

Estereótipos do Brasil e da Colômbia: uma experiência crítico-engajada em um curso de português para colombianos

Stereotypes of Brazil and Colombia: an experience of critical engagement in a Portuguese course for Colombians

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Resumo

O termo "translinguagem" tem sido cada vez mais utilizado na literatura acadêmica para se referir às práticas linguísticas complexas e fluentes de bilíngues e também em abordagens pedagógicas que potencializam essas práticas (García et al., 2017). Este estudo tem como objetivo apresentar uma experiência em sala de aula que promove interação, engajamento, cooperação e pensamento crítico entre estudantes do ensino superior. Trata-se de um projeto de pesquisa crítica colaborativa, com coleta de dados baseada em gravações em áudio de grupos de reflexão a partir da leitura de Escrivências sobre estereótipos de pessoas de diferentes nacionalidades, além de duas apresentações teatrais e uma reflexão coletiva em uma aula de Português para Colombianos. Os resultados evidenciam que metodologias críticas, colaborativas e performativas no ensino de português no Ensino Superior promoveram engajamento afetivo e crítico, participação ativa dos estudantes e revisão de estereótipos culturais.

Keywords: Ensino superior, línguas, ensino de português, translinguagem, multiculturalidade.

Abstract

The term translinguaging has gained increasing prominence in academic discourse as a way to describe the complex, fluid linguistic practices of bilingual individuals, as well as the pedagogical approaches that support and expand these practices (García et al., 2017). This study presents a classroom-based experience designed to foster interaction, engagement, cooperation, and critical thinking among higher education students. As part of a collaborative critical research project, data were



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collected from audio recordings of student reflection groups discussing *Escrevivências*—narratives that address stereotypes associated with different nationalities—alongside two theatrical performances and a collective reflection activity conducted during a Portuguese language class for Colombian learners. The results show that critical, collaborative, and performative methodologies in Portuguese language teaching in higher education fostered affective and critical engagement, active student participation, and the revision of cultural stereotypes.

Keywords: Higher education, languages, Portuguese teaching, translanguaging, multiculturalism.

1. Introduction

In recent years, bilingual education has undergone significant transformations driven by approaches that recognize the dynamic, situated, and fluid nature of language. *Translanguaging*, understood as a spontaneous practice among bilinguals and as a pedagogical strategy, legitimizes the use of students' entire linguistic repertoire in constructing meaning (García & Lin, 2016; García et al., 2017). From a critical perspective, this approach challenges monolingual ideology and values linguistic heterogeneity as a tool for learning and knowledge construction (García, 2009; Li Wei, 2014; Flores, 2014).

In Latin America, the debate on language education has gained relevance, particularly in teaching additional languages—such as Portuguese to Spanish speakers—where tensions persist between traditional models and more inclusive, intercultural approaches. Within this framework, translanguaging is seen as a situated, political, and transformative practice (Cenoz & Gorter, 2015; García & Lin, 2016). It aligns with methodologies such as critical collaborative research (Magalhães, 1990; Liberali, 2016), which integrate theory and practice through dialogic reflection, critique of hegemonic discourses, and the active engagement of students as co-constructors of knowledge.

The teaching of additional languages often retains traces of traditional models, where critical and intercultural dimensions are addressed superficially—or in ways that reinforce stereotypes and normalize dominant discourses (Xavier, 2020; Lopes, 2020; Rosado-Mendinueta et al., 2023). In light of this, reframing the classroom as a space for social analysis and identity negotiation becomes imperative. Language learning thus transcends linguistic acquisition, offering students the chance to develop critical awareness of discourses shaping both their own and other cultures.

Despite theoretical advancements, a gap remains between the conceptual framework of translanguaging and its practical implementation in Latin American higher education. This article

presents a pedagogical experience developed in the fourth year of the Portuguese program at Universidad del Norte (Colombia), involving Colombian undergraduates in Literature, International Relations, and International Business. Designed by Brazilian teacher-researchers, the initiative is grounded in three interrelated theoretical pillars: translanguaging (García & Lin, 2016), *Escrevivência* (Evaristo, 2005), and the Theatre of the Oppressed (Boal, 1975; Freire, 2005). The methodological approach was critical collaborative research (Magalhães, 1990; Liberali, 2016), which emphasizes dialogic engagement, shared inquiry, and co-construction of knowledge.

The concept of *Escrevivência* (Evaristo, 2005)—a form of writing that intertwines body, memory, and affect—serves as a powerful way to connect discourse, lived experience, and resistance. The proposal unfolded in three phases: reading and discussion of narratives, creation and performance of "theatrical dinners," and a final collective reflection. These activities fostered linguistic development, oral expression, critical analysis, and an appreciation of identity in relation to otherness. In doing so, the initiative contributes to ongoing debates on building a critical, inclusive, and replicable pedagogy in Latin American higher education.

2. Conceptual framework

To support this pedagogical experience, the main theoretical approaches that guide the proposal are presented below, with a focus on translanguaging, critical collaborative research (PCCol), cultural stereotypes and critical literacy as articulating axes of linguistic and social learning.

2.1. Translanguaging as a pedagogical and political approach

Translanguaging has emerged as one of the most significant contributions to bilingual education studies in recent decades. Initially introduced by Williams (1994) in the Welsh context and later expanded by García (2009) and Li Wei (2014), the concept surpasses the idea of code-switching by acknowledging that bilingual speakers use an integrated and dynamic linguistic repertoire, strategically employed to communicate, learn, and make meaning. Pedagogically, it validates students' linguistic practices, enhancing both content comprehension and identity expression. Baker (2011) outlines four key benefits: improved content understanding, development of the less dominant language, stronger school–community ties, and enhanced

integration between students and proficient teachers. Politically, translanguaging functions as a form of resistance against the monolingual ideologies still prevalent in many educational systems (Flores, 2014), fostering the creation of more inclusive, critical, and culturally responsive learning environments—particularly in Latin American contexts characterized by linguistic and cultural diversity (García & Lin, 2016). This approach reinforces a pedagogy grounded in linguistic equity and social justice.

2.2. Critical collaborative research and dialogical production of meaning

The methodological foundation of this study is grounded in critical collaborative research (Magalhães, 1990; Liberali, 2016), an approach informed by Marxist praxis and Paulo Freire's pedagogy (2005), which conceives knowledge as a collective, situated, and dialogical construction. This perspective challenges the traditional model of the researcher as sole authority and the participant as passive subject, instead proposing a horizontal framework in which teachers and researchers co-construct meaning to critically examine their own realities. The use of reflection groups, dramatizations, and personal narratives—such as *Escrevivências* (Evaristo, 2005)—supports the critical analysis of hegemonic discourses and the validation of lived experiences, enhancing students' capacity to take intellectual and emotional risks. Within the university setting, this methodology is particularly relevant as it meaningfully integrates theory and practice, encourages student agency, and fosters transformative learning. By actively engaging participants in the critical reflection of their own contexts and discourses, critical collaborative research (PCCol) contributes to the formation of critical individuals capable of challenging oppressive structures and participating in educational processes oriented toward social justice and transformation (Liberali, 2016; Niebles-Thevening et al., 2022).

2.3 Stereotypes and cultural identities in tension

This pedagogical experience centers on the discussion of cultural stereotypes, understood as simplified and socially shared mental representations of specific groups or nationalities (Lippmann, 1922/2008). These often-caricatured depictions shape how individuals perceive themselves and others, influencing intercultural relations and reinforcing symbolic hierarchies.

Addressing stereotypes in language classrooms enables the critical examination of naturalized discourses surrounding otherness, the development of intercultural competencies, and the redefinition of identity. Personal narratives—such as *Escrevivências*—written by individuals of diverse national backgrounds about how they are perceived by others, also provide valuable opportunities for reflection on diversity and the social construction of difference. This pedagogical stance aligns with the principles of critical intercultural education, which aims to challenge essentialist views, reveal the power dynamics embedded in cultural discourses, and open the classroom to the complexities of the contemporary world (Rosado-Mendinueta et al., 2023; Clavijo-Olarte et al., 2024).

2.4. Critical teacher education and critical literacy

This experience is also situated within a broader conception of teacher education, understood as a continuous, situated, and reflective process (Imbernón, 2011; Tardif, 2023), which values teachers' experiential knowledge and their role as agents of social transformation. In this context, the incorporation of the Theatre of the Oppressed (Boal, 1975) enables the articulation of body, emotion, language, and social critique, shaping a pedagogical practice that fosters both learning and critical awareness. Simultaneously, the engagement with critical literacy (Freire, 2005; Kleiman, 2008; Xavier, 2020) enhances students' capacity to "read the world," analyze discourses, interrogate power relations, and construct alternative meanings. Scholars such as Duboc (2012) and Leite (2017) emphasize the importance of integrating these frameworks into additional language education, particularly in contexts characterized by cultural diversity, multimodality, and the demands of critical citizenship. Collectively, these contributions underpin a theoretical approach that transcends the development of communicative competence, aiming instead to cultivate reflective and engaged individuals capable of intervening in both local and global spheres.

3. Methodology

This research was conducted using a qualitative-critical approach, grounded in the principles of critical collaborative inquiry, with the objective of exploring how addressing cultural stereotypes in the Portuguese language classroom can foster critical thinking and enhance student participation. Due to space limitations, this article focuses exclusively on the first two stages of the pedagogical experience and presents an analysis of the discussions from one selected group of students.

4. Methodological approach

This study is situated within the framework of critical collaborative research (Magalhães, 1990; Liberali, 2016), a qualitative approach rooted in Freirean praxis and a dialogic view of knowledge production. This perspective fosters the active participation of all subjects involved, the collective construction of meaning, and the interrogation of hegemonic discourses from a transformative standpoint. Within this context, teacher-researchers and students function as co-researchers, engaging in reflective, creative, and affective processes centered on socially relevant issues—in this case, cultural stereotypes and their implications for language learners. The adoption of this approach seeks to integrate linguistic development with the critical and intercultural education of students, through methodologies that promote collaboration, discourse analysis, and transformative agency in the teaching of Portuguese as an additional language.

5. Context and participants

The intervention was conducted on September 11, 2024, at a university in Barranquilla, Colombia, during a session of the Portuguese Level 4 course (equivalent to level B1 of the Common European Framework of Reference). Two Colombian undergraduate students participated, enrolled in the programs of Modern Languages and Culture, International Business, and International Relations, in which Portuguese serves as a third additional language alongside English. The session was facilitated by two Brazilian professor-researchers, with the support of a Colombian journalist responsible for the photographic documentation. The course comprises a

total of four instructional hours per week over a six-week period. The intervention itself was carried out during a single two-hour class session.

6. Validity and rigor criteria

In alignment with the dialogic and transformative principles of critical collaborative research, this study adopted ethical, ecological, and communicative validity criteria (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Flick, 2007), rather than traditional positivist standards.

Ethical validity involved prioritizing respect for students' voices, contexts, and subjectivities. Participation was entirely voluntary, with informed consent obtained and no academic risk incurred. Ecological validity was ensured by conducting the intervention in an authentic classroom environment, free from artificial manipulation, thereby preserving the natural flow of discourse and interaction.

Communicative validity was established through interpretive dialogue among researchers, aimed at reaching reflective consensus and avoiding unilateral judgments. The reliability of the analysis was further reinforced through data triangulation, incorporating recordings, observations, and personal narratives.

Critical reflexivity was maintained through an ongoing process of self-reflection concerning the researchers' own positions, expectations, and potential influences, in accordance with the ethical foundations of critical pedagogy.

7. Ethical considerations

All students were informed of the pedagogical and research objectives of the intervention. Participation was voluntary, and the anonymity and confidentiality of all materials used for academic purposes were ensured. The activity was conducted within the framework of the regular Portuguese course, without any modifications to the syllabus or assessment criteria.

8. Data analysis procedures

The collected data were analyzed using an inductive thematic analysis strategy (Braun & Clarke, 2006), informed by the principles of critical collaborative research. This approach facilitates the identification of meaning patterns collectively constructed by participants through their experiences, discourses, and reflections. The analysis followed these steps: Familiarization with the data: Audio recordings, field notes, and observational records were reviewed to develop a comprehensive understanding of the session's dynamics. Initial coding: Relevant textual segments (comments, reactions, reflections) were identified in relation to emerging categories such as stereotypes, identity, otherness, language learning, and critical agency.

Thematic grouping: The coded data were organized into interpretive thematic cores, allowing for an analysis of how students constructed meaning around cultural stereotypes, positioned themselves in relation to these constructs, and engaged with Portuguese as a medium for critical expression.

Contrast with the theoretical framework: The resulting categories were examined in dialogue with the concepts of translanguaging, critical pedagogy, critical literacy, and intercultural education. Collaborative reflection: The findings were discussed among the teacher-researchers, drawing on their shared observations and experiences during the session.

This process not only enabled the systematization of the pedagogical experience but also provided insight into how students redefined their language learning through the critical examination of social discourses.

9. Experience Design

The pedagogical proposal was structured in three sequential stages:

1. Stage 1 – Group reading and reflection on *Escrevivências*

The selected *Escrevivências* were based on the conceptualization of Afro-Brazilian writer Conceição Evaristo (2005), who defines *Escrevivência* as a form of writing rooted in the subjective and social experience of the narrator. The texts—authored by individuals from ten different

countries, including Brazil, Colombia, France, Iran, and South Korea—depicted personal accounts centered on national stereotypes.

Printed copies of the short stories were distributed randomly among the students, who were divided into two groups. Over a period of approximately 30 minutes, participants read the texts aloud in Portuguese and engaged in group reflection to identify stereotypes, examine their implications, and share personal experiences. This stage also served as a formative assessment of the students' reading comprehension, pronunciation, and fluency (Padlet, 2024).

The group analyzed in this article consisted of a professor-researcher and six female students. A total of six *Escrevivências* were read and discussed; for analytical purposes, the three that generated the most meaningful and intense discussions were selected for in-depth examination. These included:

1. Stereotypes held by North Americans about Brazilians;
2. Stereotypes expressed by foreigners about the French; and
3. Colombian perspectives on homophobia within their own country.

The reflections presented below highlight the students' interpretations, emotional responses, and the ways in which they connected the narratives to their own experiences and cultural perceptions.

Writing 1
Americans about Brazilians

Once, in the United States, my family and I went to buy wool hats to protect ourselves from the cold in New York. We were talking to the saleswoman and, when she found out that we were from Brazil, she asked: "Are you going to wear these hats with your bikinis?" This question shows the ignorance of people from other countries about the diversity of Brazil and the fact that we have states with high temperatures, but also with low temperatures.

Source: Report provided exclusively for this research (2024)

The American saleswoman's lack of knowledge about temperature variations between Brazilian states led to the following discussion:

Student: Before, when I didn't know Brazil, I didn't know it had low temperatures. I thought everything was hot. But now that we've studied the regions [of Brazil], my way of thinking has changed. And I think it's something that few people know, which is why this stereotype is so common.

Professor-researcher: Yes. Everyone walks around naked [in Brazil]. Imagine wearing a bikini with a wool cap, right? [laughs] But I also keep thinking: in the beginning, when I was young here, when I went to the beach, I would see men going into the water wearing denim shorts or cotton boxer briefs. And I would be embarrassed! I would be embarrassed! Because I am embarrassed to appear in public wearing cotton underwear. Why ? Because cotton underwear is something intimate, so I only wear it under my pants. To appear in public, I have to wear something different, which is beach underwear. So I would see men and I would be very embarrassed. I would think: What do you mean? [laughs] And I still feel embarrassed... But then I started to think: Look at the culture, right? Because I also have the same model on my body, but it is a matter of social and cultural convention ... In my culture, it is only accepted this way. Theirs is not. Look how crazy it is how we build a value socially and culturally, and it's so important that we feel ashamed, I don't know... We even discriminate against someone ... We think the other person is wrong... Because of this value, right? Even today, when I go to the beach, I still look, sometimes I laugh ... But I understand that these are cultural differences, right? But I will never be able to go to the beach in shorts! Never, never! I can't! [laughs].

The professor's narrative illustrates how cultural and social environments shape perceptions of behavior across national contexts. For instance, in Brazil, it is common for men to wear fitted swim briefs at the beach—attire that is seldom seen among Colombians, who typically prefer loose-fitting swimwear, similar to what Brazilians refer to as "boxers," which are generally not worn publicly in Brazil. This contrast may lead Colombians to perceive Brazilian swimwear as inappropriate, due to its tighter and shorter design.

Differences in women's beachwear were also noted. In Brazil, women often wear minimal-coverage bikinis, whereas on the Colombian coast—despite similarly high temperatures—most women opt for fuller-coverage swimwear that conceals more of the body. These contrasting norms highlight how national and regional cultural values inform notions of modesty, appropriateness, and public behavior.

Student 1: Before I started the Portuguese course, I also thought that Brazil only had extroverted people, parties, beaches and samba, because that's what the media usually portrays. But now I know that this is not true and that each region has its own people.

Professor-researcher: Not everyone likes soccer or samba. Some people like other rhythms. In fact, samba is not the rhythm of the entire country.

Student 1: The country has a lot of music...

Professor-researcher: Now, the sexual issue is something he pursues. Well, he also pursues men, but he pursues women more. There are several stories of Brazilian women who went to Europe and were prevented from entering. They were going to do postgraduate studies, doctorates. And then immigration did not let them in because they suspected that they were going to prostitute themselves.

Student 1: Yes, I know a lot about that too: Brazilian women are associated with sex tourism. Foreigners only go to Brazil for this aspect of the economy. That's very sad...

Professor-researcher: Yes...

Student 2: And besides, foreigners think that Brazilian women are always available to them, always wanting to have sex.

Student 1: Many people, many men, also think that the way [Brazilian women] dress is inappropriate. But in some parts of Brazil it is very hot. They wear shorts and T-shirts that are a little short, but that is normal because of the climate...

Professor-researcher: ... And for culture.

Student 1: Exactly. A lot of men believe that because they dress that way, they have the right to comment on them and sexualize them. So that stereotype and that sexist thinking about the way women dress also exists.

Professor-researcher: And I think that, even in our case, in Latin America, since we have an Afro influence, there is another component which is the dances and the music. Because funk, champeta, reggaeton, samba... these are very sensual rhythms. And then, the clothes, the body, which are mixed, with Afro influences, with European influences, with a different color, with a different voluptuousness ... All of this attracts attention, especially among foreign tourists, who do not have this rhythm in their culture. So, for them it is exotic, it is sensual, it is sexual, while for us it is normal.

This dialogue brings to light critical issues surrounding stereotypes of Brazilian and Latin American women, particularly the hypersexualization and association with sex tourism prevalent in Brazil and other countries in the region. In both Brazil and Colombia, sex tourism is deeply intertwined with exploitation, especially in popular tourist destinations. Although adult prostitution is legal in both countries, the most pressing concerns relate to child exploitation, human trafficking, and the degrading conditions experienced by many involved. Factors such as social inequality, poverty, and the international portrayal of these destinations as exotic contribute to the persistence of this phenomenon (Brazilian Ministry of Tourism, 2024).

In Brazil, cities such as Rio de Janeiro, Salvador, and Fortaleza are recognized hubs for sex tourism, where economic vulnerability and legal impunity hinder efforts to curb exploitation, despite the existence of robust legal frameworks like the Statute of the Child and Adolescent (ECA) and awareness campaigns. Efforts to monitor and protect victims continue to face significant obstacles (Brazil, 2024). Similarly, in Colombia, cities like Cartagena and Medellín have seen an increase in sex tourism, particularly following the conclusion of the internal armed conflict. Factors such as forced displacement and the regulation of adult prostitution exacerbate the vulnerability of affected populations. Local initiatives, including municipal decrees and public campaigns in Medellín, aim to address the issue (Race and Equality, 2025).

Both countries contend with systemic challenges, including corruption and insufficient regulatory enforcement, which undermine the effectiveness of anti-exploitation efforts. Addressing this complex issue requires the strengthening of public policies, investment in education, heightened public awareness, and international cooperation to combat human trafficking. The eradication of sex tourism depends on a comprehensive, multidimensional approach that integrates social development with the enforcement of legal protections.

In the following account, a French woman shares some stereotypes about the French:

Writing 2

People from other countries about French

One stereotype that everyone has about the French, especially those who live in Paris, is that we don't smile, we're bitter and we act quickly. It's true that we act quickly, but I don't think we're bitter, at least not all of us. Colombians haven't said that they believe that if you go to Paris and don't speak French, people won't like you, but I've never seen that.

Source: Report provided exclusively for this research (2024).

This account sparked a debate about French hospitality towards people from other countries:

Student 4: Yes, I saw it.

Professor-researcher: What they don't like, right? They don't like you speaking English.

Student 4: But I've also seen a lot of YouTubers who go to Paris and say no. Because most of the people they meet are willing to understand them and talk to them. So, it depends.

Student 5: My dad went to Paris last year and they don't speak English or Spanish, so it was really difficult for him because communication was a huge barrier.

Student 4: But not all people are the same.

Student 5: In France, not everyone is closed to languages other than French. I think this stereotype that they are very closed, closed to foreigners, is more due to their location. For example, Europeans are known for being very closed, very...

Professor-researcher: ... cold?

Student 4: The difference with people who live here in America, especially in Latin America... is that we are much more open to tourists, because many people here in Latin America like to get to know new cultures. So, for Europeans, there is this stereotype that they are the best on the planet...

Student 5: ...the master race.

In the previous dialogue, we can observe how some ideas that emerged from the Second World War continue to feed the social imagination to this day, such as the idea that Europeans have nations that are superior to those of other regions of the planet and continents, such as Latin America and Africa. The expression "master race" was widely disseminated by the Germans during

the campaigns of the Second World War and remains present in this debate seventy-five years after the end of the war (Galeano, 1978; Fanon, 2008; Moura, 2014).

Decoloniality is a critical movement that challenges the idea of superiority of European and North American culture imposed by colonization, which devalued the knowledge, traditions and ways of life of indigenous peoples, Africans and Asians, promoting the Western model as the only path to progress. Even after the end of formal colonization, coloniality continues to be present in social, cultural and economic structures, imposing its languages, suppressing ancestral knowledge and valuing European science and art, in addition to reinforcing global inequalities and extinguishing non-Western knowledge. A decolonial perspective seeks to value these marginalized cultures and knowledge, reconfirming multiple forms of development and promoting plural societies where different worldviews coexist in equality, challenging colonial cultural hegemony (Mignolo, 2015).

The professor presents compelling reflections on the interrelationship between language, culture, and geopolitics, particularly within the context of the historical rivalry between France and England and the subsequent rise of English as a global lingua franca.

Professor-researcher: It's a question of geopolitics, right? There's also a historical factor: France was a power, and then England took over ... So , there's a rivalry, it's always existed, right? In history, we study several wars ... So , this rivalry between the French and the English is created... And then the United States takes over... Again, English as a language, right? I think it creates a certain repulsion... Besides being a somewhat barbaric language, because it's influenced by Saxon languages, right? Like German, for example. There's this idea of the barbarian, this idea of those who gained power and the French lost. So, I think there's a bit of that in the culture as well. Because my French colleague, sometimes, says a word in English, and she corrects me: "There's an equivalent in Spanish... Why would I speak English?" So ... I've met people who don't care, but I've also met people who care a lot. Well, I'm also a Brazilian who cares, who doesn't like English, who doesn't like the culture, right? What it brings, what it means to us. So I also have my prejudice. But that doesn't mean that all Brazilians don't like it, right? In fact, there are many Brazilians who love it, who say that the United States is a model of democracy, a model of culture, a model of consumption.

Following the end of the Cold War, the United States emerged as the dominant global power, with English solidifying its status as a symbol of political, economic, and cultural hegemony. It became the principal language through which nations sought global influence (Giddens, 1991; Fairclough, 2001; Marçais, 2005; Young, 2005). As globalization deepened

interconnections among countries, the United States further consolidated its dominant position, reflected in the widespread use of the dollar as a global currency, the global dissemination of American culture, and the technological supremacy of corporations such as Google® and Apple® (Santos, 2000). While technological advancements and the free flow of information have expanded access to knowledge, this hegemony has also led to increased economic dependency among less developed nations and the imposition of cultural norms that often marginalize local traditions. In recent years, however, U.S. dominance has been increasingly challenged by the rise of emerging powers such as China, as well as by growing critiques of social inequality. These developments signal a shift toward a more multipolar world, where nations pursue greater autonomy and strive for a more balanced framework in international relations (Santos, 2000).

In this third *Escrevivencia*, a Colombian shares his perception about the homophobia practiced by his group of friends:

Writing 3

Colombian on homophobia in Colombia

I was used to sitting near them, and I often didn't notice ... For me, it was "just like that." My group of friends had a peculiarity: when someone approached me with features, expressions or behaviors that denoted their sexual orientation, my classmates would start making noises and mocking jokes to mock the preferences of this other person, who I didn't even know. As I got to know them better and analyzed their actions and the repercussions they sometimes had, I quickly realized that, although they weren't homophobic, at least it seemed to be based on their behavior.

Source: Report provided exclusively for this research (2004)

The following comment by *Escrevivência* triggered the group's exchange of experiences about homophobia and machismo in Colombia:

Professor-researcher: When I arrived here in 2014, I was struck by the fact that sometimes I would see an effeminate gay man or a trans woman walking down the street, and people would say, "Doing this, doing this..." [making sounds imitating flatulence] to irritate the person. And I thought that was very strange, very bizarre. People who didn't know them would stop to provoke them, to irritate them. And I was scared to death! Man, I had never seen that before! And it was so strange! So, this testimony reminded me of that episode...

Student 7: I can talk about my family and my neighborhood: I grew up in Soledad, and my father says that Soledad is a land of gays. And it's true, there are many. But, on the street, when they walk, people whistle and make jokes, they tease them. My grandparents are homophobic, my uncles are homophobic, my mother

tries not to be, but sometimes ... So I think there are still a lot of homophobic people in Barranquilla. It's a reality...

Student 8: This is also due to generations. Older generations have a more conservative mindset and do not accept people's different tastes and preferences. And this is very difficult to change nowadays.

Student 9: I think homophobia has a lot to do with cocks. It sounds harsh, but I think men hate women. That's why they think femininity is bad.

Student 7: Boys who have feminine mannerisms ... We adults make jokes and comments to make them stop and behave like men.

Student 8: And besides, when a woman likes women, it's seen as a bad thing, because she doesn't like men.

Professor-researcher: "Because you haven't met a real man... You haven't truly experienced a man... Because if you did, you would like it"...

Student 8: And also in relationships between men. The most discriminated man is the passive one in the relationship.

Professor-researcher: I remember one time I was on the bus. And there were some teenagers behind me. They were talking about an electrical engineering project... I think it was the course, one of the more "masculine" ones. And they mentioned that there was an effeminate guy in the group. And so, they were testing a system and it shorted out. And they were laughing because he kept moving his hands. And then they said, "Why don't you study nursing? Why don't you study pedagogy?" And I, who was listening from a distance, thought, "Does this mean that electrical engineering is for men, because it's masculine? And nursing is feminine, so it's for women and gays?" So it's like there are courses for women and courses for men, and gays have to take the courses that are for women. And it's like there are good courses [for men] and inferior courses [for women and gays].

Student 7: And also, in heterosexual relationships, sometimes if the woman opens the door, the man might say, "I'm the husband!" Things like that, gender roles...

Professor-researcher: And it's disgusting because ... I once saw some guys, some students from Uninorte, who got on the bus and hugged each other, right? Super friendly... And then the girls sat down and said something to say that the woman was ugly. And they hugged each other... And then I started to think: Are they homosexual? I mean, they are friends to the point of evaluating whether a woman is good for them or not. And then, to maintain this affectionate relationship with their friend, they need to be misogynistic, right? They need to constantly affirm their masculinity to others. Because that way, people don't think he's gay just because he's affectionate with his friends. No, he's not gay! Because he chooses the best woman for himself. So, when you said that, I started to think: how does machismo relate to homophobia? Because one reinforces the other, right?

Homophobia and sexism are deeply embedded in Colombian culture and society, manifesting through familial and social discourses that often subject LGBTQIA+ individuals and women to public humiliation and disrespect. This systemic violence is a serious issue in both Brazil and Colombia, as reflected in the persistently high rates of femicide and assaults against these populations.

In Brazil, while femicide rates showed a slight decline of 5.1% in 2024—with 1,128 cases reported by the end of the year (Ministry of Justice and Public Security, 2024)—the country remains one of the most dangerous for the LGBTQIA+ community. In 2024, 291 violent deaths were documented among LGBTQIA+ individuals, particularly gay men, transvestites, and trans women, primarily motivated by discrimination and prejudice, despite the existence of protective legislation (Schmitz, 2025). In Colombia, 619 femicides were registered in 2022, underscoring the precarious situation of women (Sintropía Feminina, 2023). The LGBTQIA+ population in Colombia also faces high levels of violence, exacerbated by the legacy of armed conflict. Reports indicate that paramilitary groups, guerrillas, and even state forces have perpetrated attacks, especially in rural and marginalized communities (Cosmopolita, 2020; Race and Equality, 2025).

Due to widespread underreporting and the absence of comprehensive official data, it remains difficult to quantify the full extent of violence against these groups in both countries. In this context, civil society organizations play a critical role in documenting and publicizing such cases, while also advocating for more effective public policies to safeguard the rights and dignity of vulnerable populations (Ministry of Human Rights and Citizenship, 2024).

2. Stage 2: Theatrical presentation about *Escrevivências*

In the second stage of the experience, students were invited to create a theatrical scene inspired by one of the narratives or reflections that emerged during the prior discussions on cultural stereotypes. Each group was given 30 minutes to collaboratively prepare and rehearse a scene—framed as a dinner conversation—lasting approximately 10 minutes. The activity was guided by the principles of the Theatre of the Oppressed (Boal, 1975), which conceptualizes theater as a site for social critique, the interrogation of oppression, and the collective construction of alternative perspectives.

The students worked collaboratively to develop dialogues, characters, and scenes, and presented their performances in various locations across the university campus. These presentations were recorded and observed by the professors, who analyzed both the critical content and the students' linguistic performance.

The group selected for analysis presented a scene based on the account of two Brazilian women who were approached by an American woman while shopping. Upon observing their purchase, the American asked whether they intended to wear a bikini, thereby exposing a

sexualized stereotype associated with Brazilian women. The dramatization allowed the students to critically explore the implications of such perceptions and to articulate their responses through embodied performance and dialogic interaction.

The dialogue in the scene below was spoken entirely in Portuguese:

The scene takes place in a clothing store in the United States.

Brazilian Customer: Hello! Hello! I'm looking for a cap.

American Salesman 1: Excuse me, what?

Brazilian Customer: A cap. You know what you're wearing on your head ... A cap.

American Salesperson 1: We're in New York, sorry. We don't have that here.

Brazilian Customer: It's something you have in your head...

American Salesman 1: I don't think we have that here. Sorry! But look what I have.

American saleswoman picks up a bikini.

American Saleswoman 1: That's what they use in your country! Look at that: it's perfect for you!

American Saleswoman 2: You can wear this ... It's a bikini, look! It's what people wear in Brazil, right?

Brazilian Customer: No! I'm looking for a cap!

American Saleswoman: Yes, sorry. But we don't have that! But you can buy it!

The students in the group chose to transform the dialogue to suggest that the saleswoman, based on the stereotype of Brazilians, thought that she would better serve the Brazilian woman by selling her a bikini instead of a cap.

10. Results and Discussion

The results of this pedagogical experience highlight the transformative potential of integrating translanguaging, critical collaborative research, and the Theatre of the Oppressed in Portuguese instruction for Spanish-speaking students. Beyond language development, the classroom emerged as a space for critical reflection, student empowerment, and intercultural meaning-making, aligned with the principles of critical and situated pedagogy (Freire, 2005; García & Lin, 2016).

10.1. Translingualism as an affective and political mediation

As Li Wei (2014) notes, translanguaging mobilizes students' full linguistic repertoire and serves as both an affective and political mediator, legitimizing voices often silenced in educational settings. In the experience analyzed, typically passive students demonstrated a new willingness to speak, reflect, and act in Portuguese. This shift suggests that using multiple languages in the

classroom supports not only language acquisition but also lowers emotional and social barriers, as affirmed by Garrity et al. (2018). In this context, translanguaging enabled students to embrace Portuguese not as an imposed language, but as a means of critical thinking, self-expression, and global positioning.

10.2. Questioning stereotypes and situated cultural identity

The intervention showed that language classrooms can serve as privileged spaces for exploring identity tensions, stereotypes, and normalized discourses about the “other.” Reading *Escrevivências* offered a concrete opportunity for students to understand stereotypes as forms of symbolic violence (Lippmann, 2008) and to critically reflect on their own experiences. Engaging with narratives from other—yet culturally familiar—nationalities prompted students to identify internalized cultural structures and question prejudices both about their own country and those they may hold toward others. This approach aligns with the perspectives of Rosado-Mendinueta et al. (2023) and Clavijo-Olarte et al. (2024), who advocate for critical, decolonial language education grounded in epistemological justice and the recognition of local knowledge.

10.3. Theatre of the Oppressed as a practice of critical literacy

The dramatization of scenes based on lived or observed stereotypes fostered performative, emotional, and socially situated learning that extended beyond grammatical practice. Students used language actively and creatively to represent and reimagine their realities, aligning with Boal (1975) and Lopes (2020), who view theater as both a rehearsal for life and a form of embodied and vocal resistance. The activity enhanced students’ capacity to interpret the world and rewrite social narratives, as advocated by critical literacy frameworks (Kleiman, 2008; Leite, 2017). The classroom thus became a space for critique, reconstruction, and discursive empowerment.

10.4. The role of the teacher-researcher as a critical mediator

A key factor in the success of the experience was the active and empathetic role of the teacher-researchers as mediators of the process. Their dialogic, horizontal, and emotionally

attuned engagement fostered a safe environment that encouraged participation, authentic expression, and collaborative learning. The prior preparation of topics, vocabulary, and concepts offered both cognitive and emotional support, enabling students to engage critically through their lived experiences. As Imbernón (2011) emphasizes, teacher education must embrace this humanizing and reflective dimension, which is fundamental to fostering transformative learning environments. Additionally, the integration of media and the treatment of errors as learning opportunities enhanced student engagement and facilitated the appropriation of language as a tool for social action.

10.5. Pedagogical implications

This research underscores the need to rethink traditional approaches to additional language teaching in higher education by integrating linguistic, cultural, and political dimensions to cultivate critical, ethical students capable of engaging in global contexts. The integration of body, emotion, and speech through theater, narrative, and reflection fosters more meaningful learning, moving beyond grammar-focused instruction. However, the inclusion of critical content alone is insufficient without the ethical and relational commitment of the teacher, who must be equipped to navigate the emotional and ideological complexities of topics such as stereotypes, discrimination, and identity. The teacher self-assessment process revealed that transforming the classroom into a space of collective construction requires sensitivity, openness to conflict, and a commitment to supporting students as they confront challenging yet essential issues for their formative development.

Final considerations

This pedagogical experience affirms that transforming the additional language classroom into a space for critical reflection and transformative action is both possible and necessary. The integration of translanguaging, critical collaborative research, and the Theatre of the Oppressed not only enhanced Portuguese language learning but also opened spaces for analyzing social discourses, expressing identities, and strengthening student agency. Traditionally silent students actively participated through group work, storytelling, and theatrical performance, becoming

emotionally and critically engaged. The collective questioning of stereotypes fostered belief revision and a more conscious stance toward otherness.

The role of the teacher-researchers was essential, serving as critical and affective mediators who cultivated an environment of dialogue and experimentation—an endeavor that demands pedagogical sensitivity and social responsibility. Based on these findings, this study recommends the promotion of critical, experiential methodologies in teacher education; the incorporation of cultural stereotype analysis as a core, rather than peripheral, element of language instruction; the revision of curricula to include performative activities integrating body, emotion, and speech; and the formation of regional networks of educators and researchers committed to critical, contextualized language education. These efforts can transform the classroom into a site for reading, questioning, and reshaping the world.

Informações complementares:

a) Declaração de contribuição das autoras e dos autores:

Marina Melo Pedroza realizou a redação do presente manuscrito, enquanto Fernanda Liberali e Nayibe Rosado Mendinueta realizaram a revisão crítica deste estudo.

b) Disponibilidade de dados de pesquisa e outros materiais:

Os dados brutos que fundamentam as conclusões deste estudo — Estereótipos do Brasil e da Colômbia: uma experiência crítica-engajada em um curso de português para colombianos — não podem ser disponibilizados, pois contêm informações que identificam os participantes da pesquisa, os quais devem permanecer em anonimato.

c) Declaração de conflito de interesse:

As autoras declaram não ter filiação ou envolvimento com instituições que possam ter interesses financeiros ou não financeiros com o assunto discutido no artigo.

d) Avaliação por pares:

✓ Avaliador 1: Sandra Santella de Sousa (correções obrigatórias)

O artigo intitulado “Estereótipos do Brasil e da Colômbia: uma experiência de engajamento crítico em um curso de português para colombianos”, cujo objetivo é apresentar uma experiência em sala de aula que promova interação, engajamento, cooperação e pensamento crítico entre estudantes do ensino superior, insere-se de maneira pertinente no escopo da revista The Specialist, por se situar na área da Linguística Aplicada e abordar processos de ensino-aprendizagem no campo educacional.

Contribuindo para o campo da Pesquisa Crítica de Colaboração, o texto evidencia práticas pedagógicas bilíngues no ensino superior. Sua organização estrutural é adequada, contemplando a fundamentação teórica, a descrição metodológica, a apresentação dos contextos, a análise crítica e a conclusão, o que confere fluidez à leitura e facilita a compreensão da proposta.

O aporte teórico revela-se consistente e pertinente, articulando de forma aprofundada os conceitos de translinguagem e multiculturalismo, bem como suas implicações para o ensino superior. Os dados produzidos e analisados demonstram a relevância do conceito de escrevivências e Teatro do Oprimido como estratégia pedagógica, uma vez que possibilita a conexão entre discurso, reflexão crítica e práticas colaborativas dos participantes.

Cabe apenas uma ressalva em relação aos resultados apresentados no resumo, que não refletem plenamente a riqueza dos dados explorados ao longo do artigo e sistematizados na conclusão.

Parecer: aceitar com revisões.

✓ **Avaliador 2:** Glória Abdalla (aceitar)

O artigo apresenta relevância teórica e prática ao integrar conceitos como translinguagem, escrevivência e Teatro do Oprimido em um contexto de ensino de português como língua adicional. A abordagem crítico-colaborativa demonstra potencial transformador, promovendo a participação ativa de estudantes e a desconstrução de estereótipos culturais. A metodologia é bem fundamentada, com coleta de dados em ambiente autêntico e análise reflexiva das interações. Destaca-se a articulação entre linguagem, cultura e poder, contribuindo para uma educação linguística decolonial e intercultural. O estudo oferece implicações pedagógicas significativas para a formação de professores e a prática docente crítica. Recomenda-se a publicação pela originalidade, rigor metodológico e contribuição para o campo. Sugere-se, apenas, a revisão de espaçamentos entre palavra e pontuação em alguns momentos, conforme cópia em anexo.

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