

PROTOKOLL

Workshop: "Sprache und Rassismus" im Rahmen von Decolonizing Minds:

Referentin: Justice Mvemba &

Treffpunkt: Gäste-Etage, Osloer Straße 12, 13359 Berlin

12. Februar 2024, 10:00-13:00 Uhr

Protokollantinnen: Filipa Pereira und Lennart Kühl

Teilnehmer*innen: 15

- The referee introduces the workshop:
 - What does language do to us?
 - Does it help us create biases? or opening minds?
 - Narrative's deconstruction
 - This will be explored at different levels (the workshop will consist of 5 different exercises);
- Round of presentations + expectations for today's workshop

1. Exercise about social constructions:

- The referee presents 22 professions: doctor, nurse, software engineer, teacher, basketball player, cleaner, lawyer, volunteer, musician, CEO, dancer, marketing manager, social worker, cook, track athlete, fashion designer, babysitter, pharmacist, superhero, mechanical engineer, nanny, counselor;
- asks the participants to divide these professions into the following sections sections: male - female - black female - black male - white female - white male;
- Referee asks who wants to share their results:
 - Results from three different participants:
 - a. associates most to white male and white female in leadership positions; black male and black female in lower positions;
 - b. was raised in the Netherlands and because of the surroundings, the participant associated most professions with white female and white male (for ex. if it is a doctor → thinks about both being white male and white female – although the participant also sees PoC in these positions);
 - c. context dependent → lived in different places so it is very dependent on the context (for example: between England and

Brazil – participant’s grandad is Black in England but a white privileged male in Brazil);

- d. language dependent: differences between German and English (in German, professions are gendered)

– Debate about gendering words in different contexts → English, German, Dutch –

Question from Referee: Did someone struggle with this exercise?

Answer from one participant: “I was forced” to imagine other people in these positions (the participant is conscious that not only white male and female fulfill these positions);

Comment from Referee: it is about understanding how we were programmed during our childhood, how we are programmed to think through the films we watch, our surroundings, etc. This exercise helps to understand how one was programmed → it is important to acknowledge this to be able to deconstruct certain stereotypes.

Another participant states that it is language, generation, context / reality where one grew up, and media consumption dependent → as one grows older, one is more aware of diversity;

→ **it is important to know how we are programmed so we can expose it and actively break old narratives and social constructs.**

– break –

2. Exercise: the referee reads a text to the participants and they have to guess which country they are talking about.

- The text is about conflict, war, different tribal groups, large families, political stability, regional languages (dialects), among others.
- guesses from the participants: Kenya, Rwanda, Germany → correct answer: Germany
- Round of comments: when talking about tribes, some participants think of indigenous groups or ethnic groups in Latin America or Africa;
- Referee: We do not associate tribes with northern countries → power structures.

3. Exercise: sort out the words into do’s and don’ts (be conscious of the biased words– which ones should one deconstruct).

- race, dominant, black, minority, ethnicity, tribe, so called Global South, normal, chief, third world country, bicultural, exotic, mixed race, European standard, African rulers;
- Division into working groups → Results:
 - **RACE**
 - group 1: clear Do Not → on a biological manner;
 - group 2: use it → to describe socioeconomic construct;

group 3: ethnicity and race → on a biological manner rather use ethnicity;

not pretend Race is not there, but rather deconstruct the word;

→ **ETHNICITY**

- ethnicity = othering word; description for non-dutch/ non-White people in a dutch context → DO NOT
- Is ethnicity something you can inherit or something you put on?
- ethnicity in medicine → less possibility of treatment for certain ethnic groups; not enough data
- Person with biethnic/ bicultural parents; both are German → what ethnicity does the person belong to?
- maybe a question of percentage, but what percentage?
- Use it or not? In the context of cultural processes or in a biological way?
- Replace RACE with ETHNICITY? What does that mean for bicultural persons and their sense of belonging?
- Ethnicity also means the exclusion of groups of people; use of the word is subjective and the categories often come from outside
- Complex! The word don't covers all of that; use has to be very careful;
- What do we want to say with Ethnicity → does it refer to social classes; cultures???
- genetic differences through different environments over time;

→ **BLACK**

- yes, Black with a capital B → social construct;

→ **MINORITY**

- better change to underrepresented, marginalized (groups);
- because minority means that a group of people are less; it reinforces power structure What groups of people can be a minority? White people surely can be a minority as well;
- Can be used in a unreflective way that oversees power structures;
- mathematical (in terms of quantity) and social sense;
- danger of underrepresentation, if we do not use it; secure rights → linked to rights and protecting them; granting minority rights (democracy) sometimes not always rules; not the norm;
- CONTEXT is really important → not use it in a social context → emphasizes certain power levels;
- Black people = minority → not true;
- RACIALISED → people being actively racialized; **ACTIVENESS**

→ **TRIBE**

- can be “something beautiful” → families, clans, lineages that get together for a certain purpose;
- form of political power and governance; Representation in the western media as a problem;
- tribes in Europe (historical correct);
- “ancient”;
- What is the difference between kingdom and tribe?;
- tribe... family units;
- kingdom... bunch of families → tribes form a kingdom;
- in German: tribe = Stamm;
- tribe link to power; culture (fine) or state forms (deconstruct power structures); tribe not seen as a legitime state form; using colonizers language; worlding through colonizers; africans gave it own meaning; sovereignty;

→ **PRO LIFE OR PRO CHOICE**

- pro life... against abortion;
- pro choice... pro body choice/ own choice;

→ **CHILD PROTECTION LAW**

- sexuality;
- not exposed to different gender identities, sexualities;
- about that!
- showed in books, and so on;
- should it be allowed for kids to change;
- looking into laws; promotion of political parties; what does that mean? careful look!

– break–

Feedback-Round on the questions:

1. What was my main takeaway?
2. What do I want to be more conscious about?
 - Impressed;
 - sceptical;
 - new vocabulary and nuances;
 - interactive presentation, moderation;
 - people made language; originally not bad words; because people are misinterpreting them have to be careful;
 - no maher how torrent; racial mindset internalized;
 - shape the way we think things;
 - power of science in shifting the discourse → how can we tackle that? a lot of people are left out in the science, misperceived as a social connotation;
 - BIASED, even with data and science... who is taking and who is left out?

- acknowledged, privileged, seen/unseen, on purpose not include the word WEST on the board? also the west implies a certain image; the western world? capitalism, colonization
- so-called global south - global north;
- Europe include racialized people;
- How can someone actively deconstruct certain topics? street names, how do I tell stories, what people do I talk to;
- feel still lost; really interesting; a lot to know/be aware of;
- We don't know; in the process of learning; should not be judgemental;
- UNLEARNING;
- open to that process or not? That's the question...
- try to explain people, energy ... certain work context to be in educational role; capacity to teach; don't see PoC as free teachers.

-End-



