Designations in Dispute: On the Relations among Linguistic-Discursive (De)Coloniality, Menstrual Dignity, and Discursive Practices of Resistance and Reexistence / *Designações em disputa: das relações entre (de)colonialidade linguístico-discursiva, dignidade menstrual e práticas discursivas de resistência e reexistência*

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ABSTRACT
This paper explores the relationship between linguistic-discursive (de)coloniality, intersecting identities, and discursive practices of resistance and reexistence, employing a critical intersectional discourse perspective to analyze two texts that challenge the epistemic-ontological implications of the term '*pessoas que menstruam*' [people who menstruate]. To this end, we examined two media-connected texts: "*Nós, mulheres, não somos apenas pessoas que menstruam*" [We, women, are not just people who menstruate] and "*Por que estamos usando o termo 'pessoas que menstruam'*?" [Why are we using the term 'people who menstruate'?] It feels strange to be accused of biologizing ways of being a woman when, in fact, we are moving in the opposite direction." These texts position the designation *pessoas que menstruam* [people who menstruate] in opposition, reflecting the positionalities of the authors' intersecting identities, and aim to generate alternative knowledge and power structures, particularly through linguistic-discursive activism as a means of reexisting, resisting, and confronting coloniality.
KEYWORDS: Linguistic-discursive decoloniality; ICDA; SDG; Menstrual dignity

RESUMO
Neste texto, debatemos a relação entre (de)colonialidade linguístico-discursiva, corpos em intersecção e práticas discursivas de resistência e reexistência, a partir de um olhar discursivo crítico interseccional, analisando dois textos que colocam em disputa epistêmico-ontológica o uso da denominação 'pessoas que menstruam'. Para tal, analisamos dois textos vinculados em práticas midiáticas: "Nós, mulheres, não somos apenas pessoas que menstruam" e "Por que estamos usando o termo 'pessoas que menstruam'? Soa estranho pensar que estamos sendo acusadas de biologizar formas de ser mulher, quando estamos partindo e caminhando em sentido opostos", nos quais o debate sobre a denominação 'pessoas que menstruam' é colocado em oposição, de acordo com as posicionalidades dos corpos em intersecção das autoras, de forma a criar

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outros saberes e poderes, inclusive por meio do ativismo linguístico-discursivo, como forma de reexistir, resistir e enfrentar a colonialidade linguística.
PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Decolonialidade linguístico-discursiva; ADCI; ODS; Dignidade menstrual

Introduction

Since 2014, the United Nations (UN) has recognized access to menstrual health as a public health and human rights issue, due to its complexity and its connection to multiple Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outlined in the UN's 2030 Agenda, such as poverty eradication, health and well-being, quality education, reduced inequalities, and gender equality. Menstrual precariousness is a multidimensional issue affecting cisgender girls and women, trans men, and non-binary people, "due to a lack of access to resources, infrastructure, and knowledge that would enable them to manage their menstruation fully" (UNFPA/UNICEF, 2021, p. 5).[1]

Until 2017, Brazil had no concrete agenda addressing menstrual precariousness through ministerial action or in legislative bodies or the National Congress. The issue entered the Congressional agenda following advocacy by the civil organization Girl Up Brazil, which presented the *Relatório Livre para Menstruar* [Free to Menstruate Report] in 2018. The first legislative milestones emerged in 2019 with Bill No. 4,968, authored by Federal Deputy Marília Arraes, which was enacted as Law No. 14,214 on October 6, 2021, establishing the *Programa de Proteção e Promoção da Saúde Menstrual* [Menstrual Health Protection and Promotion Program], with one of its pillars being the distribution of sanitary pads (Gomes, 2023a). Following this, two significant documents were published and circulated: *Relatório Pobreza Menstrual no Brasil: desigualdades e violações de direitos* [The Menstrual Poverty Report in Brazil: Inequalities and Rights Violations], released by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (2021), and *Recomendações para implementação de iniciativas de promoção da dignidade menstrual* [Recommendations for Implementing Initiatives for Menstrual Dignity Promotion] (UNFPA, 2023). These documents highlight the multidimensionality of menstrual precariousness, and the range of challenges

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[1] In Portuguese: "devido à falta de acesso a recursos, infraestrutura e conhecimento para que tenham plena capacidade de cuidar da sua menstruação."

Brazilian society must address to mitigate and eradicate this issue. Consequently, on March 8, 2023, International Women's Day, the current Federal Government issued Decree No. 11,432 to regulate Law No. 14,214/2021, establishing the *Programa Dignidade Menstrual* [Menstrual Dignity Program] as a collaborative effort among the Ministries of Health; Women; Justice and Public Security; Education, Human Rights, and Citizenship; and Development and Social Assistance, Family, and Hunger Eradication. In 2024, the Federal Government released the *Guia de Implementação do Programa Dignidade Menstrual* [Menstrual Dignity Program Implementation Guide].

One objective of this article is to discuss menstrual health from an intersectional and decolonial perspective to reduce (or mitigate) inequalities, given its transformative and emancipatory potential. Access to menstrual dignity is viewed through an intersectional lens, rooted in intergenerational histories of inequality in gender, ethnicity, race, geopolitics, and social class, which foreground the issue of gender alongside other dimensions of identity (Gomes, 2023b). Employing Intersectional Critical Discourse Analysis (ICDA), as proposed by Alexandra Bittencourt de Carvalho (2024) and drawing on Santos's studies (2019a, 2019b) on "denomination wars" alongside Latin American decolonial theorists (Santos, 2019a; Nascimento, 2020; Rufino, 2019), we analyze two media texts that problematize the use of the term "menstruating bodies." Text 1 was published in 2022 by Black cisgender philosopher Djamila Ribeiro in her column in *Folha de São Paulo* [São Paulo Paper], and Text 2, authored by white trans activists Bruna Benevides and Yuna Vitória, appeared on the *Terra/UOL* website, also in 2022, in response to Ribeiro's piece. This article presents findings from the projects "Discourses on Menstrual Poverty in Brazil and Latin America" and "The Epistemological, Methodological, and Ontological Conditions for Developing an Intersectional Critical Discourse Approach" (PQ2),[2] coordinated by Maria Carmen Aires Gomes.

In the first section, we discuss the importance of decolonizing language, identity, knowledge, power, and gender, positioning the body as a central analytical element. We also introduce the intersectional critical discourse analysis approach developed by Maria Carmen Aires Gomes and Alexandra Bittencourt de Carvalho (2024) to analyze

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[2] In Portuguese: Os discursos sobre a pobreza menstrual no Brasil e na América Latina e Das condições epistemológicas, metodológicas e ontológicas para a elaboração de uma abordagem discursivo-crítica interseccional (PQ2).

discursive practices of resistance and reexistence. In the closing section, we analyze the selected discursive sample to address the use of the term *people who menstruate* ultimately discussing the need for Brazil to adopt a more qualified, inclusive, and emancipatory menstrual dignity policy.

1 Linguistic-Discursive Decoloniality and Intersectional Critical Discourse Analysis

In *Menstruación decolonial* [Decolonial Menstruation], Nuria Calafal Sala (2020) argues that female or feminized bodies are patriarchalized, colonized, and commodified, reducing menstruating bodies to a female condition, thus inferiorized within a binary gender framework. Eugenia Tarzibachi (2017) suggests that to deconstruct and decolonize such concepts, it is necessary to produce and create new, alternative narratives about menstrual health, with the aim of dismantling a binary logic that menstruation is the sack of 'women's things (Sala, 2020). According to Fanzine Colectivx [Colectivx Fanzine] (2015), this deconstruction and/or decolonization of knowledge-power structures calls for more inclusive language to reference menstruating individuals and their socio-cultural and political experiences.

The decolonization of menstrual health knowledge and power is undoubtedly linked with linguistic decoloniality. This approach challenges us to consider the need to re-evaluate knowledge-power structures tied to language and linguistic practices, as the epistemological logic sustaining coloniality has rendered invisible, erased, and violently oppressed relationships between subjects, languages, and cultures. A geo-ontoepistemological discussion of menstruation thus becomes necessary, as knowledge production is inherently tied to a geopolitical dimension, situated and materialized in a specific locus of enunciation. Since epistemes are inseparable from the geopolitics of knowledge (Baptista, 2019) and are thus located and materialized in a particular locus, no knowledge production is independent of this locus – of a specific place or territory (Baptista, 2019).

The coloniality of language represents one facet of the coloniality of power-knowledge. For Livia Baptista (2019), coloniality shapes how language is materialized, creating spaces of discourse directed by a colonialist logic and, consequently, a system of

power. In this vein, Gabriel Nascimento (2020) posits that language serves as a mark of domination, a foundational and structuring element of racism (and beyond), as it is both shaped by and shapes historical, economic, cultural, and political contexts, enabling individuals to classify (or not) the world and, by extension, to classify (or not) themselves. Nascimento (2020, p. 8) further contends that "more than simply understanding or rejecting power systems, it is essential to challenge them so that languages also become spaces of struggle."[3] Revisiting the studies by Luiz Rufino (2019), Nascimento (2020) and Baptista (2019), Carvalho (2024) argues that although language acts as a perverse, modern-colonial instrument of domination, it is:

> A space of power struggle that, amid various tensions, can generate cracks and fissures of resistance, allowing agents – referred to here as decolonial agents – to emerge and respond by revealing and employing linguistic-discursive mechanisms shaped by the coloniality of language, while simultaneously inventing new forms of semiotic potential (Carvalho, 2024, pp. 108-109). [4]

To decolonize language, it is necessary not only to re-center the body and highlight what has been left unmarked but also to historicize it. Jota Mombaça (2017) emphasizes the importance of naming those deemed the norm, as this norm is often linguistically unmarked, signifying privilege, while the "other," hyper-marked, is consistently subjected to power analyses and racialization, perceived as an object rather than a subject. Challenging the norm, therefore, exposes the constructs that underpin and sustain the discourses of the modern-colonial world system, including the acts of naming, predicating, characterizing, and classifying bodies. As Rufino (2019, p. 34) urges us to consider, "the exercise of examining language to seek possibilities for transgression against coloniality encourages us to delve into realms of production not yet fully explored."[5] Similarly, Antônio Bispo dos Santos (a.k.a. Nego Bispo) asserts that naming

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[3] In Portuguese: "mais do que compreender ou abandonar os sistemas de poder, é preciso disputá-los para que as línguas também sejam espaços de luta."

[4] In Portuguese: "um espaço de disputa de poder que, nas muitas tensões, pode causar fissuras e frestas de resistências, que fazem emergir agentes que reagem a ela, definidos, aqui, como agentes decoloniais, no momento em que evidenciam e escolhem mecanismos linguístico-discursivos constrangidos pela colonialidade da linguagem assim como inventando formas outras de potenciais semióticos."

[5] In Portuguese: "o exercício de examinar a linguagem para buscar possibilidades de transgressão à colonialidade nos desafia a adentrar o campo das produções ainda não tão bem encaradas."

is a form of domination; each time we name, we are creating, transforming, controlling, and ultimately dominating the other.

Santos (2019a, p. 76), problematizing the terminology imposed by colonizers, invites us to consider that although names may change, colonizers persist in their practices of domination and control: "They burn, flood, implode, grind, bury, and overturn with their bulldozers everything essential for the existence of our communities."[6] According to Santos (2019a, p. 76), they also destroy and eradicate "our territories and all the symbols and meanings of our ways of life."[7] Analyzing both regulatory and advocacy texts in Brazil's 1988 Federal Constitution, Santos (2019a, p. 95) observes how different groups – colonizers and counter-colonizers – shaped the production of these texts, exemplified in terms like *"quilombo"* and "Indigenous peoples":

> By accepting these terms, by our own demand, even though they were once imposed upon us, we only did so because we are capable of resignifying them. So much so that they have transformed from crime to right, from pejorative to affirmative. This demonstrates a philosophical reflux, which is a direct result of our ability to think and develop concepts in a circular manner.[8]

For Santos (2019b), in the movements of resistance and reexistence, the very words designated and used by colonialists can be imbued with ancestral social meanings, generating new positive meanings for the colonized. Nego Bispo (2019a, p. 97) states that "the resignifications of our identities amid the most perverse contexts of racism, discrimination, and stigma; the interplay of our oral languages with the written language of the colonizers"[9] are embedded in the "wars of denomination," through political praxis and strategic discursive uses of denominations, along with other linguistic elements. This linguistic movement described by Santos (2019a, 2019b) aligns with studies on discursive

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[6] In Portuguese: "queimam, inundam, implodem, trituram, soterram, reviram com suas máquinas de terraplanagem tudo aquilo que é fundamental para a existência das nossas comunidades."

[7] In Portuguese: "os nossos territórios e todos os símbolos e significações dos nossos modos de vida."

[8] In Portuguese: "Ao acatarmos essas denominações, por reivindicação nossa, mesmo sabendo que no passado elas nos foram impostas, nós só o fizemos porque somos capazes de ressignificá-las. Tanto é que elas se transformaram do crime para o direito, do pejorativo para o afirmativo. Isso demonstra um refluxo filosófico que é um resultado direto da nossa capacidade de pensar e de elaborar conceitos circularmente."

[9] In Portuguese: "as ressignificações das nossas identidades em meio aos mais perversos contextos de racismo, discriminação e estigmas; a interlocução das nossas linguagens orais com a linguagem escrita dos colonizadores."

decoloniality, as these studies examine narratives of experiences and lived realities of bodies/agents transformed by distinct times and spaces (Maldonado-Torres, 2018; Nascimento, 2020). These narratives confront the logic of the modern-colonial world system, reclaiming identities and bodies within intersecting power relations (Collins & Bilge, 2021; Collins, 2022), with a direct, politicized voice-praxis, through subjects expressing and defining themselves from within (Danner et al., 2020).

In this article, we approach discursive decoloniality through Intersectional Critical Discourse Analysis (ICDA), a discourse-based method that reinterprets the relational-dialectical and transformational approach and discursive ontology proposed by Lilie Chouliaraki & Norman Fairclough (1999) and Norman Fairclough (2003), aiming to analyze socio-discursive practices of resistance and reexistence. Drawing on the studies by Ana Lucia Souza (2011) and Gersiney Santos & Daiane Santos (2022), Carvalho (2024, p. 123) defines practices of resistance and reexistence as "socio-discursive practices that combat the colonial structure while simultaneously reinventing other possibilities, asserting a humanized existence."[10] Souza (2011), in examining reexistence practices, argues that beyond the transformations resulting from a history of struggle and claims for the right to the existence of diverse ontologies, *position wars* and power relations in the sociocultural sphere can redefine culture and shift the balance of hegemonic power relations.

Intersectional critical discourse analysis centers on including the body as an element of social practice, positioning it in movements of internalization and articulation with other elements (Discourse, Material Activity, and Mental Phenomenon), producing discursive moments distinct from those within the modern-colonial system. The way the body operates (and is socially operated upon) relates to how it internalizes and engages with these other elements, thereby expanding productively and creating new discourses that ultimately generate alternative forms of knowledge-power. Revisiting Linda Alcoff's (2006) concept of "positionality," Gomes (2020, 2022) argues that the intersecting body functions as both an identity politics and a positional (relational and situated) space, as occupying a position enables one to act politically from it. Positionality is thus both a

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[10] In Portuguese: "práticas socio discursivas que combatem a estrutura colonial ao mesmo tempo em que reinventam outras possíveis, reivindicando a existência humanizada."

relational term identifiable within a shifting context and an active site for meaning construction (Alcoff, 2006) that is produced, interpreted, and circulated (Gomes, 2022). In this sense, the body (Gomes, 2020; Gomes, 2022) forms the material, social, political, and bio-spiritual foundation (Carvajal, 2020; Martins, 2020) of the discursive agencies (Queiroz, 2021) of critical decolonial agents (Maldonado-Torres, 2018) who resist and challenge ideologically invested discourses permeated by power relations (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999) within the matrix of domination (Collins & Bilge, 2021; Collins, 2022) and the modern-colonial world system (Maldonado-Torres, 2018).

Discourse, in turn, is one facet of social practice undergoing re-signification, where semiotic resources – genres-supports, discourse-styles – are mobilized in the decolonization project through practices and actions of resistance and reexistence, with their actional, representational, and identificational meanings (Fairclough, 2003). In ICDA, Carvalho (2024) asserts that the analytical focus is on how discourses (re)produced and upheld by the matrix of domination (Collins, 2022) and the modern-colonial system (Maldonado-Torres, 2018) are contested and re-signified by decolonial bodies/agents. Through their positionalities, these agents transform and generate new material practices, beliefs, values, and social relations, constructing decolonial discourses capable of dismantling hierarchies and privileges.

Intersectionality is yet another key concept in ICDA, drawn primarily from the work of Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge. More than a foundational element of Black feminist thought, it is an analytical tool that "fosters more expansive understandings of collective identities and political action" (Collins & Bilge, 2021, p. 187) and helps to examine the complex power relations that manifest "various configurations of interlocking systems of oppression." These relations "are to be analyzed both via specific intersections, for example, of capitalism and racism, as well as across domains of power, namely, structural, disciplinary, cultural, and interpersonal." (Collins & Bilge, 2021, p. 209). For instance, the personal politics of the interpersonal domain materializes in texts produced through political activism. We will explore these issues through the accounts of the authors of the texts analyzed in this article, whose experiences and perspectives may converge in some respects but diverge in others, underscoring the points of contention within identity politics. Collins & Bilge (2021, p. 195) note that this illustrates "how

collective political consciousness emerges when people see how their individual life experiences reflect collective experiences" and that these "are shaped by broader social forces."

As proposed by Carvalho (2024) and Gomes & Carvalho (2024), Intersectional Critical Discourse Analysis operates in a cyclical process: identification of socio-discursive practices of resistance and reexistence ⇔ visibility of resistances and reexistences ⇔ unction of resistances and reexistences in practice ⇔ interdiscursive analysis ⇔ reconstruction for a decolonial context ⇔ identification of socio-discursive practices of resistance and reexistence. In ICDA:

> Identifying socio-discursive practices of resistance and reexistence places us at discursive crossroads where meaning-making becomes layered and reinvents itself, with the aim of disrupting colonial structures (Rufino, 2019a) by highlighting the knowledge of decolonial agents who slide, diverge, alter, rupture, converge, pluralize, and spread alternative forms of social life. This approach affects our selection of texts for analysis, as in ICDA, "body and discourse are the elements that are always foregrounded, and this methodological stance is the starting point for corpus selection" (Carvalho, 2024, p. 128). [11]

According to Carvalho (2024), texts selected for ICDA should be those created by critical, combative, and inventive decolonial bodies/agents—individuals who are "Black, LGBTQIA+, poor, peripheral, among other intersecting identity dimensions, who have repeatedly been rendered invisible by an epistemicidal (Carneiro, 2005) and linguicidal (Nascimento, 2020) society."[12] These individuals resist the colonial entanglements (Rufino, 2019) and simultaneously forge alternative forms of existence for themselves, others, and the world through movements of discursive disarticulation and rearticulation.

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[11] In Portuguese: "a identificação de práticas sociodiscursivas de resistência e de reexistência nos posiciona nas encruzilhadas discursivas nas quais a produção de sentidos torna-se múltipla e reinventora, cuja função é esculhambar a lógica do carrego colonial (Rufino, 2019a) já que coloca em evidência saberes de agentes decoloniais que deslizam, desviam, alteram, divergem, rompem, convergem, pluralizam e disseminam formas outras de vida social. Essa discussão implica sobre quais textos vamos selecionar para a análise pois na ADCI "corpo e discurso são os elementos que estão sempre evidenciados e esse posicionamento metodológico é o ponto de partida da seleção do corpus."

[12] In Portuguese: "pessoas negras LGBTQIA+ pobres periféricas, entre outros eixos identitários em intersecção, que reiteradamente sofreram invisibilização de uma sociedade epistemicida (Carneiro, 2005) e linguicida (Nascimento, 2020)."

Carvalho (2024) argues that we should analytically identify not only the bodies/agents engaged in the socio-discursive practices under examination but also consider the enunciative locus of those analyzing these texts, accounting for intersecting identity dimensions and systems of subordination and oppression that interact with them. Alongside these elements, discursive and non-discursive movements of resistance and reexistence are also essential. These movements both challenge the hierarchical and binary logic of coloniality and generate alternative forms of identification, representation, and (inter)action, re-signifying intersecting knowledge/epistemes, beings/identities, and ways of acting and interacting/powers.

In the following section, we analyze the discursive sample, incorporating the discussions presented thus far.

2 Women Who Menstruate or People Who Menstruate: Designations in Dispute within the Knowledge-Power Field

This article examines the selected discursive sample, comprising two texts engaged in an onto-epistemological dispute, through the lens of ICDA (Carvalho, 2024; Gomes & Carvalho, 2024) and categories of discursive systems – namely, periodicity, negotiation, and evaluative identification (Fuzer & Cabral, 2023; Cocco & Fuzer, 2023), along with the meaning of words and word creation (Fairclough, 1992).[13] These texts are framed by a social justice orientation through political-identity activism, while also displaying "analytical and political sensibilities" (Collins & Bilge, 2021, p. 156) in their political-identity stances and collective practices of resistance and reexistence.

The two texts analyzed here stem from journalistic socio-discursive practices and are historically and politically contextualized by time and place (Brazil, 2022) as well as by multiple shared themes (combating oppression, epistemicide,[14] and linguicide[15]). They were authored by individuals (that is, decolonial agents) who resist actions and practices (re)produced and sustained by the modern-colonial world system and intersecting

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[13] FAIRCLOUGH, Norman. *Discourse and Social Change*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992.

[14] Translator's note: The systematic suppression or erasure of marginalized knowledge systems by dominant powers.

[15] Translator's note: The systematic destruction or marginalization of languages associated with oppressed or colonized communities.

relations of power, privilege, and oppression. Text 1, written by Black cisgender philosopher Djamila Ribeiro, a columnist for the Brazilian newspaper *Folha de São Paulo*, is in dialogue with Text 2, written by white trans activists Bruna Benevides and Vitória, published on the Brazilian portal *Universo Online* [Online Universe] *(UOL)* as a counter-response to Djamila's article on the use of the designation *pessoas que menstruam* [people who menstruate]. All authors have access to Brazil's major media outlets and bring legitimacy and credibility to discussions on menstrual dignity rights. Through their discursive actions and interactions, they enact "critical inquiry and praxis for the social justice projects advanced by women, queer/gender nonconforming and trans persons of color" (Collins & Bilge, 2021, p. 149).

Naming an experience equates to acknowledging a mode of existence and producing practices and actions of resistance and reexistence. The designation people who menstruate broadens the general category *people* to include a diverse range of individuals who experience menstruation, thus generating new knowledge about menstruation – namely, that it is not limited to cisgender girls and women but also pertains to others, such as trans men and non-binary individuals. The debate around inclusive language, beyond offering a "certain opening up and democratization of gender relations, which has its discursive facets," as noted by Norman Fairclough (1992, p. 206),[16] has now also become a strategy of resistance and reexistence against what is referred to as the "Cistemaheteropatriarchy."[17] Words acquire meaning in various ways, implying that when producing a text, we engage with an open semiotic system where we make choices about which specific words to use, how to use them, and when (Pinto, 2014, p. 217). In so doing, we are "defining what can be used, by whom, and when, distributing discourse values among speakers."[18] Through this process, language exerts control over bodies, regulates and normalizes existences, and (re)produces knowledge and power.

At the *I Fórum MenstruAÇÃO* [Forum on Menstrual Dignity] – organized by UNFPA/Brazil in 2022 in Brasília, one key topic was the terminology to be used in the

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[16] See footnote 14.

[17] Translator's note: "Cistemaheteropatriarchy" is a portmanteau combining "cisgender," "heterosexual," and "patriarchy," referring to an intersecting system of societal norms and power structures that privilege cisgender, heterosexual men while marginalizing individuals based on gender identity, sexual orientation, and gender conformity.

[18] In Portuguese: "definindo o que pode ser usado, por quem, em qual momento, distribuindo valores de discurso entre falantes"

document *Recomendações para implementação de iniciativas de promoção da dignidade menstrual* [Recommendations for Implementing Menstrual Dignity Promotion Initiatives] (UNFPA, 2023), a product of the Forum's discussions, for referencing menstruating individuals. In light of the diverse intersections of identity, the term *people who menstruate* was selected to identify individuals who do not conform to cisnormativity.

The *Glossary* text, titled Aligning Languages, begins with the epigraph:

> It is in language that power is inscribed. [...] The asymmetry between people is manifested and sustained in language; it is concretely through language that symbolic, social, and cultural differences take root and are naturalized… fueling discrimination (UNFPA, 2022, p. 12). [19]

In addressing power relations embedded in language that sustain and reproduce discrimination and violence, the epigraph implicitly affirms the need to use the term "*pessoas que menstruam*" [people who menstruate] in this document and similar texts. The discursive-political use of this quotation underscores the onto-epistemological debates surrounding menstruation, debates that must be addressed and asserted. The citation calls attention to (and challenges) readers, emphasizing that this is not just about terminology but a call for recognition as a step toward social justice.

It is not surprising that a term for describing individuals with diverse menstrual experiences has sparked visible and controversial debate, especially across digital and social media and in specialized forums addressing menstrual health and education from a critical, decolonial, and intersectional standpoint. This designation – "*pessoas que menstruam*" – is primarily advocated by trans men and non-binary individuals who call for this language in public policy texts and legislative proposals that concern not only access to menstrual resources but also broader aspects of menstrual health (Gomes, 2023b). Choosing to use *pessoas que menstruam* instead of *meninas e mulheres que menstruam* [girls and women who menstruate], or vice versa, to refer to menstruating bodies/beings is a political, epistemic-ontological choice within ongoing processes of

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[19] In Portuguese: "É na linguagem que os poderes se inscrevem. [...] A assimetria entre as pessoas manifesta-se e sustenta-se na linguagem, sendo concretamente na língua que se instalam e se naturalizam diferenças simbólicas, sociais, culturais… que nutrem fenômenos de discriminação."

sociocultural and political contention and transformation, generating new meanings, that is, new ways of signifying distinct experiences and lived realities. As Fairclough (1992, p. 185)[20] states, "the meanings of words and the wording of meanings are matters which are socially variable and socially contested, and facets of wider social and cultural processes," as will be illustrated in the texts analyzed below.

Djamila, a Black cisgender decolonial agent positioned with privilege within institutional media and academic power structures, as well as in interpersonal domains, uses intersectionality – the cornerstone of Black feminist thought – as her principal analytical and political argument to challenge the designation *people who menstruate*, arguing that this term risks obscuring and erasing the intersecting power dynamics faced by the racialized bodies of Black women. By doing so, she asserts her own identity with the statement, *Sim, eu sou uma mulher* [Yes, I am a woman].

Her text, published on December 1, 2022, in *Folha de São Paulo*, is titled: *"We, women, are not just people who menstruate: even with the supposed aim to include trans men, the term erases the concrete reality of women."*[21] Djamila presents her thesis*: We, women, are not just* people who menstruate. In doing so, she reaffirms her identity within the group *women* through the *I-we* framework, amplifying a direct, politically engaged voice-praxis that implies the existence of another group beyond the (generic) category *women* that also menstruates – namely, "people." Her thesis opposes and rejects the designation *people who menstruate*, arguing that it constrains and limits (not… just) the *concrete reality of women*. Djamila builds an argument in which she refutes this designation, employing linguistic and semantic-discursive strategies that assess knowledge, emotions, and values:

> *I confess that I felt profoundly disturbed, both as a woman and as a feminist theorist. As a woman, it disturbs me* that we are reduced to our biological functions as if we were not complete human beings, social beings, and political subjects.[22]

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[20] For reference, see footnote 14.

[21] In Portuguese: "Nós, mulheres, não somos apenas "pessoas que menstruam": mesmo com a pretensa ideia de querer incluir homens trans, termo apaga a realidade concreta das mulheres."

[22] In Portuguese: "Confesso que me senti profundamente incomodada, tanto como mulher quanto como teórica feminista. Como mulher, me perturba o fato de sermos restringidas às nossas funções biológicas, como se não fôssemos seres humanos completos, seres sociais e sujeitos políticos."

The affective evaluation is expressed in the thematic structure through two mental processes that evoke negative feelings of dissatisfaction – I confess, I felt – and discomfort, intensified by the adverb *profoundly*. This affective dissatisfaction highlights Djamila's frustration regarding her identity and enunciative locus, that is, as a woman and feminist theorist. The thematic phrase *as a woman* (given or familiar information) followed by the new information *it disturbs me* not only reasserts her standpoint, legitimizing her rejection of this designation but also reveals her subjective/desiderative stance on the debate around *being a woman* from critical, intersectional perspectives. Thus, she rejects the notion of *being reduced to our biological functions*, emphasizing that women are political and social subjects. For Djamila, the term *people who menstruate* introduces a sense of opacity that diminishes visibility, and as such, it excludes more than it includes, generalizes more than it specifies, and de-ontologizes rather than ontologizes. The phrases *disturbed* and *it disturbs me* convey her evaluative stance, articulated through a reaction of negative impact.

Djamila observes, confesses, and feels disturbed and troubled as a woman, feminist theorist, and Black feminist, judging this term and approach as a *setback*. She dismisses the construct by linking it to modern-colonial theories of biological sexism, offering a legitimized clarification: "*as so well explained* by Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex. [...] As a Black feminist, I view these attitudes as a setback.*"[23] Djamila critiques and disapproves of possible explanations for this usage, drawing on the critical praxis of intersectionality and feminist intellectual references, visibly foregrounding her own positionality and enunciative locus:

> *Precisely for this reason*, Black feminism has been and remains so important in considering intersectionality as an analytical tool. *If this reality is erased by the assertion that we are all women,* negating oppressions of race and class, or that we are "people who menstruate," the social group of Black women does not become visible as a subject of rights.[24]

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[23] In Portuguese: "tão bem explicado por Simone de Beauvoir em "O Segundo Sexo". [...] Como feminista negra, vejo essas atitudes como um retrocesso."

[24] In Portuguese: "Justamente por isso, o feminismo negro foi e é tão importante ao pensar a interseccionalidade como ferramenta analítica. Se essa realidade é apagada com a afirmação de que somos todas mulheres, negando as opressões de raça e classe, ou de que somos "pessoas que menstruam", o grupo social mulher negra não se torna visível como sujeito de direitos."

Djamila's argument and her discursive constructions of resistance and reexistence emphasize the importance of the generic term women as opposed to people, bringing the critical praxis of intersectional identity politics into the debate. This approach underscores the intersecting power relations of oppression and privilege affecting racialized women's bodies and seeks to counter the notion that the designation *people* encompasses the entire universe of womanhood, as if all women share identical experiences and realities. -

Nonetheless, Djamila's argument also resonates with trans and non-binary individuals, as each distinct experience and reality is directly influenced by "how race, class, gender, sexuality, agility, and age affect the rights and services," according to the Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge (2021, p. 137) have highlighted this dynamic in their exploration of the connections between intersectionality and reproductive justice, noting that "health discourse and public policy strive to deal with common challenges, but each place has its own unique struggles."

Using the rhetorical strategy of counter-expectation, Djamila challenges the notion of inclusion – a stance often considered justifiable for adopting the term – and ascribes negative effects to this usage: *The supposed intent to include erases the concrete reality of women and creates a new universal category.* According to the philosopher and activist, the term *people who menstruate* will become a universal and hegemonic category that obscures the intersecting bodies central to the menstrual health debate, such as racialized women and trans men. Although this may appear to align with trans issues, given that *trans men are not simply individuals who gestate and menstruate but political subjects,* Djamila appears to not only once again reject the existence of other menstruating bodies but also to prioritize an identity-based issue. The focus, in principle, should be on providing dignified health care to all menstruating individuals through inclusive public policies that acknowledge that, in Brazil, menstrual health is particularly shaped by intersections of race, poverty/class, gender, and geopolitics.

Djamila closes her text by reengaging evaluative lexicogrammatical resources (affect, appreciation, and judgment), relational and mental processes, modals (negative polarity, assertions), and value-laden presuppositions, as well as terminology (e.g., *backlash*), data on violence against women, and, finally, an endorsement of the need to

study feminist theories, which she presumes to be intersectional, as illustrated in the following excerpt:

> *This is a backlash and an act of violence because, once again, the material reality of women is rendered invisible* in a country ranked fifth globally for femicides, with high rates of physical and sexual violence, and where menstrual poverty is a reality that affects women predominantly. *It makes no sense to fear using the category of women or keeping it implicit. It is necessary* to study the theorists and activists who have dedicated themselves *to honest reflection* on the female condition.[25]

Through constructing an ethos of credibility, Djamila conveys her expertise on the subject with sincerity and transparency, which she demonstrates by citing statistics and terms like *backlash*. She also builds an ethos of competence, showing her knowledge and experiences, which bolster her stance as an activist and advocate. This authoritative tone discursively guides the reader to three value-laden presuppositions: *(i) It makes no sense to fear using the category of women* – presupposing that public policymakers have indeed shown fear in using the term women; (ii) *It is necessary* to study the theorists and activists – presupposing that theorists and activists who reflect on the female condition are not adequately studied; (iii) *It is necessary* to study the theorists and activists who have dedicated themselves *to honest reflection* – which implies an existential presupposition that some theorists and activists lack honesty in their reflections. These presuppositions thus convey a voice imbued with scientific, theoretical, and practical authority, aiming to persuade her audience that menstrual poverty in Brazil has yet to be addressed with the seriousness and integrity it demands.

Text 2, written by Bruna Benevides and Yuna Vitória, two white trans women, was published on December 12, 2022, as a response to Djamila Ribeiro's column. Both Bruna and Yuna are decolonial agents whose bodies occupy privileged positionalities within institutional media, digital power structures, and interpersonal dynamics. Bruna

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[25] In Portuguese: "Trata-se de um *backlash* e de violência porque, mais uma vez, decidem invisibilizar a realidade material de mulheres no quinto país do mundo em número de feminicídios, de alta taxa de violência física e sexual e onde a pobreza menstrual é uma realidade que as atinge majoritariamente. Não faz o menor sentido ter medo de usar a categoria mulher ou de mantê-la implícita. É necessário estudar as teóricas e ativistas que se dedicaram a refletir de maneira honesta sobre a condição feminina."

Benevides identifies as a Northeastern *Travesti*[26] and a trans service member of the Brazilian Navy, serving as Political Articulation Secretary of the *Associação nacional de travestis e transexuais* [National Association of *Travestis* and Transsexuals] (ANTRA). She was recognized among the 100 pioneering women in political leadership by Women of the World (WoW) and received the *Faz Diferença* Award from *O Globo* [The Globe] newspaper. Yuna Vitória identifies as a "*Trava jurídica,*"[27] is a law student, and serves as an academic researcher (FDUFBA), jointly coordinating the Research Group on Trans, Travesti, and Intersex at NUCUS, affiliated with the Federal University of Bahia (UFBA).

The article, published on the *Terra* website, is titled: *Why are we using the term "people who menstruate?" It sounds strange to think we are being accused of biologizing womanhood when, in fact, we are moving in the opposite direction*.[28] This title not only introduces the thesis they will defend – supporting the adoption of new terminology and the de-pathologization of trans bodies – but also suggests a critical, situated, and decolonial approach to addressing the care and inclusion of transgender people. It opens with a question, constructed through an I/we political praxis in the thematic position, which effectively prompts a response to Djamila's text from a critical, reflective standpoint (*strange*), using a rhetorical prompt – *it sounds strange to think that* – and a relational process with a negative implication: we are being accused via a concessive phrase (*when*) concerning the ideas (*biologizing womanhood*) and facts (*we are moving in the opposite direction*).

As Cintia Cocco & Cristiane Fuzer (2022, p. 153) note: "The use of a question as a communicative function serves as a persuasive strategy, prompting the reader to react – be it through agreement, rejection, or disapproval."[29] The starting point of these decolonial agents in this text of resistance and reexistence aligns with Jaqueline de Jesus's

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[26] Translator's note: A culturally specific identity in Brazil and other Latin American countries, referring to individuals assigned male at birth who assume a feminine gender expression and often live as women, though distinct from the term "trans woman" in its sociocultural context.

[27] Translator's note: A Brazilian term combining *"trava,"* a colloquial abbreviation of *"travesti,"* with "jurídica" (legal). It denotes a *travesti* working or studying in the legal field, reflecting both gender identity and professional/academic involvement.

[28] In Portuguese: "Por que estamos usando o termo "pessoas que menstruam"? Soa estranho pensar que estamos sendo acusadas de biologizar formas de ser mulher, quando estamos partindo e caminhando em sentido opostos."

[29] In Portuguese: "O uso da função de fala pergunta funciona como estratégia persuasiva ao solicitar ao leitor algum tipo de reação – seja resposta, desconsideração ou desaprovação."

(2014, p. 243) argument in "*Gênero sem essencialismo: feminismo transgênero como crítica do sexo*" [Gender Without Essentialism: Transgender Feminism as a Critique of Sex], which asserts that transfeminist thought "emerges as a theoretical and political response to essentialist, often biologically based feminism's failure to recognize gender as a distinct category from sex, reinforcing stereotypes about bodies."[30]

Bruna and Yuna advocate for the importance of new terms and expressions to address unrecognized and excluded identities, particularly in the context of public policy development. Their stance rejects knowledge production that remains grounded in a binary, essentialist view of cisgender bodies, those aligned with the Cistema[31] matrix of the modern-colonial world system, as illustrated below:

> It ultimately leaves a gap in the accumulated knowledge on the topic and in the dynamics of care *for bodies contesting this inclusion* **without posing any threat to those who already have guaranteed access and do not need to claim it** (Emphasis added). [32]

If, as Julieta Paredes Carvajal (2020, p. 33) asserts, "it is on the material basis of the body that gender is constructed,"[33] and this thesis is supported by Ursula Aguila, Paul Preciado, and Judith Butler (2008), De Jesus (2014), Gomes (2020; 2022), Gomes & Carvalho (2024), and Carvalho (2024), then there are bodies within intersecting relations of oppressive power that must act both ontologically and epistemologically to ensure their constitutional dignity, particularly in relation to public health policies. An interesting oppositional relationship emerges between "those bodies contesting inclusion" ⇔ *without posing any threat* ⇔ "*those who already have guaranteed access and do not need* to claim it."[34] This oppositional relationship, expressed through the differentiation of *us* versus

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[30] In Portuguese: "É na linguagem que os poderes se inscrevem. [...] A assimetria entre as pessoas manifesta-se e sustenta-se na linguagem, sendo concretamente na língua que se instalam e se naturalizam diferenças simbólicas, sociais, culturais… que nutrem fenômenos de discriminação."

[31] In Portuguese: ""*Cistema*" is a portmanteau of "cisgender" and "system," describing a social framework that centers and privileges cisgender identities, often reinforcing norms and structures that marginalize transgender and gender-nonconforming individuals."

[32] In Portuguese: "acaba deixando uma lacuna sobre a produção de conhecimento acumulada sobre o tema e também sobre as dinâmicas de cuidado para com os corpos que disputam tal inclusão sem qualquer ameaça aos já garantidos acessos daqueles que não precisam reivindicá-lo."

[33] In Spanish: "es sobre la base material del cuerpo que se construye el género."

[34] In Portuguese: "aqueles corpos que disputam acesso" ⇔ sem qualquer ameaça ⇔ "daqueles que já têm garantias de acesso e não precisam reivindicar."

them, is lexicogrammatically structured through attributive and material relational processes (*contesting*), evaluations (*guaranteed access*), and the material process (*claim*), positioning the first group ("those contesting inclusion") as non-confrontational toward other bodies. This framing counters Djamila's argument about the invisibilization of Black women's experiences.

Two existential presuppositions thus arise: (i) that there are bodies actively disputing and seeking access and guarantees, acting as goal-oriented agents, and (ii) that there are bodies not needing to act upon/claim/contest, as they already possess these guarantees. The argumentative clarification – *without posing any threat* – also signals a value-laden presumption that this pursuit of access is not a threat, as health is a universal basic right enshrined in the Brazilian Constitution for all citizens.

Jaqueline de Jesus and Hailey Alves (2012) highlight some essential points for the transfeminist agenda, with terminology being a central concern. They underscore the importance of avoiding terms that essentialize or render trans identities invisible, as Bruna and Yuna point out: *Once labeled, today trans people come to resist and position themselves* regarding gender categories and technologies, precisely questioning the biologization of identities.[35] The temporal circumstantial relation in thematic position – *once labeled, today* trans people – presupposes not only the existence of trans bodies but also that these bodies are actively engaged in resisting and questioning *gender categories and technologies and the biologization of identities.*[36] Trans bodies act/resist and question/position themselves as critical and activist bodies, actively engaged in the decolonization of knowledge, power, and being (Maldonado-Torres, 2018).

Collins and Bilge (2021) underscore the essential relationship between intersectionality, knowledge production, and emancipatory knowledge, highlighting how these aspects are pivotal to understanding the disproportionate, violent, and cruel impact that structural injustice in Brazil has on transgender people, who encounter multiple, intersecting systems of oppressive power. Bruna and Yuna urge us to consider this reality in the following passage:

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[35] In Portuguese: "Antes nomeadas, hoje as pessoas trans passam a resistir e se posicionar em relação às categorias e tecnologias de gênero, questionando exatamente a biologização das identidades."
[36] In Portuguese: "categorias e tecnologias de gênero e a biologização das identidades."

> *It sounds a bit strange to think* we are being accused of biologizing ways of being a woman when, *both theoretically and practically*, from the rise of the social movement to the development of counter-hegemonic epistemologies in academia, we have been moving in the opposite direction. *The distortion – or at the very least, profound ignorance – of what* we have produced along our paths is evident. It is *no wonder that cisgender people resist being labeled by a population that, until very recently, was seen as lacking autonomy and whose identities were pathologized, deemed a disease, or a mental deviation –* even as we have not fully overcome the moral deviance stigma imposed on us (Emphasis added). [37]

The committed, engaged, and critical stance of trans decolonial agents Bruna and Yuna is evident in their lexicogrammatical choices, including modality, intensity, degree, polarity, and comment adjuncts with evaluations and judgments of social esteem and sanction in a negative light, placed in a thematic position to lend strength and support to the evaluative arguments that follow. *It sounds a bit strange to think*, *The distortion – or at the very least, profound ignorance of what we have produced, and It is no wonder.* These emphatic statements directly counter Djamila's points, especially in relation to knowledge production and the struggles and challenges encountered by the trans population.

Naming is fundamental for articulating attributes about an entity, to assign or predicate qualities to what is designated (Rajagopalan, 2003). For Santos (2019a), naming is a form of domination, meaning that all designations are subject to power struggles. The importance of designation and naming is indisputable, as naming involves opinion, value judgment, and also constructs and deconstructs existences and knowledge, as exemplified here:

> It is important to recall that strategies for deconstructing cisnormative perspectives by challenging established concepts and expressions *necessarily involve disrupting habitual ways of thinking, which inevitably causes discomfort in those who do not perceive themselves*

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[37] In Portuguese: "Soa um pouco estranho pensar que estamos sendo acusadas de biologizar formas de ser mulher(es), quando estamos teoricamente e na prática, do surgimento do movimento social à produção de epistemologias contra hegemônicas na academia, partindo e caminhando em sentido oposto. Já fica nítida a distorção ou minimamente um profundo desconhecimento sobre aquilo que temos produzido ao longo de nossas trajetórias. Não é de se estranhar que pessoas cisgêneros se recusem a serem nomeadas por uma população que até bem pouco tempo era vista sem autonomia e cujas identidades seriam uma patologia, doença, um desvio mental – sem se sequer termos superado totalmente o estigma do desvio moral a nós atribuído."

as directly affected by these issues. It is essential to keep in mind that, although transfeminism aims to broaden perspectives, its avant-garde propositions *may occasionally provoke discomfort* by identifying cisnormativity and rejecting cisgender identity as the baseline for human existence (Emphasis added).[38]

The linguistic decolonial movement that contests designations arises from political praxis – a discursive-political use that can transform a given existence, assumed as origin and source, into a different existence imbued with resistant and political significance, as Bruna and Yuna underscore*: challenging established concepts and expressions necessarily involves disrupting habitual ways of thinking, which inevitably causes discomfort in those who do not perceive themselves as directly affected by these issues.*[39] Lexicogrammatical elements such as *necessarily, inevitably causes discomfort, do not perceive themselves as directly affected, occasionally provoke discomfort*[40] position potential addressees of this negotiation as agents upholding colonialist, hegemonic discourses of the modern-colonial *Cistema* world system and the matrix of domination, which defines the legitimate/natural/standard/normal body as white and cisheteropatriarchal.

These refutations, contradictions, and disapprovals are carried out by decolonial agents through the three basic parameters of the discursive negotiation system: what is being negotiated (information on the term *people who menstruate*), the action taken (rejection and refutation of Djamila's argument), and the speech role being exercised (rejection, disapproval, and contradiction) (Cocco & Fuzer, 2023). Bruna and Yuna negotiate from the positionality of bodies that occupy intersecting spheres of prestige within institutional, academic, and activist power systems, holding both authority and legitimacy in theory and practice regarding the debate over the designation *people who menstruate*.

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[38] In Portuguese: "Cumpre recapitular que estratégias de desconstrução de miradas cisnormativas, disputando conceitos e expressões, passa necessariamente pelo lugar de ruptura do hábito, o que gera inevitavelmente desconforto em quem não se percebe diretamente prejudicado por ele. Faz-se míster ter no radar que, apesar de existir para somar, o transfeminismo nesse cálculo pode vir a gerar eventuais incômodos em suas proposições vanguardistas ao identificar a cisnormatividade e negar a cisgeneridade como ponto de partida da condição humana."

[39] In Portuguese: "disputando conceitos e expressões, passa necessariamente pelo lugar de ruptura do hábito, o que gera inevitavelmente desconforto em quem não se percebe diretamente prejudicado por ele."

[40] In Portuguese: "necessariamente, inevitavelmente desconforto, não se percebe diretamente, eventuais incômodos."

In this text of resistance and reexistence, Bruna and Yuna, as decolonial agents, "combat epistemicide (Carneiro, 2005) and the colonial project that oppresses, tortures, decimates, and renders invisible"[41] their contributions not only in politics but also in theory (Carvalho, 2024, p. 135), as reflected in the following excerpts:

> **(i)** *The use of the term "people who menstruate" and its variations is in no way intended to replace the term women. Women are women – a group of people* who identify as women, encompassing a broad spectrum of perspectives. People who menstruate represents an even larger group. However, within this group, women constitute the largest numerical percentage.[42]
> **(ii)** *There is no issue in saying that we must* strengthen the fight for menstrual dignity for women and other people who menstruate, *and we can* employ diverse identities depending on the context. *Generally, however, the term "people who menstruate" can easily help address all individuals needing* access to menstrual dignity, breaking down exclusive and immediate associations with femininity.[43] (Emphasis added)

The text will be divided into two analytical segments, as it presents, in our view, two distinct informational flows that articulate and disarticulate around a thematic organization. The thematic choices in Discursive Flow 1 support the onto-epistemological debate over "people who menstruate and women" by presenting known information pertinent to the political debate, reinforced by evaluative elements, as seen in the following sequence: (i) The use of the expression "people who menstruate" and other related terms; (ii) Women; (iii) A group of people who; (iv) People who menstruate; (v) *However,* within this group; (vi) women.

The information is organized through identification relationships that put two types of generic categorization into the debate: (i) people who menstruate, a group of

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[41] In Portuguese: "lutam contra o epistemicídio (Carneiro, 2005) e contra o projeto colonial que violenta, tortura, dizima, invisibiliza."
[42] In Portuguese: "O uso da expressão "pessoas que menstruam" e derivados não pretende, de forma alguma, substituir o uso de mulheres. Mulheres são mulheres, um grupo de pessoas que se definem como mulheres a partir das mais variadas compreensões. As pessoas que menstruam são um grupo ainda maior. No entanto, no grupo das pessoas que menstruam, as mulheres constituem a maior percentagem em termos numéricos."
[43] In Portuguese: "Não há qualquer problema em falar: precisamos fortalecer a luta pela dignidade menstrual de mulheres e demais pessoas que menstruam, assim como podemos usar as diversas identidades a depender do contexto. Mas em geral, o uso de "pessoas que menstruam" pode facilmente contribuir para falar em um contexto de todas as pessoas que têm a necessidade de acesso à dignidade menstrual, desconstruindo associações exclusivas e imediatas com a feminilidade."

people who, within this group, and (ii) women; while both linguistic categories apply broadly, they provide minimal specific detail. However, given the context of this production – the debate around gender identity – the two categories, despite their generality, function relationally within the discourse. This positions the term *woman* as an ontologically exclusive category concerning access to menstrual health as a universal right, which becomes specific within the group of people who menstruate. The repeated thematic positioning of "people who menstruate" in the argumentative structure of the text suggests not only the existence of a specific group but also that this group possesses distinct sociocultural and political characteristics. Within this flow of information, the decolonial agents articulate their perspective, engagement, and stance on key points (to replace the term woman), made clear through evaluative expressions (e.g., is in no way intended; however), as well as through numerical and intersectional explanations (e.g., an even larger group; encompassing a broad spectrum of perspectives; the largest numerical percentage).

In the second analytical segment (Discursive Flow 2), thematic progression develops through markedly evaluative, modal, and textual themes: *There is no issue in saying; and we can; Generally, however*; and the term *people who menstruate*. Indeed, these elements introduce evaluations while expanding the meaning by negating any problem with the term's use. The lexicogrammatical structure *Generally, however* acts as an endorsement of prior points while guiding the reader toward a plausible, fair proposition. While these thematic constructions are epistemically oriented, expressed in degrees of likelihood, the explanations and arguments are expanded in a deontic manner, with a powerful sense of obligation and commitment, as seen in the following examples:

> *we must* strengthen the fight for menstrual dignity for women and other people who menstruate, *and we can* employ diverse identities depending on the context.[44]

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[44] In Portuguese: "precisamos fortalecer a luta pela dignidade menstrual de mulheres e demais pessoas que menstruam, assim como podemos usar as diversas identidades a depender do contexto."

can easily help address all individuals *needing* access to menstrual dignity, breaking down exclusive and immediate associations with femininity.[45]

Bruna and Yuna politicize themselves and their bodies, calling on all who menstruate to join the fight against menstrual precarity, which disproportionately impacts Black, impoverished people in rural and peripheral areas, as highlighted by data in the *Relatório sobre a pobreza menstrual no Brasil* [Report on Menstrual Poverty in Brazil] (2021): "nearly 19% of Black and mixed-race girls did not receive or do not recall receiving guidance, compared to white girls."[46] This report addresses cisgender girls in terms of gender and age, thus excluding trans and non-binary individuals. Data from the *Instituto Brasileiro de Transmasculinidades* [Brazilian Institute of Transmasculinities] (IBRAT) in its 2024 health survey of transmasculine people in Brazil indicate, for example, that 53.5% of these individuals lack access to gynecologists, underscoring a lack of universal healthcare access. It is indeed essential to politicize lives, practices, and values; this fight is urgent and vital.

From the enunciative position of these decolonial agents, narratives arise, shaped by experiences transformed in and through place, by practices and acts of resistance, materialized in texts that convey transgressive, emancipatory, critical, and decolonial discourses. These narratives challenge the coloniality of language – an aspect of the coloniality of power and knowledge. The bodies of these decolonial agents, situated within intersecting power relations, unsettle connections with other bodies – such as Djamila's and other cisgender bodies, which hold different morals, ideologies, experiences, and lived realities – thereby generating distinct socio-discursive practices of resistance.

The I-we political praxis voice underscores the humanized existence of all menstruating bodies while simultaneously challenging the colonial cisheteropatriarchal framework, as seen here:

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[45] In Portuguese: "pode facilmente contribuir para falar em um contexto de todas as pessoas que têm a necessidade de acesso à dignidade menstrual, desconstruindo associações exclusivas e imediatas com a feminilidade."

[46] In Portuguese: "quase 19% das meninas pretas e pardas não tiveram ou não se lembram se tiveram estas orientações, quando comparadas a meninas brancas."

We genuinely intend to develop strategic language use to integrate and include all people, irrespective of their gender identities. *We need* to respect, value, and celebrate the diversity of experiences, identities, and bodies, *because although most people who menstruate* identify as cisgender girls and women (an important note), they are not the only ones. *Those who view themselves as the only possible form of existence within a certain group lean toward universalism* (Emphasis added). [47]

Litiane Macedo (2023, p. 657) also stresses the need to conceive of and use language "as a resource that enables new ontological paths, engaging with theories that see language as a mode of action in the world."[48] Bruna and Yuna's activist political praxis voices do not refute Djamila's onto-epistemology, nor do they deny the intersectional violence experienced by women, nor aim to silence or obscure the struggle of Black women. Instead, they emphasize the necessity of creating a transformative designation from existing terms, expanding the reexistence of ontologies that are continuously violated within the Brazilian context. This linguistic-discursive movement is not one of substitution or exclusion but one of inclusion: women and people who menstruate. Although "oppressions may be focused, analyzed, and exposed as embedded within language structures, for example – reexistence can indeed occur,"[49] thus amplifying previously silenced voices (Santos & Santos, 2022, p. 10).

(In)Conclusion

This article does not aim to judge one text over another or any particular body and its associated knowledge-power. Instead, it seeks to challenge us to undertake analytical reflections on linguistic-discursive uses from decolonial perspectives, informed by the markers of our own cisgender, white identities. Our objective has been to explore how

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[47] In Portuguese: "Pretendemos realmente desenvolver formas do uso de linguagem de maneira estratégica, visando integrar e incluir todas as pessoas, completamente independente das suas identidades de gênero. Precisamos respeitar, valorizar e celebrar a diversidade de experiências, identidades e corporalidades, pois mesmo que a maioria das pessoas que menstruam se identifiquem como meninas e mulheres, cisgêneras (importa pontuar), elas não são as únicas. E quem se pensa como única possibilidade de ser e existir dentro de certo grupo tende ao universalismo."

[48] In Portuguese: "como um recurso que possibilita novos percursos ontológicos, uma vez que, em diálogo com as teorias que veem a linguagem como modo de ação no mundo."

[49] In Portuguese: "as opressões possam estar enfocadas, analisadas e expostas por estarem presas à estrutura da língua, por exemplo – a reexistência pode sim acontecer."

decolonial agents negotiate and uphold the use of the term people who menstruate, along with the counter-ideological and counter-hegemonic investments that are discursively constructed through their positionalities, enunciative loci, and politically situated knowledge – thus fostering acts of resistance and reexistence.

Djamila's text and that of Bruna and Yuna unfold within processes of discursive rearticulation and disarticulation, establishing linguistic-discursive relationships of self- and other-identification through the negotiation of knowledge and power derived from lived experiences that sometimes converge and at other times diverge. Together, these experiences enable actions and practices of resistance and reexistence that respect and strengthen each other's agendas. As Walter Mignolo and Catherine Walsh (2018, pp. 228-229) suggest, "Each trajectory will be shaped and molded within the praxis of those who engage in it." Patricia Hill Collins (2022, p. 128) also underscores that "theorizing resistance has been essential for projects of resistant knowledge," especially those that "grapple with the existential question of how individuals and groups, subordinated within various power systems, can survive and resist oppression."

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Thanks

Statement of Author's Contribution

This article was written by Maria Carmen Aires Gomes and Alexandra Bittencourt de Carvalho. Maria Carmen Aires Gomes designed and collected the data. All the authors collaborated in interpreting and analyzing the data, as well as being responsible for writing and revising the article.

Research Data and Other Materials Availability

The contents underlying the research text are included in the manuscript.

Reviews

Due to the commitment assumed by *Bakhtiniana. Revista de Estudos do Discurso* [*Bakhtiniana*. Journal of Discourse Studies] to Open Science, this journal only publishes reviews that have been authorized by all involved.

Review I

The article aims to address a relevant social issue: the relationship between linguistic-discursive (de)coloniality, menstrual dignity and discursive practices of resistance and reexistence, from an ADCI perspective. The theoretical basis and methodology adopted are coherent with the proposal and have been presented consistently by the author of the article. I would also like to highlight the originality of the article in inserting the body as a way of broadening Norman Fairclough's perspective. I only suggest a careful revision of the text to avoid small slips throughout, considering the use of the formal modality of the language. APPROVED

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Reviewed on July 02, 2024.

Review II

The text presented stems from the Project "Discourses on menstrual poverty in Brazil and Latin America" and deals with a consistent analysis of the denomination "bodies that menstruate"/"people who menstruate," situating it in the debate on the "relationship between linguistic-discursive (de)coloniality, intersecting bodies and discursive practices of resistance and reexistence, from a critical intersectional discursive perspective." The analysis is well-founded and meets the proposed objectives, making important contributions to the debate on the subject, as well as to discourse studies. We suggest

bringing in the concept of positionality as a contribution to the reading, as well as reviewing the references cited and the grammatical and textual aspects indicated in the review. APPROVED.

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