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## LINGUISTIC INTOLERANCE AND MULTIDISCIPLINARITY

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As we have pointed out in other papers, there are three main aspects of linguistic intolerance: 1. language usage is deeply marked by intolerance and prejudice, even though they are often disguised either by ethical values, “linguistic errors” or by aesthetic values, “refined language”, in certain usages and languages; 2. the relations between linguistic usages or between different languages can be of public or private nature: in the public domain, intolerance arises when a law regulates certain usages and languages and prohibits others (e.g. the prohibition of the use of forms of Tupi Indian languages in Brazil, imposed by Pombal, and the Toubon Law, in France, which prohibits the use of foreign terms). In the private domain, intolerance arises when individual or group preferences discriminate against usages and languages and prevent their users from having access to certain jobs or positions (e.g. the discrimination against people who pronounce the retroflex “r” in parts of Southeast Brazil, or against those whose intonation reveals a certain sexual orientation); 3. linguistic intolerance, in addition to any other kind of intolerance, is strongly linked with other forms of intolerance, especially racial, religious, sexual, political, and socioeconomic intolerance. We shall now discuss the relations between the different forms of intolerance, introducing a number of issues on the relations of multidisciplinary to intolerance. The first point to be made is that the different forms of intolerance, not only the linguistic form, are always related, and it is difficult to separate them. These relations are usually hierarchical, that is, there is a form of intolerance which is the base, and this form dominates the others. For instance, racial prejudice against black people in Brazil, which can be considered a form of primary or base intolerance in relation to the forms of intolerance of the way they speak, their religion, and so on. These blocks of hierarchical intolerance occur in discourse in four different ways: · In discourses which clearly show the form of primary or base intolerance, for example, the racist texts which have been published lately, signed by “White Pride”; · In

discourses which disguise the primary or base intolerance by showing an associated secondary intolerance, which is considered more acceptable, both in the public and in the private sphere. Thus, racial intolerance can be seen as religious or linguistic, hiding racial prejudice behind other kinds of prejudice that can be more easily justified or not forbidden, e.g. narrow-minded religion which causes social and political problems, “wrong” linguistic usage, which endangers and threatens the language (for example, when we criticize the linguistic usage of people from the Northeast of Brazil or of immigrants, or the way homosexuals speak, our criticism not really or only linguistically intolerant, but also socioeconomically, politically, sexually, racially intolerant). This is one of the strategies used in order to avoid issues that are “politically incorrect” or forbidden by law. · In discourses in which one of the “secondary” forms of intolerance become so common, that it is structured or presented as a form of “primary” or base intolerance. Then, forms of religious intolerance which were secondary to racial and socioeconomic intolerance become the rule and start religious wars; linguistic intolerance against lower-class speech, which is not “primary” or base intolerance becomes primary when it hinders employment or when it gives a linguistic nature to politics (the Brazilian 1989 Lula vs Collor presidential election, for instance). In cases like these, “secondary” intolerance becomes “primary”, and must be examined as such. · The fourth and last kind of discourse is that of “tolerant” discourses, or “politically correct” discourses which though disguised as tolerant, are nothing but intolerant. Here, Alexandre Marcelo Bueno’s MA dissertation on linguistic intolerance against immigrants is noteworthy. Bueno examines Brazilian immigration laws and notes that the inauguration laws state that immigrants are allowed to vote as long as they are able to read and write in their own language, even if they can’t speak Portuguese. That is, linguistic intolerance is not shown in relation to foreign languages of immigrants, but in relation to the illiterate, another form of linguistic intolerance, which is related to social and cultural intolerance. As for “politically correct” discourse, there are the “overzealous corrections”, such as those found in translations of the Bible, in which the terms God/Goddess are used, or school papers which read “professor/professora” , bringing back the already forgotten gender opposition and the use of masculine for both genders and leaving the clear message that prejudice against women is still present in our social relations. This also happens in advertisements, which have increasingly used different ethnic groups. When the Banco do Brasil launched a commercial featuring a black couple adopting a white child, a number of letters and phone calls were received, complaining that it would be virtually impossible for this to happen in Brazil. That is, the discourse was extremely “politically correct”, and the bottom-line was that it was racist. By showing the close relationship between the different forms of intolerance, we intend to demonstrate that intolerance must be examined from a multidisciplinary point of view. We can therefore propose three approaches to examine linguistic intolerance: 1. a multidisciplinary examination of intolerance which has a linguistic element. In order to achieve this, research on intolerance against immigrants, religious intolerance, sexual intolerance have to be carried out together. 2. a specific examination of dominant forms of linguistic intolerance and of the secondary ones that have become common, for example, against illiteracy, foreign terms, the use of certain variants. 3. a multidisciplinary examination of cases in which the form of intolerance that can be seen is just the “tip of the iceberg” hiding other forms of intolerance which are less socially “acceptable” or even forbidden in the public sphere, such as intolerance against homosexuals’ intonation or the speech of black people, immigrants,

or people from rural areas. In these cases, we must show what is really behind such intolerance. In addition, in order to conclude this survey, we should also differentiate the examination of linguistic intolerance itself (intolerance of linguistic usage, languages of the Other, illiteracy) from the linguistic-discursive examination of intolerant discourses (of all natures), carried out by discourse and text scholars. Our aim is to show how racist, fascist, separatist discourses are built, which procedures and strategies they use, their set of values or ideology, and finally, their identity, the intolerant "ethos". This is another way of becoming familiar with intolerance and fighting it.

Descrição:

We shall now discuss the relations between the different forms of intolerance, introducing a number of issues on the relations of multidisciplinary to intolerance.