Communication studies cartography in the Lusophone world

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1. Lusophony as a linguistic dispute

By raising the question of Lusophony I bring to debate the issue of the languages of culture, science and communication in wide transnational spaces. In the French sociological tradition of Pierre Bourdieu, the language issue had been placed as a practical matter, as it expresses strategic interests and positions of power within a certain territorial and political field, and it has to ensure the hegemony within that field. That is, the language dispute expresses the struggle for a particular symbolic ordering of the world. We see it especially in *Language and Symbolic Power* (1982) and in *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (or. 1979).[1]

I emphasize the fact that in *Language and Symbolic Power* are developed, among others, the following subjects: "The Production and Reproduction of Legitimate Language"; "Price Formation and the Anticipation of Profits"; "Authorized Language"; "On Symbolic Power"; "Political Representation"; "Identity and Representation".

Summarizing the views of Pierre Bourdieu, but transposing it from the use of a language by an individual for the use of a particular language in the interactions between communities, in extended geo-cultural and strategic spaces, we can say that languages can be understood as the product of the relationship between a "language market" and a "linguistic *habitus*". When individuals use a certain language in a given geo-cultural and

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[1] Summing up the idea of Pierre Bourdieu, we can say that to represent the social world is to classify it, or better, to (di)vide it, and also to fight for the division in which we strive. In this struggle symbolic interests are invested, and the symbolic expresses relations of social power, i.e. power relations.

strategic space, they make use of accumulated resources, however implicitly adapting themselves to the requirements of the political field or of the market of global exchanges.

I think, however, that the post-colonial tradition, from Franz Fanon (1963, 1986) to Eduard Said (1994), and from Stuart Hall (1997) to Gayatri Spivak (1987) and to Homi Bhabha (1994), allows us to be more ambitious today in consideration of the languages of culture, science and communication in wide transnational spaces. The post-colonial tradition allows us to face what we name globalization as a movement of technological mobilization of goods, bodies and souls, to the market, and also as a cultural homogenization movement, that a single language, English, helps to settle, being however our obligation to question the blind spot of this kinetic - after all, what it is here silenced: the subaltern and dominated, the people from former colonies, the minorities, the peripheries, the diasporas, the migrants, the refugees, all that are excluded, and thus their cultures and languages.[2]

For this reason, as we today interrogate the sense of the human, we can no longer stop thinking about the wraith of the Western metaphysics of unity, from the Greco-Roman tradition, based on the *logos* (as sovereign decision-making instance) to the Jewish-Christian tradition, based on the *sun/bolé* (an image that reunites), both founders of logocentrism, ethnocentrism, imperialism, colonialism and productivism.

This movement of technological mobilization toward the market is seen in the metaphors of the "world-economy" (Immanuel Wallerstein, 1974), "world culture" (Gilles Lipovetsky & Jean Serroy, 2008) and "network society" (Manuel Castells, 1996).

2. From European expansion to the globalization of markets by technology

Historical research has insisted, in recent times, on the possible analogy between current globalization, a "technological circumnavigation" founded on information technologies that move us to the market, and the first globalization, implemented by the European expansion in the 15th and 16th centuries[3].

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[2] It was because they shared an understanding similar to this on the dynamics of cultures that the Portuguese sociologists Boaventura Sousa Santos and Maria Paula Meneses published in 1995 the book *Epistemologies of the South*.

[3] See, e.g., Roger Crowley (2015), *Conquerors. How Portugal forged the first global Empire*; and also Martin Page (2002), *The First Global Village: How Portugal Changed the World*.

Also in Portugal, historical research on European expansion, and specifically on the Portuguese expansion, had in recent years a great increase. These studies have highlighted the association between the outbreak of modern European expansion and the remarkable advances made in that period in physics, mathematics, astronomy and cartography[4].

But just as the European expansion of the 15th and 16th centuries can't be thought of only as an opening to the "diversity of the world", but rather as a colonization movement, which not only served the meeting between people, but also the assimilation-integration and world domination by Western design, so the debate on languages must go through the same movement of postcolonial deconstruction.

The image of circumnavigation may then help us to figure out our journey, a journey embedded in technological experience, the contemporary experience par excellence.[5] Resembling the times of European expansion, contemporary man does today, through technology, a journey, moving from the culture of the one to the culture of the multiple. The former one is logocentric, ethnocentric, imperialistic, colonialist and productivist. It is characterized, therefore, by exclusion, assimilating and destroying the difference. In contrast, the culture of the multiple and the mixing is associated with participation, intercultural communication, difference, with a postcolonial culture (Martins, 2015, 2011a, 2011b).

The circumnavigation classically indicates the experience of crossing oceans and exceeding the prescribed limits, let them be seas, lands or knowledge. And, in my view, it is a good metaphor to characterize the current Lusophone experience, an experience today largely technological.

In classical navigation we relied mostly on the stars to lead us in the night. But modern circumnavigation relies especially in instruments as the sextant, the astrolabe and the

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[4] I remind here the work of the physicist and historian of science Henrique Leitão (2009), whose work on *The Portuguese Discoveries and the European Science* confirms that the European maritime expansion (Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch and English) was probably the greatest political, social, administrative and economic transformation of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. And, most particularly, I also mention two papers, published in partnership with Joaquim Alves Gaspar in *Imago Mundi* review in 2014, on the decisive contribution of Portuguese studies in mathematics and cartography (most particularly by Pedro Nunes in 1537) to the creation of the Rhumb Lines, mathematical instrument used by Gerardus Mercator for the cylindrical projection of the Earth globe in 1569.

[5] This was the guiding principle of Stéphane Hugon (2010), in his book *Circumnavigations - L'imaginaire du Voyage dans l'expérience Internet*. Using the perspective of "a sociology of electronic spaces", Hugon discusses, among other things, "the culture of wandering", "a genealogy of drift", "what it means to inhabit", "what is a landscape" and also "the communitarian dynamics".

armillary sphere. And with time, we stopped looking at the stars and we started to look at screens, as Virilio notes (2001, p. 135). That is, from the history of sense that had stars as a part, the West gave way to screens (Martins, 2011a). And in this crossing a "technological skin" (Kerckhove, 1995) was developed, a skin for the affection, i.e., for the be-together, for the be-with-others.

By adopting the imagery of the screens, the electronic circumnavigation implements the cyberculture paradigm as a journey toward the New America of a new cultural archive, which reactivates the old, the archaism or even the mythology (Martins, 1998; Jenkins, 2008) and, at the same time, continuously reconfigures the community, by the desire to be with-others. And it's the history, the whole history, both of colonization and of post-colonialism, which is now recapitulated in this desire of community.

Therefore, the journey that the people of the Portuguese-speaking world, speakers of Portuguese, are called to do is a technological mobilization for interknowledge, dialogue and cooperation. It is also a journey to their gathering in an expanded geostrategic and cultural area, respecting the differences and the dignity of the national languages (in Angola, Mozambique, Timor-Leste, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe), challenging a hegemonic globalization of financial and speculative nature and spoken in a single language, English. It is, finally, a journey into the attachment to the value of heterogeneity, to the seduction of a net woven from threads of many colours and textures, a network of people and different countries, able to resist its reduction to an artificial unit.

3. The decolonization of language

In discussing language policies in postcolonial terms, decolonizing them, we remain in line with the same process of deconstruction that we used to analyse Western maritime expansion in the 15th and 16th centuries.

This postcolonial deconstruction is even more necessary because technological circumnavigation exposes us, today, to the greatest dangers. I give as an example the current terms of the language debate in Portugal, which in some cases resembles a wild messianic narrative.

In an interview to the site "Inteligência Económica", following the presentation of the report *Potencial Económico da Língua Portuguesa* (Economic Potential of the Portuguese Language), a study commissioned by the Portuguese Camões Institute (the main public institute for cooperation and promotion of Portuguese language) to ISCTE-IUL (University Institute of Lisbon), Luís Reto, Rector of the University and coordinator of the project, raised the question of the languages in the following terms: "This is the time of the Portuguese"; and, pointing immediately the economic route to the Portuguese language, he warned that the navigation is now toward a new cultural archive, where the language is "product" and "economic value" and the assessment of its significance is measured in terms of percentage of GDP.[6] Launched, then, to the sea of its transformation "in a world economic power", the course of the Portuguese language would be, on one hand, "the Lusophone community", and on the other, "the value created for the exterior, for a networked economy".[7]

The idea of looking at language itself as a commodity, "as a product" (Reto, 2012), a language for knowledge and trade, is an excellent illustration of this current world trend of technological mobilization for the market. The main chapters of the above mentioned work on the economic potential of the Portuguese language read as follows: "Network effects and economic value of the language"; "Value of the language and cultural and creative industries as a percentage of GDP"; "Foreign trade and foreign direct investment (FDI)"; "Migration flows and tourism".

4. Concluding remark

A language of culture and thinking must be, also, a language of knowledge. This was the reason why the scientific communities of Communication Sciences of the Lusophone countries founded in 1998, the Lusophone Federation of Communication Sciences, with the following objectives: Promote the development of Communication Sciences in the Lusophone geo and cultural region; encourage cooperation between Portuguese speaking countries; increase the international role of the Portuguese speaking researchers

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[6] See, Luís Reto: http://inteligenciaeconomica.com.pt
[7] *Ibidem*.

communities in terms of scientific production; sponsor the publication of scientific work in Portuguese.

But the battle for the conversion of the Portuguese language in a language of knowledge and science has barely begun. Science communication and language policies decide who has the power to define the social reality and the power to impose such representation. And in these circumstances, the experience we have in the world is the standardization of thought and knowledge: researchers are expected to publish mainly in English; citations are more and more made from articles and books published in English; applications for funding and reports are written in English; scientific paradigms follow Anglo-Saxon tradition.

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