

## THE LANGUAGE BARRIER AS PART OF EDITORIAL POLICIES ON DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

A BARREIRA LINGUÍSTICA COMO PARTE DAS POLÍTICAS  
EDITORIAIS DE DIVERSIDADE E INCLUSÃO

LA BARRERA LINGUÍSTICA COMO PARTE DE LAS POLÍTICAS EDITORIALES  
DE DIVERSIDAD E INCLUSIÓN

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In scientific publications, as well as in society in general, the role of intentional and unintentional bias has deserved increasing attention. Prejudices based on ethnicity, gender, religion, disability, education, institutional environment, career status, sexual orientation, language, etc. have been a concern for scientific editors. This bias can manifest itself in several stages of the editorial process, but the moments of submission and peer review are particularly sensitive. The appreciation of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) has been essential to promoting equitable actions ensuring diversity in various areas, including geographic, linguistic and cultural. These conditions favour the inclusion of new perspectives in the field of study represented by this diversity.

The American Psychological Association (APA, 2021) produced a didactic paper on inclusive language for the promotion of DEI. Among many terms, it describes oppression (related to the power and privilege used to dominate the other, maintaining inequality) and privilege (it does not occur on merit, but by inserting it into a system that normalizes the fact, ensuring, to some, power, such as rights, benefits, opportunities, etc.).

In Brazil, the Brazilian Association of Scientific Editors (ABEC) has also taken the initiative to raise awareness among scientific editors of the principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA). ABEC Brasil has created a webpage for the presentation of guidelines and has promoted scientific meetings on this topic (<https://www.abecbrasil.org.br/novo/espaco-deia/>).

The document “Criteria, policy and procedures for the inclusion and permanence of journals in the SciELO Brazil Collection” includes, in its latest recently published version, the promotion of the DEIA Principles throughout the research process and its communication. In addition to reiterating SciELO Brazil’s commitment to these principles and recommending that journals follow them, it is now mandatory that they include an “explicitness of promoting diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility in management and operation” (SciELO Brasil, 2022, p. 16), and considers diversity, equity and inclusion in the composition of the editors’ team in the journal’s evaluation. This document stresses that multilingualism is an expression of diversity and inclusion. Although it is actively promoting events focused on this theme, the difficulties in the implementation of these guidelines are not mentioned in this text.

Although much is being discussed and actions are being initiated, as shown by the guidelines mentioned, there is no deepening in the relationship of the Brazilian non-English-speaking researcher with texts and lectures in English. The theme has relevance, since the scientific quality of an article depends on a previous literature review, including recent citations in journals indexed in the best databases, usually published in English. Despite all the efforts of the editorial team of the Brazilian Journal of Psychodrama to increase the quality and diversity of references, it is observed the predominance of citations from national or foreign authors translated into Portuguese.

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The adoption of English as the language of science could solve the limitation for the sharing of scientific knowledge imposed by the diversity of languages. However, this decision would lead to the exclusion of a considerable portion of scientific knowledge. A Google Scholar survey in 16 languages found that 35.6% of the 75,513 scientific documents on biodiversity conservation published in 2014 were not in English. The absence of this considerable percentage of studies can cause study-related reviews or make updates unavailable in local languages, making it difficult to access interested professionals who do not master English (Amano et al., 2016).

Bibliodiversity refers to the inclusion of different systems, research topics, publications, and languages to meet the needs and diversity of research communities (Kittinger & Vandega, 2020). Both multilingualism and bibliodiversity meet these local needs. Still, the publication of articles in English and Portuguese means a considerable increase in cost for many institutions, including the Brazilian Federation of Psychodrama, responsible for the Brazilian Journal of Psychodrama.

Scientific research is collaborative and international and, as such, should be multilingual. An alternative that has been growing is multilingualism, characterized by publication in several languages, valuing local and/or national, an essential factor to facilitate the use of research results conducted in their places of origin (Shearer et al., 2020) and keeping locally relevant research alive. Communicating in the native language creates impact and interaction with society, in addition to academia (Foro Latinoamericano sobre Evaluación Científica, 2021). Journals in the SciELO collection, for example, can publish all articles in one language, all articles simultaneously in more than one language, some articles in one language and others in another language, and still others simultaneously in more than one language. The most used languages are English, Portuguese and Spanish (SciELO Brasil, 2022).

The Latin American Observatory of Evaluation Indicators (OLIVA) seeks to increase the visibility and appreciation of indexed scientific production in Latin America and the Caribbean. A study with 1,720 scientific journals indexed in SciELO and/or Redalyc, half of them from the Social Sciences and Humanities, observed the emergence of publication in several languages, characteristic of multilingualism and an increase in those that publish their articles in English (especially Brazilian journals). However, unlike the main international databases where English is predominant, in the OLIVA set there is a great linguistic diversity. Spanish and Portuguese predominate, and only 23.9% of the articles are written in English (Beigel et al., 2022). The same study also points out that some publications are failing to publish in Portuguese to publish only in English, which means a loss for multilingualism.

In addition, only part of the problem is met with multilingualism, because the exchange of experiences with other cultures and the review of articles published in the main databases continues to require an interest in reading (or translating) articles mostly written in English.

In Brazil, universities are actively working for the internationalization of higher education and the mobility of their students and researchers. It is a policy of inclusion in other cultures, aiming at the production of more relevant knowledge and the preparation of students to deal with an increasingly volatile, complex and uncertain world. A meta-analysis of approaches critical to internationalization identified underlying anxieties that hinder this initiative (Stein, 2017). With the data collected, Stein (2017) evaluated that educators and researchers have questioned internationalization, but used inadequate methods, which tends to narrow the apprehension of the factors that hinder this process. The concept of internationalization was born in the so-called Global North and evolved, responding to different needs and adapting to new realities (de Haan, 2014). However, the meaning and implications of internationalization differ depending on geography (EVALUATE Project, 2022).

Psychology students can benefit from internationalization by accessing new practices and treatments developed in different cultures and regions of the world. They can increase their sensitivity and cultural awareness by reflecting on contextual factors that limit the applicability of certain theories and interventions, depending on the population served (Balva et al., 2022).

Mobility experience plays a key role in the development of personal, cross-cultural, and professional capacities in the academic-scientific sphere. Despite the insufficient mastery of other languages, it is one of the main challenges in the international mobility experience. For Brazilian students and researchers abroad, the language is perceived as an obstacle, generating academic difficulties (Oliveira & Freitas, 2017).

Some evidence of the influence of other factors, in addition to difficulty with English, can be observed in international events where professional exchanges with colleagues who speak other languages have been a huge challenge. The embarrassment and distancing of English speech make it difficult to understand the moment, even if there is translation, characterizing a difficulty in dealing with diversity, the absence of equity and the exclusion of many colleagues.

This editorial aims to reflect on the inclusion of the language barrier, resulting from the insufficient mastery of English, as one of the factors responsible for the difficulty in developing equity, and inclusion in the international scenario of Brazilian psychodramatist authors.

## THE LANGUAGE BARRIER IN BRAZIL

The English Proficiency Index of Education First (2022) shows that Brazil is in the 58th position out of a total of 111 countries, considered moderately proficient. In the Latin American sphere, Brazil is in 12th position, among the 20 countries in the region.

The linguistic disadvantage of Brazilian researchers who do not master English was identified in the doctoral thesis of Sonia Maria Ramos de Vasconcelos (2008). A statistical correlation was observed between the researcher's productivity and his proficiency in written English. It was concluded that the communication skills of these researchers bring greater visibility to Brazilian science in the international scenario (Vasconcelos, 2008). Other factors contribute to the worsening of this situation, such as the lack of knowledge and training for scientific writing, little mastery of scientific language, lack of creativity and daring to produce original contributions, as well as insufficient planning and methodology (Marques, 2009).

The Science without Borders Program (CsF) was created in 2011 to promote, among others, academic training abroad and the internationalization of Brazilian science, through the exchange and mobility of undergraduate students. To address the lack of scholarship holders who had insufficient mastery of a second language, the Languages without Borders Program (ISF) was created in 2012, to promote a language policy in universities and assist higher education students in accessing mobility programs offered by the Federal Government. From 2014 to 2018, a total of 1,496 teachers (1,140 English) participated in the program and 364,519 vacancies were offered (337,317 English). Unfortunately, the program was discontinued in 2019. A study conducted with 1,283 CsF fellows who graduated from United States institutions between 2012 and 2015 showed that 40.8% of them reported having taken an English course abroad to "improve language proficiency" (Borges, 2018, p. 134, cited by Borges, 2022).

Despite training programs for writing and scientific evaluation that have been promoted by ABEC Brazil, although they are valid proposals, they are insufficient to increase support for recommendations for reading and publishing texts in English.

Despite the increasing internationalization of Brazilian research and incentives for international, regional, or global collaboration, there is little to support graduate students in language challenges. Some programs require a certificate of proficiency in English as a condition for obtaining a master's degree and a second foreign language to obtain a doctorate. Hence the asymmetries: those who have had or can develop these capacities have more possibilities of dialogue outside their scope of origin, while those who do not speak other languages end up being symbolically or in practice excluded from the broader dialogue.

Learning a second language is important not only when publishing a scientific paper. To develop partnerships, and for research to have a global impact, it is necessary to understand what happens and is being produced elsewhere in the world. Without a second language, this is not possible, and if funding is used only to translate articles, there will never be growth.

## LANGUAGE BARRIER EVIDENCE IN INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

In international psychodrama events, large groups, especially when they occur on several days during congresses with professionals working with groups, facilitate the appearance of co-conscious and co-unconscious states, which are mental states activated by the sharing of experiences, thoughts, and sensations among participants (Fleury & Knobel, 2018; Knobel, 2011). At international events promoted by the International Association for Group Psychotherapy and Group Processes

(IAGP), it is known to all that the value of the registration fee is lower for participants from developing countries. In addition to the economic difference, the official language is English, which ensures greater ease of expression, communication and influence to those who master the language. The coordinators of these groups report individuals or groups that do not require translation when, in reality, they need it, criticism and attacks on the work of indirect translators and discomfort concerning communication. “Despite everyone’s goodwill, unexplained tacit agreements seek to minimize this asymmetry of access to information, either because of the shame of those who do not know or by the existential misunderstanding of those who know it” (Knobel, 2011, p. 11).

In 2006, São Paulo hosted the 16th IAGP International Congress, with 1,300 registrations and participants from 45 countries. The goal was to build bridges and dialogues between the global community of group interventions, expressed in the theme “Groups – Connecting Individuals, Communities and Cultures”. Every morning, scientific activities began with a Small Group, which provided a space for participants to share their daily experiences at the congress and make contact with colleagues from all over the world. The Large Groups concluded every day by offering an opportunity to get to know other cultures, communities and subgroups and explore social conflicts and possible dialogues.

Despite the success of the scientific program and the satisfaction of the participants, the language barrier was one of the main concerns of the organizers. Practical solutions such as simultaneous translation for lectures and sequential translation by volunteers in other lectures helped a lot, but the final conclusion of the coordinators of the Scientific Program was that the language barrier is much larger and has deeper sources that touch on issues of priorities, privileges, superiorities and inferiorities. It was also observed that Latin American professionals in the Large Groups seemed to approach colleagues from other cultures with hesitation and little self-confidence, which may have contributed to this difficulty (Weinberg & Fleury, 2006).

After this event, the scientific journal of the IAGP, Forum, published some articles that tried to deepen the understanding of some difficulties faced by the organizers and presenters.

In Small Groups, language was a challenge for everyone. One of the reports was the reaction of a Brazilian participant who, when she entered the room and realized that the group would speak in English and Portuguese, seemed offended and left the room, which caused discomfort to the other members of the group (Howard & Russo, 2007).

Later reflections to the Large Analytical Group, directed by the Austrian Felix de Mendelssohn (Mendelssohn et al., 2007), identify elements related to the history of the IAGP Institution, the consequences of the process of colonization of the countries of the Southern Hemisphere by countries of the Northern Hemisphere and important evidence of the influence of emotional content on issues understood as linguistic barriers.

Solange Emilio, one of the two Brazilian psychologists invited to voluntarily translate the three daily sessions of the Large Analytical Groups, felt in the first two days that some affections that should be addressed to the coordinator, came towards the translators, especially to her who translated into English. She observed that, although they do not have a passive nature, the two Brazilian women allowed themselves to be dominant in the situation (Mendelssohn et al., 2007).

These experiences reflect a discomfort in the face of the language barrier, which may have similarities with poor reading, citation, and publication by Brazilian authors of content that is not in Portuguese. It probably involves emotional and social factors that need to be better studied.

## CONCLUSION: LANGUAGE AS AN INSTRUMENT OF INCLUSION

The use of English as a global language of science has been useful for the transmission and exchange of ideas, but it has hindered access to this knowledge by most Brazilian researchers. Conversely, it hinders the access of non-Lusophone researchers to what is produced in Brazil. Thus, scientific communication published in a single language weakens the construction of knowledge due to the impossibility of exchanges.

In the scientific publication, multilingualism can be a solution, but publishing in several languages entails costs that tend to make it impossible to maintain the scientific journal. An alternative to high translation costs can be seen in journals that publish articles in the languages in which they are submitted, Portuguese, Spanish or English.

To align the objectives of the internationalization of Brazilian science and international collaboration, it would be necessary to invest more in scientific associations and societies, government agencies, graduate programs, etc., for their journals to publish in both languages, Portuguese and English. This would certainly improve interlocution and exchange with authors whose language is not Portuguese.

The Latin American Fora on Scientific Evaluación (FOLEC), an initiative of the Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales (CLACSO), states that the evaluation systems of the countries of our region must not only reward scientific production *in English per se* but also favour multilingualism, promoting official languages such as Spanish or Portuguese (Foro Latinoamericano sobre Evaluación Científica, 2021). Meanwhile, funding agencies play a key role in this issue, as they do not value local language publications.

In other modalities of scientific exchanges, such as international congresses, many factors involved in distancing from activities in English, as well as important complaints of translation, are similar to the difficulty with English texts. It is a very sensitive area that requires further studies for a better understanding of the factors involved. With the increasing internationalization of Brazilian psychodrama, it becomes mandatory to deepen the collective issue of developing cooperative modes of communication that meets the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion.

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