



**Call for Contributions:**  
*Discussion groups linked to the*  
**Interdisciplinary Workshop on Language and Trauma**  
Online-Sessions, 18<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> of March 2024 (to be confirmed)

Following the very successful *Interdisciplinary Workshop on Language and Trauma* in March 2023, we would like to propose a follow-up meeting, consisting of several sessions that can be attended independently or in a series. For each session, we welcome a number of short contributions that bring an idea or concept to the table, potentially anchored in individual research – however, we are not aiming for ‘conference-type’ presentations but rather for a joint discussion.

**Session I: Conceptualizing trauma in a multilingual perspective**

How can we conceptualize concepts of psychological trauma through history under the influence of struggles for recognition and distribution of resources and of institutionalization in multilingual contexts? How are relevant notions constructed in medical and legal discourse and in everyday language? How do we deal with assumptions about trauma as manifesting itself in a uniform, universally observable manner?

How do we apply these questions in interpreting in court, asylum procedures and health care but also when dealing with emotional evaluations and connotations of different of languages that constitute the repertoire and multilingualism as a resource in therapy?

**Session II: Linguistic violence: Language (or its absence) in the making of trauma**

Language is in one form or another always present through the persons involved in a traumatizing scene – even by its absence. Linguistic violence and hate speech can (like physical violence) be experienced as de-humanizing, violence can be associated with a perpetrator’s particular forms of speech. Topics may include language deprivation, linguistic ostracism, heritage language loss, the repression or interdiction of indigenous/minoritized languages and others.

**Session III: Impacts of trauma on linguistic repertoires, language use and language learning**

Once a link has been established between certain languages or ways of speaking and traumatic experiences, it is not so easily severed. As a result, such languages are often avoided and subsequently abandoned. Silencing, loss of voice or withdrawal into silence are part of many narratives dealing with flight and migration. What sort of imprints do traumatic experiences leave in peoples’ communicative repertoire? How do they affect processes of (language) learning and language use?

**Session IV: Putting traumatic memories into words – shared narratives, metaphors, poetic language, arts and performance**

What is sayable / what remains unsayable? Which particular linguistic features can be observed in trauma narratives? Can symbolization through verbalisation contribute to containing traumatic experience? This may also include visual arts, semiotic assemblages, performances as well as poetic language or the use of metaphors that allow for condensing and displacing a traumatic experience. In this part shared narratives are considered as a means for self-empowerment, as a way to achieve public recognition and to allow for collective remembering and as an offer to inhabit discursive positions.

**Session V: Trauma in language research: Epistemological, methodological and ethical questions**

How can different language-related approaches contribute to the field of trauma research? What can be shared, what can be heard? Who is the addressee? What do we do next?

## **Organisation and Venue**

We are organizing half-day online meetings around specific topics (see above). A small in-person gathering is probably possible upon request at the University Duisburg-Essen (Germany).

There is no participation fee, registration (per session) is required.

## **Participation**

**Send your expression of interest** until the 6<sup>th</sup> of January 2024 to [judith.purkarthofer@uni-due.de](mailto:judith.purkarthofer@uni-due.de)

We will arrange the program of the sessions according to interest, so please include

- (1) information on the concepts / topics that you would like to discuss,
- (2) whether you would like to present an idea (5-10 minutes, up to 200 words) and
- (3) which sessions you are planning to attend.

## **Conveners and Contacts**

[Judith Purkarthofer](#), [Marcelyn Oostendorp](#) and [Brigitta Busch](#)

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Information on the Workshop in 2023: <https://heteroglossia.net/Language-and-Trauma.142.0.html>

**Virtual Book table:** <https://heteroglossia.net/Resources-and-virtual-book-table.150.0.html>  
(Updates still possible!)