



Safe the date: 01/07 15 h/MEZ JUNGBLUTH, Konstanze *Como nasce uma língua? // How does a language emerge?* ABRALIN ao Vivo

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Panning for tongues of the past:
How does a language emerge?

Speaking a language is activity, is energy (COSERIU 1988). Tongues are rooted in dialogue. Speakers keeping their distance hampers their use. Speakers of different tongues who pretend to exchange objects, information or find an agreement create words and new structures to communicate with each other. This discursive effort and its repetition may turn into a new way of speaking, which in favorable historical conditions – and over time – can be transformed into a natural language of its own right. This kind of process may be exemplified by the Romance languages. All of them emerged in plurilingual contexts.

I'll unfold an aspect of historical pragmatics rooted in a lusophone context – one that is thus far severely understudied by linguists. The so-called 'Falar de Guiné' (ALMADA 1964) was created and used for several centuries by different communities of practice (WENGER 1998; FALCON 2012) in motion (!) along the coast of West Africa. In their encounters Africans and Europeans created a peculiar way of speaking called 'Kust-Portugees' by the Dutch (DAKUBU 2012; JUNGBLUTH 2018). Their activities were attracted by the hub of São Jorge da Mina, the first Portuguese settlement, castle and fort constructed in 1482.

My diachronic data confirm ABOH's claim (2019) which recognizes all languages as "our creolized tongues" (cf. Romance languages – a case of creolization? SCHLIEBEN-LANGE 1977). This emergence of a language, whether we call it a pidgin or creole (MUFWENE in press), tells us that there has been no breakdown of communication (BICKERTON 1988; McWHORTER 2018). Quite the contrary, Portuguese was gaining hundreds – nay thousands – of 'new speakers' during this period (HONRSBY 2015)!

At the heart of my talk are the plurilingual communities of seamen, Africans and Europeans, which the Portuguese called 'os lançados', living without permission on the 'continent'. They lived together with their bilingual offspring, 'os filhos da terra' (CABRAL 2015), some of them addressing powerful African women 'as senhoras' (JUNGBLUTH / DA MILANO in press). The fine-grained study of the tongues used in Early Modern Times when European and African languages, particularly of the Bantu family, constantly stayed in contact, allows us to better understand the emergence of a language and its use according to major changes in history.