Opinions on bilingualism have been as diverse as opposed among themselves throughout decades – while ideological notions have affected or defined certain approaches, it has become fundamental to acknowledge the process of transition: from old prejudices about the repercussions on a natural cognitive development to favoring the benefits gained by individuals involved in multilingual contexts. *Demystifying Bilingualism* illustrates several issues regarding the myths that have surrounded studies about the impact of bilingualism on cognition, from its ontological foundations, theory-building advances, and the role of metaphorical language into shaping these very myths.

From a solid start in the Introduction as the first chapter, a brief, yet detailed revision of background works, bibliography, and further references to following content is presented. Later in Chapter 2, the authors provide an overview of the historical development that explores the different stances that research has taken toward bilingualism. Particularly, it addresses the “bilingual advantage/disadvantage”, where works such as Marzecová (2015) and Baum and Titone’s (2014) warn about simplifying said debate to a polarization of a rather complex topic that seeks to better explain the interaction between bilingualism and cognitive functions. By comprising experimental designs and cognitive performance tests, current methodologies intents on inquiring into possible cognitive differences between monolinguals and bilinguals shown by exercises with participants with different language profiles. These procedures, along with their results, serve as a basis for the authors to suggest that a redirection towards neuroplasticity considerations would represent a significant progress and a more detailed analytic approach. Regarding the historical development of experimental research, we could agree that there has been an ideological evolution that has influenced considerations from methodical and theoretical approaches.

Moving on to Chapter 3, we can appreciate a discussion within theoretical and methodological issues that serves to outline a new methodology for analyzing language myths in scientific discourse on bilingualism and cognition. Thus, concepts such as language
myth, metaphor, and discourse become noticeably relevant to the queries about their functions in knowledge construction. What turns to be a well-aimed set of strategies – selection of linguistic phenomena, as well as usage of computer-assisted discourse analysis (focused on metaphors), and a frequency list of lemmas – draw a representative picture in the creation of corpus texts to detect and quantify different currents within the discourse that expose popular language myths that have shaped scientific views on bilingualism.

Language myths in scientific discourse further addresses abstract phenomena in Chapter 4: ontological metaphors. As duly noted by the authors, any discourse about language happening from any field draws on fundamental ideas about the nature of language itself, yet the problem with metaphorical conceptions of language is the dominant taken-on of languages as distinguishable entities, i.e., homogenous set of features. This may be rooted in bodily experience and perception, but it has a cultural dimension that has transcended to ontological metaphors in Western societies, where they are essential for discourse analysis because they build the basic conceptualizations for complex mental models of the functioning of language(s) in speakers’ lives, brains, and societies.

Studies in Cognitive Psychology conceive of languages as objects with clear-cut boundaries, as well as internally homogeneous substances. Following these previous social considerations, Chapter 5 is dedicated the questioning of a widespread narrative that exhibits a deep relation between languages and nations, national identity and belonging. Again, parting from the Western myth of the monolingual nation-state as a frame of reference in conceptualizing the relationship between language(s) and social groups, the need to establish a dichotomy native/foreign speaker became evident to reconsider apparently inherent connections between collective identity, culture, language, and territory.

The effects of a nation-state myth have surpassed attitudes (mainly negative) toward bilingualism and have even influenced terminology used to refer to linguistic issues. Therefore, given the focus of this chapter on how the relationship between languages and speakers is construed, the authors part from a corpus to examine metalinguistic discourse that metonymically links speakers, languages, and language components to a nation, and follows a tradition known as the nation-state model. On the other hand, central metaphors that scientific discourse has relied on to describe human brains and mental activities are 1) the mind is an organism and 2) the mind is a machine. In Chapter 6, we have the chance to survey on the gradual transition from the understanding of language as being intimately interconnected with emotions, ways of thinking, individual and collective identity, to the embracement of a mechanistic view of mental processes and speech production.

The discussion focuses on showing how this understanding of language and thought as expressions of national and individual culture led to a less organic view that found its grounds in a context influenced by the rise of machine-computer metaphors for the brain. While said transition has allowed speed and efficiency to become core values in scientific discourse on bilinguals’ cognitive performance, it provides the conceptual underpinnings for competition metaphors. As opposed to the latter scenario, Chapter 7 explores the usage of numerous metaphors in scientific discourse to explain how different languages coexist and interact in a bilingual’s brain. The attention is, then, directed towards metaphorical descriptions related to the idea that being bilingual implicates conflict and competition between languages, which furthermore causes negative or positive evaluations.

Explanations for presumed cognitive differences between monolinguals and bilinguals, also derived from these metaphors, have been theory-constitutive since the early stages of research in this field, this antagonistic relationship has only served as a conceptual basis for modeling the interaction between languages that overlooks its restricting effects on theory-
building. The previously mentioned metaphorical shift to the competition frame has a simultaneous impact on attitudes and views toward bilingualism, a setup entailing underlying structural metaphors working in parallel to ideological development, mainly instated in Western societies.

Finally, Chapter 8 contextualizes all prior findings within knowledge production in science and society. The nuclear argument resides in the archetype of Cognitive Psychology’s metaphorical models of bilingualism, which has been both historically and ideologically linked to Darwin’s evolutionary theory, and essentially built on common language myths, given that these have defined the scientific discourse as structural metaphors from metonymies that, at the same time, connect languages to speakers, nations, and territories. The authors explore the hypothesis that research on both bilingual advantages and disadvantages have been motivated to certain extent by notions of competition, along with other forms of contention, as a scientific, social, and cultural paradigm. In addition, researchers have taken up a combination of these metalinguistic constructions into complex scientific models in order to guide the initial “war metaphor” to less rigorous, yet still conflictive metaphors.

We are able to observe, then, a changing process in the interpretations of social experience in different social and ideological settings that in themselves imply different approaches to cultural and linguistic diversity. It has been noted that social experience in Western societies has mostly been framed by ideologies of confrontation and contention, which are directly influenced by political contexts of imperialism and nationalism, now left behind thanks to the paradigm of competition brought by neoliberalism. As mentioned before, reforming not only happens in ideologies, but in homogenizing myths, and the scientific discourse analyzed in this series of works is not immune to the controversies surrounding any other field of research that is subjected to the interpretations pertinent to their respective ideological environment.

In this review we conclude that bilingualism has become an object of mythification in Western societies and in science, characterizing its research by a set of transmitted canonical assumptions on the nature of language that underlie conceptualizations of bilingualism in research to motivate the debate on the heuristic status of scientific models and their findings, historical and social roots under consideration.

Within these works’ limitations, it is acknowledged that what has conveyed the bilingual advantage and disadvantage hypothesis resides in Scientific’s interests, which in itself is quite limiting because they tend to be motivated by ideological ones. So, it becomes vital to inquire if revised data has been interpreted in the same terms of cooperation, not competition, and if it had been the central paradigm to describe connections between individuals and nation-states. We have seen how common language myths outline languages and their components as objects and containers, creating metonymical links between languages, linguistic elements, nations, and speakers. Still, we have yet to explore further into scientific discourse on bilingualism and cognition about attitudes and myths about language in society, rather than cognitive approaches.

The most significant contribution formulated by the authors seems to be the questioning of very well cemented notions and ideas that have defined scientific theory-building, primely because it has represented a limiting landscape for more open approaches that seek a reliable source for future descriptions and analysis of data. This serves as an opening to even more recent research that aims to broaden the landscape that no longer needs to address ideological developments from the last century, rather propose brand new critical methodologies that not only validates emerging proposals, but also contributes to the formulation of theories and hypothesis that question real situations of language usage. Thus,
old beliefs and notions about what it's supposed to be addressed that are considered in future studies should not be influenced by former and more limited descriptions of linguistics phenomena.