

The relationship between Portuguese and indigenous languages in the Community of Portuguese Language Countries: an existential sociolinguistics perspective

A relação entre língua portuguesa e as línguas indígenas na Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa: uma perspectiva sociolinguística existencial

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Abstract

In this study, I criticize the use of Portuguese as the sole official language of the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP). I address the question: Portuguese as the sole official language of the CPLP: what insight is gained for the post-colonial discourse analysis of the CPLP? I employ the theoretical framework of existential sociolinguistics and engage in the method of philosophical reflection – an analysis of arguments – the case of the relationship between Portuguese and indigenous languages within the CPLP as stated in the organization's objective. I found that Portuguese as the sole official language of the CPLP fosters hegemonic linguistic power, perpetuates social injustice and anti-intercultural value, and undermines linguistic and cultural rights and dignity. In conclusion, I propose a multilingual language policy with the representation of indigenous languages to solve this problem and demonstrate an equitable, dignified, and decolonized treatment of languages other than Portuguese in the CPLP.

Keywords: Existential sociolinguistics; Philosophical reflection; Post-colonial discourse.

Resumo

Neste estudo, critico o uso do português como única língua oficial da Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa (CPLP). Abordo a questão: o português como única língua oficial da CPLP: que leitura se obtém para a análise do discurso pós-colonial da CPLP? Emprego o referencial teórico da sociolinguística existencial e envolvo-me no método de reflexão filosófica – uma análise de argumentos – o caso da relação entre o português e as línguas indígenas no seio da CPLP tal como consta do objetivo da organização. Descobri que o português como única língua oficial da CPLP fomenta o poder linguístico hegemônico, perpetua a injustiça social e uma força anti-intercultural que mina os direitos e a dignidade linguística e cultural. Em conclusão, proponho uma política linguística multilíngue com a representação das línguas indígenas para resolver este problema e demonstrar um tratamento equitativo, digno e descolonizado das línguas indígenas na CPLP.

Palavras-chave: Sociolinguística existencial; Reflexão filosófica; Discurso pós-colonial.

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Introduction

In this study I criticize the use of Portuguese as the sole official language of the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP). I address the question: Portuguese as the sole official language of the CPLP: what insight is gained for the post-colonial discourse analysis of the CPLP? I employ the theoretical framework of existential sociolinguistics and engage in the method of philosophical reflection – an analysis of arguments – in this case, solidarity among the members of CPLP as stated in the organization’s objective. I found that Portuguese as the sole official language of the CPLP fosters hegemonic linguistic power relations and social injustice. This injustice constitutes an obstacle to the sustainable development of the entire community.

To overcome this obstacle, the CPLP needs to implement a more humane language policy for the common good and human dignity (SEALE; MALLINSON, 2018). In conclusion, I propose a multilingual language policy with the representation of indigenous languages to solve this problem and demonstrate a just, dignified, and decolonized treatment of languages other than Portuguese in the CPLP. In addition, in my opinion, solidarity in a multilingual international organization should also imply an equitable use of languages other than Portuguese (LOTP) existing in the CPLP speech community. Hence, since this is not the case, what insight does this policy provide us as students and scholars of postcolonial and intercultural relations studies interested in the CPLP? Before addressing this research question, I would like to briefly explain what the CPLP stands for and what its objective is.

The CPLP

The Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP) also known as the Lusophone Commonwealth is an intercontinental politico-economic and sociocultural (Africa, Asia, South America, Europe, and Oceania) organization with nine member nations: Angola, Brazil, Cabo Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, Mozambique, Portugal, São Tome and Príncipe, and Timor-Leste. Portuguese is the sole official language of this intercontinental organization. Describing the organization’s objectives, one of the sources writes: “Founded on July 17, 1996, upon the principle of solidarity, the community’s statutes define three main objectives for the organization: political and diplomatic coordination, cooperation in all areas, and the diffusion of the Portuguese language” (see Appendix B). This study focuses on the need for pursuing a multilingual policy to realize a relation of solidarity and social justice between Portuguese and indigenous languages. Hence, for the sake of equity, the CPLP needs to implement a language policy within the theoretical framework of existential sociolinguistics, paradigm that fosters social justice or “existential justice” (BALOSA, 2022a, p. 160) and dignity for all languages (SEVERO, 2014; MORENO CABRERA, 2016). In addition, solidarity within a multilingual community implies solidarity among all languages of that speech community. Hence, a monolingual official language policy may not justify the solidarity professed by the CPLP’s objective. Solidarity should entail concrete actions in support of greater linguistic/cultural diversity – manifest in the discourse of the relationship between Portuguese and LOTP, such as by adopting bilingual or multilingual educational policies, which may also contribute to reducing poverty and achieving greater social justice (MILLER, 2007). Indigenous languages and Portuguese used within linguistic and ecological framework in employment and media, education, and political international public speeches may demonstrate solidarity among Portuguese and LOTP.

In my opinion, it is a politico-moral-obligation for the CPLP to promote the diffusion of LOTP in its speech community. This concrete action should demonstrate the organization’s decolonized mindset toward greater linguistic and cultural diversity and the protection of the linguistic and cultural rights and minority linguistic political legitimacy across the world (SEVERO, 2014; SORRELLS, 2016; BALOSA, 2022a). This concrete action would also foster democracy as it will develop literacy in indigenous languages and empower indigenous or rural inhabitants to become active participants in the democratic processes within the nation-members of the CPLP. This participation may finally contribute to a convincing political legitimacy of the democratically elected leaders of these nations. For example, in the work *Is*

Democracy Possible Here? Principles for a New Political Debate (2006), legal philosopher Ronald Dworkin points to the significance of understanding the political legitimacy of each language and everyone. He writes: “If we accept that it is equally intrinsically important that every human life goes well, then we must not treat any other human being as if his life were a matter of no great consequence. Treating him that way would demean us all, us as well as him or her” (p. 94). This legitimacy was not recognized under the colonial politics of language.

For example, Brazilian linguist Cristine Severo explains that with respect to language, the colonial Portuguese in Lusophone Africa implemented “a complex set of policies of languages and discourses as tools of domination of the colonized people” (SEVERO, 2014, p. 13). She explains that the colonial Portuguese had “to name African languages, develop them within European linguistic discursive structure, and treat them as exotic and uncivilized languages” (SEVERO, 2014, p. 13). If the CPLP should radically be opposed to the mindset of the colonial Portuguese policy with respect to the relationship between Portuguese and LOTP, it must establish a culture of equity and dignity for all languages and foster an active participation of these languages and their speakers in political life of the community. This is what an existential sociolinguistic paradigm entails, that is, to equate “treatment of languages to treatment of people” (BALOSA, 2022a, p. 155). From this paradigm we can deduce that demeaning one language equals to demeaning fellow human beings, speakers of that language. Unfortunately, in one way or another, former colonial powers seem to have difficulty to radically transform and adjust their colonial language policies to the existential reality of the modern intercultural world – the world of diversity – the world of “hybrid existence” (MARCEL, 1967, p. 133; CANCLINI, 1995, p. xxiv-xxviii). It is important for us as scholars and students of post-colonial studies to examine the arguments of these post-colonial organizational alliances to understand which mindsets we are dealing with. That is, whether we are dealing with “reconversion strategies,” (CANCLINI, p. xxvii) and a “sustainable existential intercultural mindset” (BALOSA, 2022a, p. 149, 151) beneficial to the culture of human dignity for all or a mindset of the status quo – “a mindset of domination, oppression, and political injustice” (MARCEL, 2008[1952], p. 30). It is with this alternative in mind that I would address this paper’s research question: what insight does the use of Portuguese as the sole official language and the marginalization of indigenous languages within the CPLP provide to the analysis of post-colonial discourse about this organization?

Research methodology

This study uses the method of philosophical reflection to explore the discourse promoting Portuguese as the sole language of the CPLP. The relationship between Portuguese and indigenous languages in the CPLP also entails the relationship among human, cultural, and environmental diversities of the organization. That is, any discriminatory attitude or action related to languages affects these diversities as well. This method draws on the work of the French philosopher Gabriel Marcel (1889-1973), work that critiques the way in which the modern world’s technocracy undermines social justice, human rights, and human dignity. For example, in *Being and Having: An Existentialist Diary* (1965), Marcel explains how, in his research, reflection helped him determine how “human existence comes down to the distinction between what we have and what we are” (p. 9, 155). As about *being*, Marcel writes: “To say that something exists is not only to say that it belongs to the same system as my body, but also to say that it is in some way united to me as my body is” (p. 11). As with respect to *having*, he writes: “Everything really comes down to the distinction between what we have and what we are. What we have presents an appearance of externality to ourselves. What we have are things, things whose existence is, up to a certain point, independent of me. In other words, what I have is added to me” (MARCEL, 1965, p. 11). The CPLP is an intercontinental community in that its *being* and *having* with respect to its cultural and linguistic identity should be equitably identified and legalized in a humanly dignifying way.

Applying philosophical reflection in this study implies to critically examine the CPLP’s use of Portuguese as the sole official language of the organization and its impact in rebuilding post-colonial intercultural relations that promote

the culture of equity, unity within diversity, and human dignity. For example, questions to lead the discussion may be formulated such as: How is the status of official language adopted? How are LOTP used in their local or regional settings? What efforts are being deployed to defend, protect, and promote linguistic rights and dignity in the CPLP? What signs of solidarity are provided between Portuguese as the colonial language and LOTP? How are languages and the speakers of these languages recognized and dignified as active participants not merely reduced to socio-economic interests, but also as participants to extensive politico-moral obligation and committed to global intercultural-intellectuality mentorship in the community? These questions may foster reflections that may touch the hearts and minds of policymakers and push them to take concrete actions in protecting the rights of indigenous languages. Marcel (1963) thinks that this reflection transforms us from “being concerned with safeguarding the existing order and fundamental liberties” into becoming concerned “with establishing a stricter social justice” (p. 18-19).

Furthermore, using the method of philosophical reflection triggers some questions related to other similar case studies. Although the CPLP would like to promote Portuguese, philosophical reflection helps us wonder for example: Why should a language that is already a world language like Portuguese and does not appear threatened with extinction be promoted? If a multilingual policy is used in most international alliances or organizations as official languages, why can such a policy not be implemented in the CPLP? Existential sociolinguistics and decolonization discourse analysis can be deployed to better understand the motivation behind this policy of using Portuguese as the sole official language of CPLP. Hence, philosophical reflection within a critical discourse analysis perspective seems to be the appropriate method to reach this goal. In addition, the CPLP should rethink and adjust to intercultural values and globalization demands by developing and implementing an official multilingual policy. This representational and participative politics of language may encourage its nation-members to actively participate in the processes of the culture of democracy, sustainable development, politico-economic, sociocultural affairs, and human dignity for all (SACHS, 2015; MORENO CABRERA, 2016; BALOSA, 2022a). This policy may contribute to a comprehensive development of the CPLP members since concrete projects in indigenous languages such as bilingual education, employment readiness training, bilingual/multilingual healthcare service, political/public address, and media may become significant transformational factors for that development. The CPLP should not find any difficulty to implement a multilingual policy since many existing international organizations and nations are multilingual.

Examples of Portuguese in multilingual policy

The European Union has 24 official language and Portuguese is one of these official languages of this Union. The African Union has also a multilingual policy with 6 official languages, which Portuguese is one of them as well. Another example is the case of Mirandese in Portugal. In 1999, the Portuguese government was able to make Mirandese, according to European Union, a language spoken by about 10,000 people, the second official language of Portugal. These examples show that there already exists a multilingual official policy within the CPLP and that adding LOTP to the official status should not be an issue, but should be, instead, a way to protect and promote the linguistic rights and to demonstrate a rupture with the colonial ideology of linguistic discrimination and oppression. As an existential sociolinguist, and a speaker of Portuguese, I think it is an existential sociolinguistic injustice not to include LOTP in the management of the CPLP (PENNYCOOK; MAKONI, 2020). Although what I call an *econotechnocratic* order would promote languages of political and economic power and influence, this anti-intercultural and anti-humanist policy – “language as a human being” (WILLIAMS, 1977, p. 20) prevents LOTP and their speakers from flourishing and participating in the overarching politico-economic, sociocultural structure, technological, and environmental structures of the community. From the two examples above, we can understand that multilingual policy is a common practice in international organizations and many multilingual nations. In my opinion, organizations that want to respect, protect, and promote linguistic rights and linguistic and cultural diversity should not have any difficulty in adopting multiple official languages.

Research question: Portuguese as the sole official language of the CPLP: what insight is gained for the Post-colonial discourse analysis of the CPLP?

To understand the insight that the use of Portuguese as the sole official language and the marginalization of indigenous languages within the CPLP provide to the analysis of post-colonial discourses, we need to look at the historical colonial past of the CPLP while we reflect on whether the new policies still sustain colonial ideologies or not. To establish a culture of existential justice and human dignity for all, it does not suffice to establish alliances of collaboration and solidarity while the power relations between the members of these alliances and their politico-economic and sociocultural structures remain ambiguous. Alliances with transformational leadership motivated by a “sustainable existential intercultural mindset” would require transparency and consensus (BALOSA, 2022a, p. 155). In addition, today’s intercultural world encourages “intercultural communication competence” (MORENO CABRERA, 2006, p. 41, 42; BYRAM, 2008, p. 162, 163) and “a global intercultural citizenship” (BALOSA, 2022a, p. 150). That is, the critical linguistic and cultural awareness and its application within a more humane and more global intercultural solidarity mindset.

With all these multilingual/multicultural/intercultural imperatives, what insight does the use of Portuguese as the sole official language of the CPLP provide us? The answer to this paper’s research question is – the strategic and symbolic maintenance of overarching hegemonic power through language policy. Since language incarnates the overarching management of politico-economic, sociocultural, moral, and environmental structures, promoting one sole official language reinforces the power attributed to that language and its speakers. Hence, Portuguese as the sole official language of the CPLP plays that role of not merely a linguistic hegemonic power but an overarching controlling power with the CPLP. This attribution is contradictory to the objective of the organization according to which is to promote “solidarity” among members of the community. Furthermore, due to the colonial common past of domination, oppression, and discrimination, new alliances should reflect critical-radical transformation by showing awareness of critical linguistic and cultural diversity (BYRAM, 2008). That is, by the CPLP implementing a multilingual policy, it will be coherent and practicing solidarity with its professed organizational objectives. Hence, it will support and promote multilingualism as a resource and skill for its members and their citizens. Multilingualism will be perceived not as an obstacle but as an enriching intercultural competence and contribute to global intercultural citizenship in building better intercultural relations among the nation-members – relations within mutual respect, mutual empowerment, social justice, and human dignity. This may lead to the reduction of poverty and expansion of healthcare, establishment of bilingual/multilingual educational and administrative institutions, employment readiness, cultural enrichment, and an effective management of multilingualism. It is a modern reality that we cannot shy away from today’s “hybrid existence” (MARCEL, 1967, p. 133-134); our mixed identities in “a world so fluidly interconnected” (CANCLINI, 1995, p. xxvii-xxviii).

Theoretical framework: existential sociolinguistic approach

To answer this paper’s research question, I have used the theoretical framework of existential sociolinguistic (BALOSA, 2022a, p. 147, 155). Since existential sociolinguistics supports a multilingual counterstrategy to the monolingual thrust of the CPLP, it provides a reasonable model that the CPLP’s language policymakers should use. Existential sociolinguistics is a sociolinguistic paradigm that emphasizes the inseparability of the treatment of languages and the treatment of human beings or speakers of these languages. It is a model of handling language issues by focusing on establishing relationship among languages and peoples in the context of sociocultural, politico-economic, moral, environmental, and educational policies based on culture of equity, unity within diversity, human rights, and human dignity. The model presents ways to question policies in terms of how these policies “foster equity, unity within diversity, inclusion, human rights (cultural/linguistic rights), human dignity, and dignity for all languages” (BALOSA, 2022a, p. 149). That is, all languages existing in a speech community need to be recognized, respected, included in the participation of

democratic processes, sustainable development, human rights, and human dignity. Implementing equity in dealing with linguistic and cultural diversity is tantamount to treating speakers of these languages as worth participants in the project of sustainable development.

An existential sociolinguistic paradigm helps CPLP policy makers appreciate that “a language cannot be disassociated from its speakers. That is, the treatment of a language is tantamount to the treatment of the speakers of that language – the harm that a language suffers because of oppression and humiliation is also suffered by the speakers of that language” (BALOSA, 2022a, p. 148). In the context of the CPLP as a multilingual organization, an established “political legitimacy for all languages” provides evidence of its position regarding the protection of the right and the dignity of all languages and cultures. It would also demonstrate that the organization is a post-colonial transformational leadership community, that is, a model of an intercultural force and resource for a post-colonial world of equity, unity within diversity, and human dignity for all (BALOSA, 2022a, p. 155-156). For example, it is common knowledge today that, minorities’ languages are exposed to oppression by policies promoting dominant languages and undermining the existence of minority languages and their speakers (MORENO CABRERA, 2006; SEVERO, 2014). These anti-intercultural forces, supported by “colonial language politics ideology” (FISHMAN, 2006, p. 314; SEVERO, 2014, p. 12) and neocolonial politics, may resist embracing a culture of inclusion, diversity, and human dignity (HAGE, 2015). This is where an existential sociolinguistic approach plays its role. That is, the role of encouraging the policymakers to consider the “reality” of the linguistic landscape within their politico-economic and sociocultural spaces (BALDWIN *et al.*, 2014, p. 339) and to do “sociolinguistic justice” (BUCHOLTZ *et al.*, 2019, p. 168), which I prefer to call existential justice (BALOSA, 2022a) to these languages. Recognizing the physical existence of all languages implies defending human rights and human dignity. Regional/local/national/international/indigenous languages are all languages used by human beings and an equitable language policy should accommodate their use or their “ontological status” in public and political spaces next to Portuguese as the mainstream language in the case of the CPLP (PENNYCOOK, 2006, p.67).

Existential sociolinguistics derives its insights from an overarching critical-radical humanist model. That is, a paradigm that puts human beings’ happiness and human dignity upfront in the main objectives of politics and public and social policies. Hence, it radically counteracts any anti-intercultural politics and policy anchored in human domination, exploitation, neo-colonial tendencies, and indignity of minority or micro-cultures and languages (MARCEL, 2008[1952]; HAGE, 2015). The history of colonization and its politics of language have demonstrated their limitations and consequences upon building relationship of justice and human dignity across cultures and nations (WALZER, 1987; DWORKIN, 2006; FISHMAN, 2006; SANDEL, 2009). For example, in her book *The Colours of the Empire: Racialized Representations During Portuguese Colonialism* (2013), Portuguese anthropologist Patrícia Ferraz DE MATOS explains the classical rationale of racism and how the Portuguese rule in the context of the Colonial Empire managed the relationship between its rule and its subjects with respect to race. She argues: “The classical racism is based on the unequal treatment of those seen as different and thus held to be inferior. Racial discrimination exists when individuals of a certain physical appearance are associated with certain traits of personality or conduct held to be positive or negative” (DE MATOS, 2013, p. 1-2).

Indeed, by adopting a multilingual policy, the CPLP will demonstrate a decolonizing mindset and will adopt a critical radical humanistic paradigm which values human dignity above economic and technological interest (MARCEL, 1967; SMITH, 2009; GALLARDO, 2014). In other words, by validating the indigenous languages in its sociolinguistic landscape, the CPLP will provide evidence of abandoning hegemonic politico-economic and sociocultural policies that reinforces colonial or neo-colonial visions, that is, visions of marginalization and non-recognition of the existence of indigenous cultures and languages and their participative power in the decision-making processes. In this regard, Sandel (2009) thinks that “a new politics of the common good – a just society involves reasoning together about the good life” (p. 261) is the way to handling the issue of inequality and non-recognition or marginalization. He writes:

If a just society requires a strong sense of community, it must find a way to contribute to citizens a concern for the whole, a dedication to the common good. It can't be indifferent to the attitudes and dispositions, the 'habits of the heart' that citizens bring to public life. It must find a way to learn against purely privatized notions of the goods life and cultivate civic virtue (SANDEL, 2009, p. 263-264).

From this perspective, the CPLP monolingual policy implicitly subscribes to power politics or politics of domination rather than politics of fostering participatory democracy and active recognition of human, cultural, linguistic, moral, and environmental diversity as national and universal resources. Existential sociolinguistics, as a critical-radical humanist paradigm, can provide the following insights in handling language issues: (1) a better understanding of the issues of language, society, and sustainable development, (2) sustainable transformational interculturality, (3) global intercultural citizenship, and (4) community diplomacy.

Language, society, and sustainable development

From an overarching critical-radical humanistic paradigm, the relationship between language and human dignity, thus, language, society, and the project of sustainable development require participative efforts from all. Mismanagement of language issues in the context of this relationship may prevent not only the citizens but also of the entire society from development and happiness. Hence, good governance implies adoption and implementation of equitable language policies which may also indicate a sign of good government and promotion of human dignity (RATNER, 2020). That is, empowerment of all, better education, better health care, and social justice which are most of the times sources of political mismanagement issues (ROSANVALLON, 2018; CALHOUM *et al.*, 2022). Marginalization of minority languages implies difficulties in meeting the developmental needs of these languages and those of their speakers. Hence, policies that recognize the existence of multiple identities, multiple languages, and multiple cultures as diversified developmental forces may offer their communities better opportunities for sustainable development. Here again, we can deduce that decolonizing anti-intercultural traditional mentality that oppresses diversity may contribute to sustainable development and to what the French philosopher Henry Gouhier calls "the dignity of the human spirit" (GOUHIER, 1987, p. 14).

Herman Daly's *Ecological Economics and Sustainable Development: Selected Essays of Herman Daly* (2007), Jeffrey D. Sachs's *The Age of Sustainable Development* (2015); and Marcel Danesi's *Language, Society, and New Media: Sociolinguistics Today* (2020), provide also encouraging insights on the importance of decolonizing old anti-intercultural mentalities to achieve sustainable development. They argue about adopting politics that motivate new attitudes and insights in fostering a culture of dignity for all languages and all people of state-nations. In the age of globalization, they advocate for policies that strengthen families and communities and unify forces for the common good to be honored and applauded by citizens and neighbors. In the context of the CPLP as an intercontinental multilingual organization, members may organize a referendum on national languages, that is, LOTP to choose one or two national languages that should become national-official language/s of that nation, then make one of the national-official languages, one of the CPLP official language alongside Portuguese. This practice is an exercise of social democracy and intercultural communication competence for contemporary leadership and sustainable development for all. It is not the number of the official languages that should matter, but the consideration, recognition, and validation of these languages as existing in a certain sociolinguistic speech community. This is the meaning of "existential justice" (BALOSA, 2022a, p. 160).

Sachs (2015) suggests that sustainable development as "a normative approach or ethical view of the world is a way to define the objectives of a well-functioning society – one that delivers wellbeing for its citizens today and for future generations" (p. 11). Hence, an organization that does not offer opportunities to all its citizens members to participate in its management may encounter significant obstacles in achieving sustainable development. In addition, Danesi (2020) helps us understand how sociolinguistics fosters the interaction of "language, speech, and society as intrinsically

intertwined” (p. 33). That is, international organizations made of multilingual nations should operate as multiple societies and should be managed as multilingual entities rather than as monolingual one. In the multilingual world we live in, every language and every speaker of these different languages is a part of it. We need a more humane language policy which through a consensus or a referendum can help multilingual nations critically choose one or two regional/national languages to go alongside with the already-in-place international language and make all these elected languages become official *linguae francae* of the organization. This process gives political legitimacy to these national/indigenous languages to enjoy the linguistic rights and dignity due to all languages.

Daly (2007) helps us appreciate the notion of internationalization which he defines as “the increasing importance of relations between nations: international trade, international treaties, alliances, protocols, and so on” (p. 194). Daly argues that the basic unit of community and policy in this internationalization process “remains the nation – even as relations among nations, and individuals in different nations, become increasingly necessary and important” (DALY, 2007). This is where multilingual policy encourages individuals to participate in the community and policy structures and promote the flourishing of various cultural experiences. Within the globalization structure which Daly (2007) defines as “a global economic integration of many formerly national economies into one global economy, by free trade, especially by free capital mobility, and also, as a distant but increasingly important third, by easy or uncontrolled migration” (DALY, 2007). He adds that “globalization is the effective erasure of national boundaries for economic purpose – globalization is the economic integration or the combination of separate albeit related economies into a single economy of the globe” (DALY, 2007). Daly explains that within this political system, “national boundaries become totally porous with respect to goods and capitals, and increasingly porous with respect to people or in some cases cheap human capital” (p. 194-195). The CPLP should consider a multilingual policy as a cultural resource of goods and capitals.

Sustainable transformational interculturality

Sustainable transformational interculturality entails a leadership mindset committed to an exemplary protection of rights, privileges, and dignity of individuals, families, and communities rooted in the values of inclusiveness, equity, diversity, and sustainable development for all. It derives its insight from the politico-moral-obligation, that is, from recognizing human beings as overwhelmingly moral creatures. We don’t cheer evil deeds or extremism. It is for this reason, that most of the people across the world today are committed in global solidarity behind different social movements counteracting racism, social inequalities, and corporations’ exploitation of the masses for their narrow self-interest (MILLER, 2007). I suggest a more intercultural/inclusive, hence, global intercultural solidarity should influence policymakers in the CPLP and across nations and help them adjust their traditional political culture to the intercultural and multilingual social reality at hand and implement equitable and sustainable policies vis à vis human, cultural, and linguistic diversity. Existential injustices within international/intercultural relations are overwhelmingly harmful to the entirety of humanity. If individuals, families, and communities cannot flourish under these injustices, neither can the humanity in general flourish and be a place of safety and happiness.

The temporary enjoyment of elite and discriminatory power politics has demonstrated its limitations and keeping on manipulating the world order around this politics can only duplicate the consequences. Hence, a leadership incarnating *sustainable transformational interculturality* appeals to humility and wisdom, efforts, reflections, and concrete actions in the processes of the decolonization of the present hegemonic world order that perpetuates injustices and human indignity (MARCEL, 2008[1952]; MIGNOLO; WALSH, 2018). With humility, wisdom, efforts, and the love of togetherness in our difference or diversity, it is possible to implement equitable multilingual policies to boost the disposition of *sustainable transformational interculturality*. That is, an individual and collective exemplary leadership of adjustment to sociocultural reality and changes at hand within our zone of policymaking and daily interpersonal relations. The first benefit of this model of leadership is, in my opinion, to counteract a false togetherness. That is, a professed attitude or policy that makes

others believe in the oneness of the organization or the group, while the single-minded self-centeredness of the dominant or powerful ones prevents them from seeing the destructive exploitation of the powerful – what I call, existential injustice. The second benefit is to foster global intercultural solidarity, mutual empowerment, mutual respect, and human dignity in a loving communion where diverse human, cultural, linguistic identities or presences interact in distinctly intercultural, interpersonal, and translingual terms appropriate to inter-subjective/intercultural relations. The principle of sustainable transformational interculturality prepares both policymakers and the people to cultivate a global intercultural citizenship disposition. The next section explains what this principle is all about.

Global intercultural citizenship

Global Intercultural Citizenship is an intercultural competence that constitutes a strategic and symbolic capital in constructing and navigating intercultural/interpersonal relationships (BYRAM, 2008; HALUALANI, 2018; TIN-TOOMEY; CHUNG, 2021). This competence enables us to treat our common humanity with radical and exemplary commitment with respect to protecting and defending these values across our symbolic landscape of universal brotherhood, that is, the human, cultural, linguistic, moral, and environmental diversity across the world. It also enables us to maintain our original national, cultural, and individual identities while we promote mutual respect, mutual appreciation, and mutual empowerment of human, cultural, linguistic, moral, and environmental diversity as national and universal resources. Contrary to the notion of “Global or World citizenship” focusing on a broad moral concern rather than to comprehensive diversity or interculturality, global intercultural citizenship focuses on the equitable recognition, appreciation, and use of human, cultural, linguistic, moral, and environmental voices and uniqueness across localities or communities of the world. Hence, the multiplicity of political, individual, and cultural identities and practices makes “global/world citizenship” (NUSSBAUM, 2002, p. 6-7; SORRELLS, 2016, p. 231-232) implies supporting merely an elitist notion of moral obligation of common humanity rather than fostering the participative actions of individuals, families, and communities through their cultural and linguistic identities. The good intention of proponents of “global citizenship,” for example, in the discussion of the qualities of global citizenship such as “wisdom, courage, and compassion/empathy” (SORRELLS, 2016, p. 231) and “capacities for global citizenship – capacities that reimagine citizenship based on human needs rather than rights” (SORRELLS, 2016, p. 232) are also fine, but in my opinion, this approach needs to be upgraded to include interculturality, which ensures the inclusion of human, linguistic, and cultural diversity.

How to become a *global intercultural citizen*? To become a global intercultural citizen, first, one must be able to recognize not merely our politico-economic and technological interdependence as it seems to be the case under the today’s world order that I call *econotechnocracy* (MARCEL, 1967; CURTIS, 2013; ROSANVALLON, 2018), but also to recognize the sociocultural, moral, and environmental interdependence that constitute our common humanity—our attitude, knowledge, and behavior (BYRAM, 2008). Second, one must be able to cultivate a balanced appreciation or evaluation of the ongoing realities related to the politico-economic, sociocultural, and intercultural relations among different cultures and nations. That is, one must be objective, critical, and realistic in blaming or praising certain administrative or political systems. The reality today seems that the *econotechnocratic* order undermines micro-culture/minority cultures, languages, and economically and technologically struggling people. Hence, what are the benefits of becoming global intercultural citizen?

Among benefits deriving from becoming global intercultural citizen, in my opinion, two major benefits can be highlighted. The first benefit is the disposition of *global intercultural solidarity*. That is, feeling and acting together for the common good without being pressured by the mentality of superiority or inferiority and domination or oppression toward others but participating in the processes of equitable and human dignifying mutual empowerment and partnership. The second benefit is the disposition of *comprehensive intercultural competence*. This disposition helps understand ways to enjoy human, cultural, and environmental diversity not merely by the minority powerful intellectual and political elite but by

all. That is, comprehensive intercultural competence provides insight or strategies with respect to the attitudes, thoughts, and actions of fairness, human rights, equity, and human dignity in handling today's complex systems (YOUNG, 2018). The more people cultivate a global intercultural citizenship mindset, the less people will be engaged in feelings, thoughts, and actions of hatred and domination of others. For example, in the first century, the Apostle Paul reflected with the inhabitant of Corinth on the issue of marginalization, division, and mistreatment of others in these terms: "For who consider you as superior? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?" (1Corinthians 4:7 – New, American Standard Bible). In the same vein, our interdependence and interconnectedness and all the benefits as outcome should help us reflect on ways to live together in humility, wisdom, loving communion, and recognition of the mutual empowerment that we can provide to one another in intercultural and interpersonal relationship-building processes across today intercultural world. Implementing global intercultural citizenship encourages and motivates individuals across nations and communities to treat others with mutual respect and human dignity. This entails a global intercultural solidarity and a comprehensive intercultural competence for a better understanding of human "hybrid existence" in the age of globalization (MARCEL, 1967, p. 34).

The fourth principle that may help policymakers of any organization to overcome the status quo or hegemonic intercultural relations is the principle of community diplomacy. The following section explains what community diplomacy entails, how it can help nations and organizations such as CPLP overcome hegemonic mindsets in dealing with others, and what benefits may derive from this principle.

Community diplomacy

Community diplomacy entails a diplomacy committed not only to the political powers and influential sociocultural and politico-economic interests of an elite minority but a critical diplomacy involving both urban and rural populations of the nations in building not merely transnational relations, but also more dignifying and humane relations for the common good. This is contrary to the model of diplomacy practiced today which is a more urban-oriented diplomacy from which rural population and indigenous people are largely excluded in this diplomatic discourse. To achieve inclusiveness and foster community diplomacy, transnational relations need to apply the insight from research on public diplomacy. For example, in his book *Public Diplomacy and the Behavioral Sciences* (1977), Glen Harry Fisher helps us understand the difference between traditional diplomacy and public diplomacy. He explains: "In traditional diplomacy we have always been concerned with the perception and cognition patterns of identifiable individuals, usually leaders and decision makers. In public diplomacy we are more interested in both those patterns of which people are aware, and those which go on below the level of conscious direction" (p. 21). Fisher reveals the difficulty in understanding these patterns of diplomacy. He argues that "understanding these patterns is complicated not only by international contrasts in public experience and interests but also by contrasting assumptions embedded in cultural differences" (FISHER, 1977). This is where the community diplomacy should intervene. That is, diplomatic missions need to coexist with the communities to grasp their cultural experiences and interests to establish a more humane diplomatic mission.

There is a need of transforming the traditional diplomatic missions. The settling in the capital cities of the Global South and showing less interest in the rural populations and the wealth of their cultures that could benefit the sustainable development project for the common good seems to be unproductive vis à vis transnational solidarity (LUSTIG; KOESTER, 2013; SEALE; MALLINSON, 2018). In their volume *Rural Voices: Language, Identity, and Social Change Across place* (2018), scholars Elizabeth Seale and Christine Mallinson reveal that "not only more people live in larger cities in the twenty-first century, but shared expectations about normality and the features of a desirable life are increasingly urban-centric" (p. xiii). They add that "both rural sociologists and sociolinguists tackle issues of the well-being and culture of people living, working, and surviving in less densely populated areas – in the hinterlands, on the margins of the urbane" (LUSTIG; KOESTER, 2013; SEALE; MALLINSON, 2018). From this perspective, one would encourage a diplomatic mission to join its

effort with these sociologists and sociolinguists trying to contribute to the well-being of rural communities. Martin and Nakayama (2011) provide insight that diplomatic missions should look to benefit from intercultural relationships. They write: “The benefits of intercultural relationships include learning about the world, breaking stereotypes, and acquiring new skills – in intercultural relationships, we often learn specific information about unfamiliar cultural patterns and language” (p. 251). These unfamiliar cultural patterns and language alluded to by the authors here should include all existing languages, that is, languages in use in cities as well as in rural areas or spaces.

In the case of CPLP and indigenous/local languages or LOTP, Fisher (1977) helps us understand the role of language in human and organizational relationship-building. He writes: “The role which language plays in the very existence of culture and of structured human relationships is essential. Language is the most important means by which what one man learns is transmitted to another, including transmission from generation to generation, so that culture is cumulative wisdom and experience” (p. 96). Fisher goes on explaining that language “is the essential attribute of humans which separates them from the lesser animal; it is the key element which allows man (human beings) to adapt to his environment” (FISHER, 1977). Transnational relations embedded in diplomatic missions should show interest in the rural areas, learning their languages, treating them as equal tools to human beings’ active contribution to the common good and “a global agenda for change” (*Our Common Future: The World Commission on Environment and Development*, 1987, p. 4; *The Brundtland Commission’s Report – 10 Years*, p. 1).

What benefits can derive from community diplomacy? The first benefit is that it can help organizations and transnational relations overcome policies of marginalization, discriminatory attitudes and actions, and intercultural relations of domination. That is, community diplomacy can encourage and motivate intellectuals, political elites, and people to adjust their mindsets to the reality or the imperative of modern intercultural relations. The second benefit is the understanding of the need to expand transcultural or transnational’s mission into the rural areas and involving rural inhabitants, cultures, and languages in their diplomacy and projects of development. This participative interaction is the essence of intercultural diplomacy that I prefer to call community diplomacy. The traditional diplomacy, the urban one, in my opinion, has focused and still focuses on the establishing power politics rather than on establishing intercultural relations anchored on equity, mutual respect, mutual empowerment, and human dignity for all. Community diplomacy should inspire designing and implementing inclusive language policies within multilingual community. These policies are vital if we are serious about reducing global illiteracy and poverty. Within this perspective, community diplomacy can help transform hegemonic mindsets into respectable intercultural relations for a better future for all.

Conclusion

This study has provided a critique of CPLP language policy of the use of Portuguese as the sole official language of this organization. It argues that this policy is a hindrance to transformational efforts toward the decolonization of the colonial and neo-colonial ideologies with respect to linguistic and cultural diversity. The consequences of this politics of language are the maintenance of the colonial linguistic and cultural hegemony and its oppressing and discriminating attitude toward indigenous languages and their people. This attitude cannot build better and transparent relations among racial, ethnic groups, nations, nor reduce poverty since the monolingual language policy creates not only a linguistic barrier but also a mutual empowerment imbalance among citizens. The significance of language in nationhood and individuals’ development cannot be undermined. Language as a tool of thought, creativity, identities’ management, and an expression of intercultural competence should motivate policymakers to foster language policies that build bridges but not those policies that maintain barriers or build walls among citizens (WARDHAUGH, 1983; BYRAM, 2008).

To answer the question: Portuguese as the sole official language of the CPLP: what insight is gained for the post-colonial discourse analysis of the CPLP? I argue that, first, there cannot be sustainable development when the tools of thoughts, creativity, literacy, and identities’ management of a multilingual and multinational organization are mis-

managed or discriminatorily planned within a society (GUILHERME, 2002; BALOSA, 2022). Second, there is only a partial solidarity but not a comprehensive solidarity when one sole language is the official language of a multilingual and multinational organization or nation. This solidarity mostly applies within the elite classes or the urban inhabitants and marginalizes rural inhabitants or indigenous people. This kind of solidarity sustains the status quo and social injustice and need to be readjusted to respond to the need for sustainable transformational interculturality. Third, scholars interested in the postcolonial discourse within the context of the CPLP may understand that the CPLP sustains the linguistic hegemony by maintaining Portuguese as the sole official language of its organization. This policy supports *econotechnocracy* rather than democracy since the dominant language, Portuguese, is presented as the language of politico-economic opportunities, literacy, and sociocultural opportunities while indigenous languages are considered as inexistant and powerless in the management of the nationhood or organizational affairs (BLEWITT, 2008; HARBERT, 2009; YOUNG, 2017). For this reason, this study has found out that if the CPLP is to foster comprehensive solidarity or global intercultural solidarity it needs to adopt a more critical attitude toward its actual language politics and adjust it to reflect a more politico-socio-moral obligation toward all languages, cultures, and all peoples (MARCEL, 1967; FOUCAULT, 1991).

To achieve this goal, this study has proposed four principles: first, understanding the ways society, language, and sustainable development interact to implement more humane and inclusive policies. Second, implementing policies toward sustainable transformational interculturality – an exemplary intercultural leadership fostering public and social policies that enhance inclusiveness and mutual empowerment for all. Third, embracing the notion of global intercultural citizenship – a comprehensive intercultural competence for understanding and appreciating human, cultural, linguistic, and environmental diversity and handling world affairs and their complex systems with equity and human dignity. Fourth, creating measures toward community diplomacy – principle that entails existential recognition of and justice toward both urban and rural entities in the implementation of transnational policies for sustainable development and human dignity for all. Indeed, by applying these principles, the CPLP may achieve its goal of solidarity among its members. Finally, I hope that both scholars and students engaged in interdisciplinary research and the analysis of decolonization should find this study insightful for their future work (FANON, 2008[1952]; MARCEL, 2008[1952]).

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Appendix A

The New York Times

A language spoken in only one town Becomes the second Official Language of Portugal

Published January 22, 2012

Last week, we stumbled upon this article from the *New York Times*' Frugal Traveler about a language hidden in rural Portugal. In the northeast corner of Portugal, there is a tiny county called Miranda do Douro and in Miranda do Douro many inhabitants do not speak Portuguese, but rather its distant cousin, Mirandese. This region is geographically divided from the rest of Portugal by two rivers that run on either side of it, and it is actually easier to travel to Spain from Miranda do Douro than it is to get to Lisbon and other parts of Portugal. This geographical isolation is one reason why the region continues to speak a language with only 10,000 speakers. Many languages developed because of geographic barriers that isolated them from external influence. Geographic barriers can be very distinct – in the case of oceans – or subtler, like mountain ranges and rivers that inhibit travel and linguistic exchange. For example, in the mountains of Ghana and Togo, there is a language group that is distinct from its neighbors on the other side of the mountain. The languages are so tied to the geography that they are called Ghana Togo Mountain (GTM) languages.

Back to the Iberian Peninsula: Mirandese did not descend from Portuguese or Spanish, but rather developed independently from Latin concurrently with those modern languages in the 1100 and 1200s, like Catalan. (Learn more about Catalan and its contentious political history.) Spanish and Portuguese became the dominant languages of the Iberian Peninsula because of political variables. As Portugal and Spain became the dominant governments of the region between 1200 and the present day, fewer and fewer people spoke other Romance languages, like Mirandese, Extremaduran, and Galician, among others.

In the 1930s, Mirandese was outlawed by the dictatorship of Antonio de Oliveira Salazar, further diminishing the number of native speakers. However, in recent years, there has been a growing movement among some young people in Miranda do Douro to ignite interest in this dying language. In 1999, with encouragement from Mirandese speakers, the Portuguese government named Mirandese the second official language of the country. Today, the European Union estimates that about 10,000 people speak the language.

(A previously unknown language was discovered in India. Learn about it!)

Would you want to learn a rare language like Mirandese?

<https://www.dictionary.com/e/mirandese/#:~:text=In%201999%2C%20with%20encouragement%20from,language%20was%20discovered%20in%20India.>

Appendix B

The Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP) is the privileged multilateral forum for deepening mutual friendship and cooperation among its members. Created on July 17, 1996, the CPLP enjoys legal personality and is endowed with financial autonomy. The Organization's general objectives are:

- . Political-diplomatic coordination among its member states, in particular to strengthen its presence on the international scene;
- . Cooperation in all fields, including education, health, science and technology, defense, agriculture, public administration, communications, justice, public safety, culture, sport and media;
- . The materialization of projects of promotion and diffusion of the Portuguese language.

The CPLP is governed by the following principles:

- . Sovereign equality of the member states;
- . Non-interference in the internal affairs of each state;
- . Respect for national identity;
- . Reciprocity of treatment;
- . Primate of peace, democracy, rule of law, human rights and social justice;
- . Respect for territorial integrity;
- . Promotion of development;
- . Promotion of mutually advantageous cooperation.

1 Objectives of the Community of Portuguese-Language Countries Source: Adapted from CPLP objectives (<https://www.cplp.org/id-2763.aspx>, accessed 28 May 2017)

https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Objectives-of-the-Community-of-Portuguese-Language-Countries-Source-Adapted-from-CPLP_fig1_320674103

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