

PRESENTATION

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PRÉSENTATION

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This issue of *Íkala, Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura* brings a broader view of language focused on the Other. It moves through topics of literacy among indigenous communities that are not used to written systems; gender-related management of symbolic capital seen in formal or informal language awareness within a group of Spanish-speaking Liman speakers residing in the U.S.; the deployment of narrative resources among 3- to 8-year-old speakers in underprivileged socioeconomic urban environments; and people thinking of themselves as a nation through artistic practices developed at a popular festival in Cameroon. All of this finds a unifying thread in Torres' paper about the overarching significance of teaching human sciences for building argumentative skills, thinking, and, ultimately, democracy.

Throughout these seemingly disparate views about literacy, marginalized narratives, semiotics, and ethnography, it is the Other that is considered. This Other takes different forms: the subordinate gender affirming their symbolic capital, as seen in the realization of the sibilant /s/ among Liman females compared with Liman males; indigenous communities performing and reinterpreting new literacy uses, allowing us to see literacy as community creation; young children displaying evaluative resources in narratives with peers, older boys and girls, and adults; deaf and hearing-impaired individuals in Spain and the opportunity for translation students to carry out teamwork to address this group's needs and expectations regarding subtitling; and the collective creation method developed by La Candelaria theater group in Bogotá, Colombia, for whom giving a voice to opposing narratives in a country's historic event was an opportunity to bring folklore to the stage. Last but not least, the Other appears in the semio-hermeneutic reading made of the popular festival

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‘Yelwata Maroua 1er’ in Cameroon through their established, yet noncanonical, artistic practices.

All of these situations lead us to reflect upon language itself, its acquisition and development, and the horizons of translation. Like Ariadne’s thread, winding through a labyrinth of language acts, Andrea Torres Perdigón’s essay “¿Cuál es el rol de las ciencias humanas en la lectura y la escritura universitarias? Martha Nussbaum y François Rastier” sheds some light on the humanities from two seemingly opposite shores: a (female) U.S. philosopher and a (male) French linguist. Both of them criticize the current educational approach adopted worldwide, which is focused on profitability and technology, to the detriment of the arts and humanities. The Other is key in these two conceptions of what might be a last hope for the tradition of critical thinking that helped forge world democracies. Instrumentalized knowledge leads to a kind of functional illiteracy, as manifested in widespread poverty regarding critical reading and argumentation. This issue of literacy leads us to consider the poor results Latin American students tend to achieve on Pisa tests, which points to another gap between the global South and North, even more important in the “information age.”

The article titled “Aspiration of /s/ in masculine and feminine speeches of Limans in the United States,” by Emily Bernate, is a pilot study addressing the use of the sibilant /s/ as a key marker in formal or informal speech. The sociolinguistic approach constitutes a novel contribution to gender studies in sociolinguistics. Similarly, in the article titled “Oh no! Look what happened! The use of evaluative resources in fictional accounts by young children from marginalized urban populations,” Florencia Alam and Renata Rosemberg review previous studies to present their research work among children between 3 and 8 years of age in urban slums in Buenos Aires, Argentina. This work fills a gap in the study of evaluative resources among children of this age group, highlighting

scaffolding provided by older children and/or adults.

“The Problem of Defining ‘Indigenous Literacy:’ Lessons from the Andes,” by linguist Peter C. Browning, departs from the linguistic right to literacy proclaimed by Unesco to track the concept of literacy from the Colonial period up to contemporary times. The identification of literacy with the European tradition of alphabetic writing and its technology—the book—is revised here, appealing to post-structuralist theories that consider literacy a ‘social practice.’ The author uses a social literacy approach in the situation of a letter exchange between a sender and an addressee who are both non-literate. These letters are written by scribes and delivered to receivers who rely on the message deliverer to tell them the message contained in that set of symbols. In this sense, the letter functions as a mnemotechnic aid to build communication.

In “Presenting the target audience in the audiovisual accessibility classroom: An educational innovation project,” Doctor of Translation and Interpretation Ana Tamayo tells us about an action-research project carried out by audiovisual translators in training with a group of deaf and hard-of-hearing people. Noting that this is a significant population (12 percent of the total population in Spain), this study attempts to reconcile the target population’s needs and expectations with current regulation on subtitling. The result was a subtitling project balancing aspects such as time on screen and color resources to show tone variations. During the study, interpersonal skills achieved included teamwork, self-criticism, and critical thinking in education.

Inscribing La Candelaria theater group’s work in a post-modern aesthetics and post dramatic theater, the article titled “*Guadalupe años sin cuenta*. Staging the abuses of state power in Colombia,” by Leandro Quiroz Londoño, highlights the use of intertexts, such as folklore by La Candelaria, as a leading thread between scenes. At the same time,

folklore is described here as the voice of the people, offering a conflicting view of a historic event compared with the official narrative.

“The Yelwata Maroua 1^{er} festival in Cameroon: a semio-hermeneutic approach to a popular culture,” by Zacharie Hatolong Boho, applies a socio-semiotic and semio-hermeneutic approach to the analysis of the *Yelwata Maroua 1^{er}* festival

in Cameroon by looking at linguistic and pictorial practices on display there. This gives Boho material to make a reading of what undergirds the festival, that is, the expression of diversity, the celebration of local and national icons, collective memory, and the people of Cameroon’s expectations regarding their future and their identity as a nation. In all of this, Boho sees cultural redynamization, of which Cameroon’s people are sorely in need.