SYMPLECTUM PRESENTATION ABSTRACT
Language and Migration: Experience and Memory

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Title of Presentation: Identifying and Responding to Linguicism: Toward a Conceptual Model

Abstract

At the heart of many of the issues to be discussed at this symposium are concerns with the linguistic human rights of both individuals and groups – as well as the violations of such rights. Violations of linguistic human rights are often manifestations of what Robert Phillipson and Tove Skutnabb-Kangas have labelled “linguicism.” Linguicism is, in essence, the linguistic parallel and equivalent to such phenomena as racism, sexism, ageism, audism, classism, and so on. It is, as Skutnabb-Kangas has defined it,

Beliefs, attitudes, and actions whereby differences of language serve to structure inequality between linguistic groups; ideologies, structures, and practices used to legitimate, effectuate, regulate, and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources between groups defined on the basis of language.

Thus, linguicism has significant implications for virtually every aspect of human society and every domain of human life. There has emerged in recent years a growing body of excellent literature devoted to the study of linguicism. However, like other kinds of oppression, linguicism is by no means a single, unified entity. Rather, it takes many different forms, and responding to it effectively requires different kinds of actions. In this presentation, I will offer a conceptual typology, based on the most useful typologies of the different kinds of racism, to identify and discuss some of the various sorts of linguicism. Specifically, recognizing the distinction between individual and institutional linguicism, I will argue that there are four sorts of linguicism with which we should be concerned: internalized linguicism, interpersonal linguicism, institutional linguicism, and structural linguicism.

References


