, they had family house and I quite
03	felt/ felt, you know, <b>the accent difference...</b> of the region, I found it very interesting, a:nd when
04	I visited Paraty in Rio de Janeiro, you know, I visited my friend who had done an exchange at my
05	university a:nd people said I was speaking
06	<b>Researcher:</b> [Brazilian friend
07	E: Brazilian friend, people said that, like, <b>before this exchange, I was speaking in a different way,</b>
08	<b>that there was no influence of <i>paulistano</i> accent,</b> I arrived THERE at the bus station (inaudible)
09	"Hi, how are you?" like, "Quite some time [that we've seen each other]", <b>I said something</b>
10	<b>((laughs)) that had an R,</b> you know, "wow, Eduardo", then he started teasing me, "e aí, ma::no,
11	<b>meu, tudo bem, magina"</b> ((mocks <i>paulistano</i> accent and we laugh)), but, yes, like, I was/ was
12	going out with his friends, you know, like, then <b>they started criticizing my accent influenced</b>
13	<b>by <i>paulistano</i></b> ((laughs in an uncomfortable way)), but I think it's kinda interesting, when I was,
14	like, in Minas Gerais, you know, <b>they spoke very fast, because they tend to shorten the ending</b>
15	<b>of words...</b> I guess it's a very remarkable experience, that I would never be able to live if I were
16	in Japan
17	<b>R:</b> and what is the sensation... of speaking such a local Portuguese, it is/ of a Brazilian identifying
18	in you a feature of a so local Portuguese, is there a sensation of belonging or not?
19	<b>E:</b> it is/ <b>usually people find my speaking very weird,</b> hum, "where are you from?", "I am from
20	Japa:n", "hi, are you from Japan? why are you here? why are you speaking Portuguese?", oh, so
21	many things
22	(...)

##### 8. Transcription Conventions:

Symbols	Meaning
...	Short pause
it's WRONG	emphasis
/	Self-correction or restart
(6)	Duration of the pause
((laughs))	Description of non-verbal activity
[	Overlapping speech
(inaudible)	Sound not understood during transcription

23	E: so, I imagine that, being here in São Paulo, you know, I am speaking with Japanese accent,
24	because for you all, you hear (inaudible) a foreigner (inaudible) ((we laugh)) but when I visited
25	Minas Gerais/ both in Minas and in Rio de Janeiro, like, people didn't notice I am Japanese,
26	like... "oh, you're speaking with a different accent", like that, you know: "where did you grow
27	up?", "I'm studying at ((says the university name))", "ah, right, your accent is influenced by
28	<i>paulistanos</i> ", ((we laugh)), "no, I am from Japan", "Oh, you are from Japan, but you were born
29	here and so on and so on, right?", "NO:" ((laughs)) "I am on an exchange", always this confusion

Eduardo: é, vou falar uma coisa aconteceu fora da Unicamp, posso falar? eu viajei por Minas Gerais e pelo Rio de Janeiro, acompanhando meus amigos, que tinham casa da família e eu senti/ sentia bastante, né, a diferença de sotaque... da região mesmo, achei muito interessante, e:: quando eu visitei Paraty no Rio de Janeiro, né, eu/ visitei meu amigo que fazia intercâmbio na faculdade minha e:: dizem que eu tava falando

Pesquisadora:

[amigo brasileiro

E: amigo brasileiro, dizem que, tipo, antes desse intercâmbio, eu tava falando outro jeito, que não tinha nada de influência de sotaque paulistano, eu cheguei LÁ na rodoviária (inaudível) "Oi, tudo bem?" tipo, "Faz tempo", eu falava uma coisa ((ri) que tinha R, né, "nossa, Eduardo", aí ele começou a zoar, "e aí, ma::no, meu, tudo bem, magina" ((imita sotaque paulistano e nós rimos)), mas é, tava/ tava saindo com amigos dele mesmo, né, aí tipo depois eles começaram a criticar meu sotaque influenciado pelo paulistano ((ri de forma desconfortável)), mas acho que é até interessante, quando eu tava em Minas Gerais mesmo né, eles tavam falando muito rápido, porque eles tendem a cortar terminação de palavras assim... acho que é uma experiência bem marcante que eu nunca poderia conhecer estando no Japão

P: e que sensação que dá... falar português tão local, que é/ um brasileiro consegue identificar em você uma característica de um português tão local, dá uma sensação de pertencimento ou não?

E: é que/ geralmente as pessoas ficam estranhando muito, a minha fala, é, "de onde você é?", "sou do Japão: ", "oi, você é do Japão? Por que você tá aqui? Por que você tá falando português?", ah, muita coisa (...)

E: então, pelo que imagino, estando aqui em São Paulo mesmo, né, estou falando com sotaque japonês, porque para vocês, ouve um (inaudível) estrangeiro ((inaudível, seguido de risada)) mas quando então eu fiquei lá em Minas Gerais/ tanto em Minas Gerais quanto no Rio de Janeiro, tipo, o pessoal não percebeu... que eu fosse japonês, depois da explicação NEM percebeu que eu fosse japonês, tipo... "ah, você tá falando com sotaque diferente", assim, né::, "onde você cresceu?", "tô fazendo faculdade na Unicamp", "ah, verDA:de, seu sotaque tá influenciado pelos paulistanos"((rimos)) "não, é que eu sou do Japão", "a:::, você é do Japão, mas cresceu aqui tal coisa, né?", "NÃ::O" ((ri)) tô fazendo intercâmbio tal", essa confusão

Minas Gerais and Rio de Janeiro are neighbouring states of São Paulo state, and all of them are part of the Southeast region. It is worth pointing out again that University C is in the state of São Paulo – not in the city of São Paulo. There is a distance of 100km between the city where University C's main campus is and the city of São Paulo, but both cities are relatively easily connected by highways. São Paulo is the richest city of Brazil, being a hub for financial, economic and people's flows. In terms of ways of speaking, Portuguese spoken in these three different states visited by Eduardo have their own particular characteristics and status. Also, Portuguese spoken by those born in the city where the campus is located would be considered quite provincial when contrasted to Portuguese spoken by certain idealised *paulistanos*, those born in the metropolis or who, after being there for some time, may display features of this way of speaking.

As can be seen on the excerpt, the Japanese student's narrative contains a metacommentary about what we would refer to different *Portugueses* spoken in the Southeast region of Brazil. On the one hand, Eduardo uses i) metacommentary to talk about his own way of speaking. On the other hand, metacommentary is also depicting ii) how, in Eduardo's view, people he encountered in his journey and who lived in the same region (Southeast) speak in different ways. By talking about what is "officially" called Portuguese, Eduardo highlights various nuances of the language and describes not only how he perceives his own way of speaking, but also how his interlocutors perceive it.

Because of Eduardo's interactions, particularly on campus and its surroundings, he learned how to sound like a *paulistano*; in other words, he had not displayed any *paulistano* trait before his academic exchange to Brazil (lines 7-8).

We can affirm that University C concentrates a huge diversity of ways of speaking because those who study there come from all Brazilian regions and from different countries, but these facts are downplayed by Eduardo. To him, he was still perceived as a foreigner when involved in social practices at the Brazilian university (lines 23- 24). He added that he sounded like someone speaking Portuguese “with Japanese accent” on campus. However, when he transited to other states, such differences became blurred, so he would be perceived not only as a Brazilian, but as a Brazilian who was born in the metropolis (or at least, learned how to speak Portuguese as an idealised *paulistano* would speak), as depicted in the final lines of the narrative.<sup>9</sup>

It is especially important to understand how ideologies play a role here. Eduardo’s Portuguese is oftentimes depicted as weird (line 19) and oftentimes depicted as relatively prestigious Portuguese (negotiated in lines 23-29). As mentioned, when attached to how Japanese he sounds, he affirms that his way of speaking is weird. Nonetheless, when his way of speaking would not be attached to being Japanese, but instead, would index a metropolitan high-value Portuguese, suddenly, to him, it becomes more prestigious, what can be perceived when he quotes the conversations he had with those encountered during his trips. While explaining, Eduardo commented proudly on his way of speaking, relying on a prestigious language ideology. We should bear in mind, though, that this high-value Portuguese is not being attributed by all his Brazilian interlocutors, but instead *being contested* - especially for those who are of the same age and are not from São Paulo. This is made clear at the moment Eduardo arrived at the bus station and a Brazilian friend, whom he had previously met in Japan, welcomed him. The Japanese young man started being teased for his (now new) way of speaking like a *paulistano*, both because of the sounds he produces (“I spoke something that had an R”) and the words he employs (“e aí, ma::no, meu, tudo bem, magina”). Implicitly, his friend’s metacommentary would be functioning as a way of telling Eduardo not to speak like a *paulistano*. Laughter here is also a metacommentary, as Eduardo clearly had felt frustrated when his friends mocked his *paulistano* accent (lines 12-13).

It draws our attention that Eduardo is aware of, and able to discern between, all these nuances of Portuguese language (what he calls “accent differences”), even regional differences, like some features of Portuguese spoken in Minas Gerais (lines 14-15). Even more, how the memorable experience regarding his sojourn is bound to his success in language, to his frustration and to different values attributed to *Portugueses* spoken by him. Just as Betsy Rymes (2014b, p. 12) affirms, when we observe metacommentary, “more subtle repertoire elements are involved than simply whether ‘English’ or ‘Spanish’ is being spoken”.

## II. Befriending Brazilians around the university

The next situation involves Alice narrating her first realisation of having a Korean accent. Due to the limited range of PAL courses, this narrative was prompted by the researcher’s suggestion about PAL modules or short-term courses that could be offered by the university to international students:

### Situation 2

01	<b>Researcher:</b> is there anything else that you consider important? a module, for example, it could be
02	something shorter, like a pronunciation workshop
03	<b>Alice:</b> ah! pronunciation is very good!
04	<b>R:</b> ((laughs)) your pronunciation is great! ((both laugh)) you DON’T need it ((laughs))
05	<b>A:</b> this is true... but Asians have accents, you know, so, in fact, I didn’t know I have a Korean accent
06	((laughs))
07	<b>R:</b> I guess you almost don’t have an accent
08	<b>A:</b> there are so:::me people that “ah, you have an accent, don’t you?”... I went to a party and I met
09	a very drunk girl ((laughs)) in the bathroom... her friend said “a:::h can you hold her for now?”, so I
10	tried talking to her, “ah, hi, how’s it going?”, “you good? you alright?”, but she said, “AH! you have
11	an ACCENT! where are you from?” ((laughs)) goodness ((both laugh)) goodness!
12	<b>R:</b> [goodness... I think that

9. There was a large Japanese migration flow to Brazil throughout the 20th century, and this country is widely mentioned as having the largest *nikkei* community outside Japan. This could be one of the reasons why Eduardo’s appearance would not be promptly linked to the one of an “outsider” in Brazil.

13	I barely hear any accent from you ((both laugh)) so perhaps if I didn't know you're Korean ((Alice
14	laughs)), I'd think "ah, she's Brazilian" ((Alice laughs)) everybody has an accent, you know so do I,
15	but there are Brazilian accents (Alice laughs) and
16	A: [yeah
17	R: accents from people who are not Brazilian
18	A: but among Asians also say: "AH! You have Japanese accent, you have Chinese accent", Chinese
19	can't speak/ differ between R or (inaudible)
20	(...)
21	A: so, I guess I don't know because it's ME, I am speaking, so...but maybe I have a Korean accent
22	((both laugh)) an exception, I want to improve

## Situação 2

Pesquisadora: mais alguma coisa que você acha que seria importante? um curso... por exemplo, pode ser uma coisa mais simples, tipo, de proNÚNcia...

Alice: ah! pronúncia é muito bom!

P: ((ri)) a sua pronúncia é ótima! ((ambas riem)) você NÃO precisa ((ri))

A: isso é verdade, mas... os asiáticos têm sotaques né, então, na verdade, eu não sabia que eu tem sotaque coreano ((ri))

P: eu acho que você quase não tem sotaque

A: mas tem algu::mas pessoas que t/ "ah você tem sotaque né?", eu fui pra uma festa e encontrei uma menina muito bêbada ((ri)) no banheiro, a amiga dela fez "a::h pode segurar ela por enquanto?", então eu tentei conversar com ela, "ah, oi, tudo bem?", "tá bom, tá bem?", mas ela falei assim "AH! você tem soTAque! de onde você é?" ((ri)) nossa! ((ambas riem)) nossa!

P: [no::ssa... eu acho que/ eu assim, eu quase não ouço nenhum sotaque seu (as duas riem) então talvez se eu não soubesse que você é coreana, eu pensasse "ah, ela é brasileira" ((Alice ri)) todo mundo tem sotaque né, eu tenho também, mas é que tem sotaques brasileiros ((Alice ri)) e

A: [aham

P: sotaques de outras pessoas que não são brasileiras

A: Mas entre os asiáticos também fala "AH! você tem sotaque japonês, você tem sotaque chinês", os chineses não conseguem falar/ diferenciar R ou (inaudível)

(...)

A: então, acho que eu não sei, porque:: eu, sou eu que falo, então...mas talvez eu tenha sotaque coreano ((ambas riem)) uma exceção, eu quero melhorar

Alice narrates a situation in which she, as many undergraduate students, attended a party in a *república*.<sup>10</sup> Having just met a girl in the bathroom who had drunk too much and was not feeling well, Alice started a conversation to check on her (line 10). According to what Alice recounts, we assume that her interlocutor quickly perceived her way of speaking as non-Brazilian, then making use of metacommentary (lines 10-11). As the Korean student made clear (lines 5-6), that was the first moment she was astoundingly confronted with her own communicative resources. By the end of the narration, she concluded that it was not possible for her to self-analyse her speech, thus making it harder to be aware about what she refers to as a Korean accent (line 21). Furthermore, by adding that she wants to reduce her accent (line 22), she ends up reinforcing an ideology of a fixed language that would carry no marks from its speakers.

By strengthening her argument with her lived experience, Alice aligns other Asian students with her stance, saying that a pronunciation module would be effective for them. *Asians have accents* (line 5), she said, then implying that, just like her, they maybe would not be able to grasp these salient traits in their pronunciation. Interestingly, she unpacks the Asian category, remarking that students from different countries in Asia would have particular accents when speaking Portuguese, something that would always be perceived by other Asians (lines 18-20).

10. A house shared by students in Brazil is popularly known as *república*. *Repúblicas* very often throw very popular parties throughout the study year.

Before moving on to the next excerpt, we add a note about the researcher's positionality. Gabas (2021) has already acknowledged that bringing to the fore ideologies that comprise researchers' practices can be challenging. What is seen in Situation 2 is that, in an attempt to reassure Alice about her pronunciation, first the researcher said that Alice's accent almost went undetected (line 7). Then, she seemed to assume that unfamiliarity with Alice could lead one to think that the Korean girl is Brazilian (line 14), attributing her a Brazilian accent, after all *everybody has an accent* (line 14). Although the researcher displays considerable knowledge of the dominant ideologies at play and tries to tackle these issues departing from a performative view of language, what she said implies that it would be fine to have an accent if one is Brazilian, but not if Korean. From our standpoint, the researcher's positioning exposes a dissonance between (fluid) theories about language and (still rigid) practices about/in language. In a way, retrospectively data in which they have participated can be a tool for applied linguists to investigate their own hierarchical sedimentations, which will manifest in various social contexts, including academic ones.

Zooming in on the interactions Eduardo had with his friends on campus, we observe, just as he had hinted before (Situation 1), that the perceived "Brazilian" features of his speech are set aside, being substituted by his Japanese pronunciation of words in Portuguese (Situation 3). Similar to Alice, Eduardo described a certain lack of self-awareness. During our conversation, he used metacommentary to *mark sounds* and to signal the distress he went through in two different social spaces: with his friends and during Portuguese classes. He qualified these moments as *heavy*:

### Situation 3

01	Eduardo: the worst thing, but/ dunno, the worst thing is that I don't realize, you know, if I make
02	a mistake in the classroom because nobody corrects me, but in everyday conversation, as I get
03	along very well with people, you know, like, they correct, you know, "you're not doing it right"...
04	yeah, but both are heavy, for example, you know, like, dunno... for me to improve I say that
05	this correction from my friends worked a lot, I even asked them to make an impression of my
06	pronunciation, "but how is it wrong? So do it like me", and I understood ((laughs))
07	Researcher: so it/ then it hit you
08	E: I tried to pay attention to, like, the tongue movement (inaudible)
09	R: you used the word heavy, you said
10	E: [heavy?
11	R: yes, in both contexts it's heavy.... to make this mistake, to produce a sound like this
12	(...)
13	E: (inaudible) it's just that/ hu::m, when I am, like, corrected because of these mistakes, I kinda/
14	get shocked, you know? wow, it's wrong, so it's been a long time that I am speaking like that,
15	right?, that they corrected/ so it was a shock, you know? wow, it's really wrong... but/ so, in this
16	case, it was a shock being corrected, spoken, like, "this is wrong", right... but in the classroom
17	nobody corrects me, but I'm wrong, I don't realize it, but it's heavy, that's why I said, like, both
18	cases are kinda heavy
19	R: and do you think it's very serious, to mispronounce words?
20	E: yes, I do, I think it's very serious (8) because it's something that is never out there on the
21	manuals, on the textbooks that I checked... kinda like "wow, I didn't know about that because
22	nobody taught", right, but, like, my friends, like, started talking about this kind of/ like teasing, you
23	know? "ah! It's wrong, Eduardo, you are Japanese", you know?
24	R: yes, this is something interesting, to be acknowledged as a Japanese because of a certain way of
25	producing sounds in Portuguese
26	E: yes, it's kinda shocking, isn't it?
27	R: do you mind this situation? maybe this is heavy
28	E: yes, YES, also
29	R: all of this?
30	E: yeah, maybe, all of this is kinda heavy, you know? Because we never learned this (inaudible)
31	putting yourself in Brazil, right, putting yourself in a situation in which people only speak Portuguese,
32	ah, I thoug/ and people start teasing, you know, my pronunciation, it's kinda heavy, you know
33	R: can I understand this heavy, one of these heavy that you mentioned, that "we never learned this,
34	it's not in the textbooks" as an injustice, is that it?
35	E: that's it, shocking, so let's say, sometimes they talk about these mistakes in a kind of derogatory
36	way, you know, "it's WRONG", you know, with that prejudice that they have, Japanese can't
37	articulate R, J, I don't know why, but they know about this ((laughs))

## Situação 3

Eduardo: pior, mas/ não sei, pior que eu não percebo, sabe, se eu cometer erro na sala de aula porque ninguém aponta, mas na conversação cotidiana mesmo, como eu me dou muito bem com as pessoas, né, tipo, o pessoal aponta, né, "tá errando"... é, mas os dois são pesados, no caso, né, tipo, sei lá... para melhoRAR eu digo que esse apontamento dos meus amigos funcionou bastante, até eu pedi a eles imitarem, minha pronúncia, "mas como é que tá errado? então me imita", e eu entendi ((ri))

Pesquisadora: aí dá pra/ aí cai a ficha

E: tentei reparar, tipo, a movimentação da língua (inaudível)

P: você usou a palavra pesado, falou assim

E: [pesado?

P: é, nos dois contextos é pesado... errar, fazer esse erro, produzir desse jeito

(...)

E: (inaudível) é que assim é:: quando eu for, tipo assim, apontado por esses erros, meio que/ fico chocado, sabe? nossa, tá errado, então faz muito tempo que tô falando desse jeito, né?, que apontou, aí levou um CHOque, sabe? nossa, tá errado mesmo... mas/ então, nesse caso, eu levo choque sendo apontado, falado, tipo, "tá errado isso", tá... mas na sala de aula ninguém aponta, mas tô errado, não percebo, mas é pesado, por isso que eu disse, tipo, os dois casos eram meio pesados

P: e você acha que é muito sério, trocar os sons?

E: é, acho, eu acho muito sério (8) porque é uma coisa que nunca saiu na apostila, nos materiais que eu usava... meio que "nossa, não sabia disso, porque ninguém ensinou", né, mas tipo, os meus amigos, tipo, vieram falar sobre isso meio que zoando, sabe? "ah! tá errado, Eduardo, você é japonês", sabe?

P: é, isso é uma coisa interessante... ser reconhecido como japonês por causa de uma determinada forma de produzir o português

E: sim, é meio chocante, né

P: você se incomoda com isso? talvez isso seja pesado

E: é, É, também

P: tudo?

E: é, talvez, tudo que seja meio pesado, sabe? porque pra gente nunca aprendeu isso (inaudível) colocando no Brasil, né, colocando uma situação em que as pessoas só falam português, ah, eu pens/ começar a ficar zoando, sabe, da minha pronúncia, é meio pesado, sabe

P: eu posso entender esse pesado, um desses pesado aí que você falou, "que a gente nunca aprendeu isso, não tem nos livros", como uma injustiça, é isso?

E: é isso, chocante, então digamos assim, de vez em quando então eles falam sobre esses erros do jeito meio pejorativo, sabe, "tá eRRA:do", sabe, já com aquele preconceito que eles têm, os japoneses não sabem articular R, J, não sei por quê, mas eles sabem ((ri))

According to him, pronunciation mistakes would neither be a concern (of the teacher) during Portuguese classes (lines 1-2 and 16-17), nor be tackled by textbooks (lines 20-21). We believe it is worth pointing out that Eduardo was an advanced speaker of Portuguese and very interested in linguistics. Considering the number of students in class, the diverse trajectories each of them had and Eduardo's interests, the mispronunciations he is referring to are very mild and would hardly affect his meaning-making negotiations in class or out of class, given that every utterance is situated in a context. Still, some of these features kept bothering him. Influenced by what we would describe as a native speaker ideology, he aimed to solve this tension on his own via two actions: searching books (lines 20-21) and having out-of-class conversations with Brazilian friends, in which he requested to be corrected (lines 4-6) while paying attention to articulation movements (line 8) – a gesture metacommentary.

The depiction Eduardo makes about the value of his Portuguese, unlike in Situation 1, changes. The way we see it, his willingness to sound "less" Japanese unfolds "linguistic oppression" (BADWAN, 2021), not in the institutional space (as could be expected), but with his friends, who start policing the way he speaks. Even though he anticipated a good result from asking his peers to correct him, these cumulative corrections, which at first, helped him, seem to have acquired a much larger – negative – proportion. The help he inquired for became a reason of frustration, what we can see by the words and repetitions he employs to narrate the situation, such as *shocked* (line 14), *shock* (line 15,

16) or *shocking* (26, 36); *it's wrong* (line 14), *it's WRONG* (line 37), *it's really wrong* (lines 15-16), *I'm wrong* (line 17) or *it's wrong, Eduardo, you are Japanese* (line 23) as well as several sentences qualifying the situation as *heavy* (lines 4, 18, 30, 32).

It is worth pointing out that language has not been widely discussed as an object of racialization when it comes to affirmative policies in universities. Likewise, we cannot forget that language is intertwined with other identity markers, such as gender, ethnicity, social class (DRYDEN; DOVCHIN, 2021). What we see above in the situation depicted by Eduardo is exactly the way his body and language are racialised, especially when he quotes his friends by saying *it's wrong, Eduardo, you are Japanese*. Adding to this are the final lines (36-38), when he wonders how it is possible that his friends could be so aware of the sounds from the Japanese language, thus being able to pick on him exactly because of how Japanese he sounds while pronouncing words with [r] or [ʒ]. Suddenly, through the way his interlocutors position him, Eduardo goes from a moment in which he manages and moves his linguistic resources in Situation 1 to a state of being, as Badwan (2021) would call, "languageless", in Situation 3.

### III. Befriending international students

In the last situation below, Alice commented on her friendship with international students, enabled by activities the student-led organisation mentioned in section 2 hosts. The organisation is run by Brazilian students, but operates as a hub for international students' gatherings since their moment of arrival in this country:

#### Situation 4

01	Alice: oh, I think that meeting the other international students really helped me because they are
02	also foreigners and they don't speak very good Portuguese, so I thought that/ oh, everybody does
03	mistakes, so... so I can speak more free with them

#### Situação 4

Alice: ah, acho que encontrar os outros intercambistas me ajudou muito porque eles também são estrangeiros e eles falam não muito bem de português então eu achei que/ ah, todo mundo faz erro, então... então eu posso falar mais livre, com eles
--

Considering the background of the East Asian students of this paper, when the year abroad experience happens, it is the first time they are performing in Portuguese other than in their courses in their home countries. According to the *code* metacommentary Alice made, these students and her would share the foreignness and a lack of skill in speaking Portuguese (line 2), which had helped her confidence rise while speaking (line 3). Interestingly enough, even though Alice's metacommentary indexed a standard language ideology – those who speak "good" Portuguese and are compliant with rules are "native" speakers – paradoxically she also argues that when she talked with non-Brazilians, she experienced a language in which she was not stuck to rules, in which there was *freedom* (line 3). In a way, we can say that Alice also builds scales in an ecologic way, being aware of hierarchies, even if she aligns with the ideology that being a good user of a language is to conform to rules.

It is through the immersion experience of the year abroad programme – a rationale that reinforces the promising superiority of being in touch with native speakers – that Alice realises that when using communicative resources, we can be free. The (apparently fixed) Portuguese spoken by her Brazilian interactants (or so-called "native" speakers) at University C and its surroundings, however, did not render her free – her non-Brazilian interlocutors' did.

## 4. DISCUSSION

On the one hand, the tensions in the *Portugueses* spoken in Situations 2 and 3 depicted how the East Asian international students interviewed for the study became self-aware of the differentiation between their way of speaking and other Brazilian students' way of speaking at University C. This self-awareness, however, was limited to how foreign (Asian, Korean, Japanese) they sounded, what generated feelings of how their communicative repertoires (and themselves) were not on a level playing field, and should be altered (through Portuguese classes or textbooks or even by interlocutors' corrections). Complying with ideologies of native speaker and of a monolingual Portuguese when interacting with their Brazilian peers, the participants become trapped (and immobile) within

very rigid sociolinguistic scales, naturalising inferiority. It is not surprising – particularly with the continuous symbolic violence Eduardo went through – that ecological orientations to sociolinguistic scales hardly find their way in these metacommentaries.

On the other hand, the metacommentaries presented in Situations 1 and 4 threw light on various ecological factors involved in what we have been referring to as tensions. Among these factors are the Brazilian regions where speakers were located and/or lived, different social practices in order to get to meet people and organising communicative resources differently. The metacommentaries elucidated how students manoeuvre their resources despite indexing, at the same time, widely propagated language ideologies.

Rymes (2014a, p. 314) underscores that metacommentaries can make experiences visible, and that “caring about the variety of experiences that make up an individual’s communicative existence is an ethical choice”. We would say that, in our case, investigating these metacommentaries and listening to students ignited a fire for the question of awareness. As seen on the data, to become self-aware of one’s way of speaking does not necessarily make her aware of dominant language ideologies, so commonly disseminated not only in our everyday talk, but also through institutions. For this reason, we would sustain that students should be introduced to, and feel the reverberation of, another kind of awareness. The situations analysed draw our eyes to the importance of defending the nexus between language (self-)awareness and what Badwan (2021, p. 183) addressed as social justice awareness:

Awareness starts with acknowledging that language can be used as a tool to other, profile, stigmatise, disadvantage, divide, demote and shame people. These are acts of oppressing, silencing and marginalising identities, emotions and bodies. Yet, the affected individuals are made invisible and worthless by dominant social configurations of symbolic violence. Derogatory comments on someone’s language, accent, or way(s) of speaking are not innocent banter or moral concerns about making someone sound more educated or more intelligent. Rather, they are acts of discrimination that cause immense pain and suffering and amount to acts of oppression.

Having this weaving in mind, we sustain that working via the epistemologies of the South (SANTOS, 2019) can help disrupt, to a certain extent, what we have been observing as an internationalisation agenda, not always only enforced through the use of a hegemonic language, such as English, as the data shows, but also through standardisation and a one and only Portuguese, what, as Eduardo shows us in Situation 1, does not sustain itself. Santos (p. 383) affirms that “the possibility of the mutual enrichment of different knowledges and cultures is the *raison d’être* of the epistemologies of the South”. Two main ideas of the author speak to the context depicted here: *becoming conscious of the incompleteness of knowledges and making different knowledges more porous*.

In light of institutional work, it is known that few PAL modules (table 1, section 2) are offered at University C. Both Alice and Eduardo seem to believe that an offer of modules “on pronunciation” would solve the situations they face, thus “erasing” their accents. Eduardo indicates that his mispronunciations were never spotted during PAL classes, an approach that, as explained above, we endorse. Apart from PAL classes (that are not mandatory) and the university being an application centre of Celpe-Bras (the Brazilian Portuguese Proficiency Test), no other educational language policy implemented at the moment focuses on inbound mobility. Moreover, Brazilian peers were the ones who put Alice’s and Eduardo’s way of speaking Portuguese to the test, which means that language policy implementation should not be directed only towards international students or PAL. We question, then, what kind of debate on language resources and linguistic diversity the institution is promoting via its internationalisation policy, not only in PAL classes, but as a whole, to all students and staff. It is important to have in mind what César and Cavalcanti (2007, p. 50) reported 15 years ago. Even though Brazil is a multilingual country, educational systems reinforce an “unquestionable truth” (e.g., the monolingual Brazil with a prestigious Portuguese) in its practices and policies from a very early age, thus excluding various populations that compose the country. A similar point was also described by Dryden and Dovchin (2021) in their work on accentism in Australia, as they explain educational settings and media broadcasting end up contributing to structural forms of racism via the insistent propagation of dominant English-speaking forms as the norm. For these reasons, to think of a just internationalisation involves tackling the fact that the university, with its practices and curriculum, is a place that reinforces the coloniality of knowledge, here specifically manifesting itself through a monoculture of languages.

At the same time, the excerpts presented here cast light on how students navigate their interactions, becoming involved in a variety of meaning-making practices and spaces, in which language resources are always at the fore. As shown above, these lived experiences highlight how international students as well as home students are agents of knowledge circulation, regardless of the kind of language ideology and language conceptualisation they might

convey. Particularly looking at the participants' metacommentaries, we notice that the scales they build on speaking Portuguese varies depending on ecological factors, such as the spaces they inhabit and on several identity markers of their interlocutors.

This is one of the reasons why a counter-hegemonic language education (and PAL classes) is so important. It is exactly because "internationalization is never discussed as a way to help students understand or rethink their place in the world" (BUCKNER; STEIN, 2020, p. 6) that, with the data analysed here, we advocate for paying attention to the role of languages and the agency of students. In order to promote an ecological orientation to sociolinguistic scales and awareness of language resources, discussions at universities need to be widened so that students can contest and realise the value of their communicative repertoires, since they are never given or detached from the spaces where students perform. Likewise, we have to debate racialization and oppression (and their effects), which are carried out *in languages*, and disclose modes of violence towards being the Other, the foreigner, and here, the "Asian".

## FINAL REMARKS

We have presented situational moments with different actors in which East Asian international undergraduate students engaged in during their sojourn in Brazil. While these situations highlighted how students' experiences in Portuguese are not confined to lectures and PAL classes, tensions around *Portuguese* spoken by international students and values attained to them became clear through metacommentary. Even though students at times framed their repertoire's value through ecological sociolinguistic scales, they also brought out hierarchical ideologies. Likewise, it cannot be forgotten the fact that Brazilian peers had a major role in confronting international students' way of speaking.

At this point, our space is limited, but we would like to return to César and Cavalcanti's (2007, p. 51) words on education and language teaching: "What kind of inclusion? Is it to reiterate dominant political projects and ideologies?". Although public universities in Brazil have many features of a westernised university model, including the supposed homogeneity of knowledge, we conceive the role of universities as a formative one. From the perspective we emphasised here, when the process of internationalisation is under discussion, it is not enough to provide language classes to international students or to increase the offer of modules to cope with the variety of profiles that come to the university. It is only through language education to the academic community as a whole, including teacher education, that it will be possible to uncover struggles that arise from the manoeuvre of linguistic resources. In sum, the inclusion we would like to create, based on language awareness and social justice awareness, needs to resist the hierarchy and totality of knowledges – and, consequently, languages.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

The two authors participated in the planning and writing of this manuscript. Bruna Elisa Frazatto wrote the introduction and sections 1, 2 and 4. Bruna Elisa Frazatto and Ana Cecília Cossi Bizon collaborated on section 3 and conclusion. Both authors reviewed and edited the final version of the text.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

## DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Due to privacy and ethical concerns, supporting data cannot be made available.

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