**Unequal Personalities: Language Education and the Politics of Difference**

Language is often perceived as an expression of a particular personhood and, by extension, a reflection of one’s personality – the ‘chaotic’ multilingualism of the early 20th century Macedonians as indexical of their ‘disorderly’ psyche, being one example (Gal, 2013). Different ways of speaking are therefore seen to reflect different ways of being that are linked to forms of morality. In educational contexts, ‘personality’ is used as a discursive trope to justify the unequal valuation of individuals’ linguistic behaviour as well as to point to a type of persona that acquiring certain languages and registers allows them to be. Yet, ‘personality’ in this context is often understood as a psychological, and thus individual, phenomenon, rather than social and ideological.

This panel is concerned with how the concept of personality is mobilised in language learning contexts. By critically investigating the idea that language is a transparent expression of an inner personality, this panel will explore how language learners and teachers negotiate ideas about personality, and the moral dimensions of such processes. In addition, it will address the histories and structures that they are a product of, and the implications of such ideas. Specifically, we welcome ethnographic contributions from different geographical contexts, from both classrooms and less institutionalised sites, that explore the following questions:

- How, and under what circumstances, are certain languages or registers seen as linked with particular personalities?

- How do teachers/learners perceive the influence of personality on language learning?

- What moral evaluations are connected to particular languages and personalities?

- How are ideas about the link between language and personality, and the moral evaluations connected to them, connected to wider histories and structures of race, gender, class?

- What are the social, economic or political implications of these ideas?

**References**

Gal, S. (2013). Tastes of Talk: Qualia and the moral flavor of signs. *Anthropological Theory*, *13*(1–2), 31–48

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