

Plurilingual practices and the construction of transnational social imaginaries amongst Brazilian youth: implications for teacher education

Windle Joel¹

¹ Fluminense Federal University

Although plurilingualism is a well-established topic in the international literature, there is an assumption that plurilingual practices do not influence interactions in so-called monolingual settings without significant flows of migration, such as Brazil. In Brazil, languages other than Portuguese are understood to be restricted to minority and heritage settings, and to the classroom learning of foreign languages. Further, there is an assumption that foreign languages are predominantly learned and used by middle-class and elite groups who can pay for private courses and international travel. However, the present paper investigates how plurilingualism is present in the online linguistic practices of working-class Brazilian youth as part of digital literacy practices focused on identity construction and expression, posing questions of race, gender, sexuality, and social status. Based on a digital ethnography of a Facebook page focused on American Black popular culture, we analyze the linguistic resources and cultural references drawn upon by Brazilian youth who identify as part of a global hip-hop nation, as members of an Afro-Diasporic community, and as part of a queer collective identity, all of which are closely connected to life in urban peripheries and favelas. The research seeks to understand the perspectives and online practices of these young Brazilians, mobilizing theoretical resources from New Literacy Studies to understand the processes of discursive construction and resignification. The findings show the importance of virtual spaces for the affirmation of subaltern identities, and how these are embedded in multiple sociolinguistic scales and moving notions of translanguaging and plurilingualism beyond the mixing of named languages. Further, these findings have been used within language teacher education, providing insights into new approaches to language pedagogy and strategies for challenging dominant monoglossic linguistic ideologies. The paper therefore ends by pointing to some ways that research findings can be integrated into teaching, based on student journals and presentations.