CALL FOR PAPERS

ALTERA LINGUA OR THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF LINGUISTIC OTHERNESS

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Rationale & Scope

The discourses, narratives, imaginaries and tensions concerning otherness crystallize the preoccupations of many "historical communities" (Schnapper, 1998). As a reflection of this tendancy, researchers in social sciences (Jodelet, 2005: 24) devote a whole range of concepts[1] to the Other. The consideration of social otherness even seems to be at the foundation of socially engaged, activist or transformative science[2] (Schneidewind *et al.* 2016: 6). The question of otherness thus places us at the crossroads of scientific criticism and social action. What about linguistic otherness more specifically?

This call offers the expression *altera lingua* to designate the multitude of phenomena of the "construction of otherness" (Jodelet, 1989; 2005: 23) through which language[3], languages and their variations can be mobilized, instrumentalized, institutionalized, sacralised, forbidden. Using this little used construct, our motivation is also:
– To invite a momentary pause, a questioning of one's own certainties (representations, categorizations, imaginaries) to encourage an encounter with the other;

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[1] For example: exoticization, orientalism, empathy, the inclusive school, modes of discrimination, gender relations, management of living together.

[2] "a specific type of science that does not only observe and describe societal transformation processes, but rather initiates and catalyses them. Transformative science aims to improve our understanding of transformation processes and to simultaneously increase societal capacity to reflect on them" (Schneidewind et al., 2016: 6).

[3] In the inclusive sense: language system, language variety, language practice, plurilingual repertoire.

- To allow for humble[4] intellectual postures in the sense of nuanced thoughts by recognizing and *listening to* altered experiences (Levinas, 1976; Lamarre, 2006);
- To offer contributors a relatively open semantic space insofar as *altera lingua* is less documented compared to others, such as linguistic otherness and difference (*cf.* Busch, 2017; Choi & Slaughter, 2021; Farmer & Prasad, 2014; Goï, 2013; Goï *et al.* 2014; Prasad, 2017; Purkarthofer, 2018).
  Each author is invited to take up the construct according to his or her own interpretation to narrate, to explore and to analyse the question of linguistic otherness in different ways.

The starting point of this call could be formulated as follows: "Otherness is *constructed* more than it is discovered" (Baudrillard & Guillaume, 1994: 52). Whether it consists of taking into account the significance of words when they are received as categorizations[5] as "the other", of questioning the place of languages in the construction of otherness in society, or of studying the social representations of languages that stem from ideologies of otherness, otherness is not a given. Rather, it is a product of a social construction (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

The aim of this issue is to take a social approach to languages (e.g. Labov, 1976; Boutet, 1980; Gee, 1996; Halliday, 1997; Calvet, 2013; Street 1984, 2011, 2013) and position ourselves as researchers and languaging beings (Flores, 2013). Do we situate ourselves in a post-multilingual era (Wei, 2016) and how does this shape us and our plurilingual experiences? What narratives (scientific, historical, political, institutional, etc.) about the "Other" unsettle us? How might the[6] recent growth of movements such as "de-binarization", "decolonialization", "anti-racist", "inclusive writing", "*woke*" culture, or "intersectionality" inspire us? Discrimination on the basis of language traits is well-known ("linguicism", Skutnabb-Kangas, 1986), ordinary ("glottophobia", Blanchet, 2016) and insidious ("linguistic micro-aggressions", Razafimandimbimanana & Wacalie, 2019, 2020). How can and do engaged researchers respond?

A few angles of questioning are proposed below without limiting the field of possibilities. They take up the transversal theme of the social construction of linguistic otherness and share a common aim in the pluralization of our capacity to imagine, to say, to represent, to problematize and to understand the processes of otherness *through* language. We invite the contributors to freely draw inspiration from these avenures, even if to then distance themselves from them. The following axes invite us to imagine new possibilities of resistance to identity categorization.

What does *altera lingua* involve?

How can the question of linguistic otherness be renewed in such a way that it makes minority experiences (more) visible? This first axis is interested in the meanings that can be given, in a heuristic, collaborative and subjective way, to a concept that does not yet have a dedicated literature: *altera lingua*. Who are we talking about when a linguistic boundary is drawn between ourselves and others? Who are we not talking about (yet)? Why is this? How does this border become a structural barrier (Cummins, 2003)? Can it be overcome and what are the consequences? What do we do with our own borders? Given the non-neutrality of researchers' terminological choices, the demonstrated discomfort with the term "allophone" being an

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[4] Less in the sense of a religious virtue than in the sense of nuance and awareness of its necessity to "meet" the other, to rethink oneself and to nourish one's (self-)critical thinking.

[5] Not exclusively negative.

[6] Or at least, the feeling of it when referring to the institutional spaces (hexagonal France, New Caledonia, Canada, United States) in which we are registered as members and observers.

example among others (Prasad, 2012; Razafimandimbimanana and Traisnel, 2017; Marchadour, 2019), how do we justify the ways we speak of the "linguistic Other"? What forms of intersectionality arise with other social categorizations? What are the main manifestations of *altera lingua* and what do they tell us about the societies in question?

Figures of *altera lingua*

The other is to be (re)imagined insofar as :

> *"the human capacity to hurt others has always been much greater than its capacity to imagine others. Or perhaps we should say, 'The human capacity to hurt others is very large precisely because our capacity to imagine others is very small'" (Scarry, 2003: 102).*

In contrast to empirical experience, how do we imagine linguistic otherness? Around us, the institutional imaginaries (Castoriadis, 1975) of linguistic otherness create representations that are as iconic and glotto-stereotyped (Bochmann, 2001) as they are laden with praise for differentiation. The following examples have become classics in the figures of otherness: the myth of the superhuman (hyper[7]) *polyglots* (Erard, 2012: 82; 220); the cliché of the accent that would be peculiar to the allochtonous alone, more commonly called the foreigner (Boyer, 2015); the mapping between allophonies and academic difficulties (Klinkenberg, 2015: 25; Armagnague-Roucher & Rigoni, 2016: 346; Flores & Rosa, 2015; Rosa & Flores, 2017; Rosa, 2019). All these figures stem from a certain conception of language, used and accepted as a social filter. The multiple phenomena associated with *altera lingua* also concern the desires for feminization, *for* "linguistic parity" (Baider *et al.* , 2007) and against a patriarchal or sexist system (Khaznadar, 2015). Who embodies these figures or how do we imagine them? What fears does inclusive writing arouse (Abbou *et al.* , 2018)? Conversely, what reactions does masculinization (*cf.* Viennot, 2014) generate? How are the imagined alterities claimed and organized?

The construction of the "realities" of *altera lingua*

The conceptions of the Other are plural. Each scientific discipline, the institutions, the media, the arts, fiction and, more broadly, the world of entertainment also participate, if not in instituting them as "truths", at least in relaying the "reality" of linguistic otherness. What are the characteristics of the linguistic otherness to which these spaces, discourses, representations, systems, and ideologies bear witness? What about the modalities of their construction in historical narratives and over time? Given that the "Other" can result from a hetero-assignment ("you are not like me[8]") or a auto-assignment ("I am not like you"), in what ways can linguistic otherness be over analysed? For whom, does it appear to be applied excessively? To hold space for a plurality of voices and knowledge, what do the people who embody *altera lingua* say about it? To this end, contributions may take the form of interviews, meetings, and portraits that allow us to enter into the intimacy of experiences that claim linguistic otherness. Given that "words are not only instruments of academic and political discussion, they are the objects of it" (Schnapper, 1993: 157), how do those who embody *altera lingua* designate themselves? What do they do with the modes of designation, or even subjugation, of others?

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[7] The popularization of the term "hyperpolyglot" is attributed to Richard Hudson in 2003. URL: [https://dickhudson.com/hyperpolyglots/], accessed 22.02.21. Hudson defines a polyglot as one who has mastered at least six languages.

[8] The singular is used for convenience.

The stakes of *altera lingua* in the relationship to knowledge

The Other and knowledge. Rhetorically (Kristeva, 1989), imagined figures and images, diffused "reality", *altera lingua* also raises the question of erasure (Meschonnic, 1999) and the conditions of recognition (Honneth, 2000). Applied to schools, educational contexts, training and professional fields, the question connects social relations to others and relations to knowledge. The social stakes are important considering that access to knowledge is conditioned by : a sense of belonging, identification with conception of knowledge and by the possibilities of projection in pedagogical spaces (Bandura, 1977; Cummins, 2003). Contributions may also be interested in the observation of dynamics of Otherness in institutional settings, in the analysis of educational policies, in the sharing of pedagogical experiences or in critical studies of evaluative postures. Contributions may also look at how *altera lingua*, a social construct, becomes a source of institutional knowledge about other languages, the languages of the other, the other language: "that which is spoken of a politically and ideologically uninhabitable place: the place of the interstice, of the edge, of the sling, of the limp: a *cavalier* place since it crosses, straddles, panoramas and offends." (Barthes, 1970).

In sum, this call aims to create a space for listening and for encounters with forms of linguistic otherness. It is also part of what Mignolo and Tlostanova (2006) call the centering of "the geopolitics and body politics of knowledge". Thus, what knowledge is constructed from lived experiences as "minoritized bodies" due to ideological, racialized, linguistic, gendered, religious conceptions? From what borders and narratives are these knowledges elevated to the status of "theories" and how do they illuminate dominant ideologies (Siebers, 2013)? It would also be interesting to see how knowledge and theories allow for the critique or even transformation of these dominant ideologies.

Whatever the angle adopted, contributions are welcome to adopt decompartmentalized, collaborative and interdisciplinary approaches to make the phenomena of *altera lingua* more visible in light of encounters that may (dis)enchant researchers.

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