

ARENAS

ANALYSIS OF AND RESPONSES
TO EXTREMIST NARRATIVES



*We are what we
speak
and
we become who we
are spoken*

The Power of Words

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ANALYSIS OF AND RESPONSES
TO EXTREMIST NARRATIVES

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Objectives:

Understand how language shapes our perceptions and can lead to extreme narratives.

Diversity is the Key

... And the rule of the living



Heading

- Speaking is learning to distinguish with words.
- Diversity is expressed through variation (e.g., cats, humans).
- Favor **diversity** over difference to avoid extreme narratives.
- Examples: Gender, inclusivity, positive language.



What is an Animal?

Diversity exists even in categories we often consider universal. Dog, cat, bird, etc. → All these living beings are indeed animals



What is a Human?



- Representations of humans are diverse and complex.
- Woman, man, baby, elderly, etc.
- Diversity in human representations → complexity of definition.
- Question: How to avoid hasty generalizations?



Speaking is learning to distinguish with words

- **Discrimination as a cognitive process, but one that must be managed.**
- *Discrimination*: The process of distinguishing one element from another.
- *Language acquisition*: Involves distinguishing and naming objects, living beings, and people.

Examples:

- Distinguishing dangerous snakes in the Amazon rainforest VS Recognizing street names in a city.



Diversity is expressed in Variation

- Use adjectives to qualify without excluding.
- Example with cats: Variety in appearance and behavior.

Qualifying to distinguish:

- "This cat has short red fur, blue eyes, a bushy tail..."
- Avoid extreme judgments to prevent exclusion





Why diversity?

Difference vs. **diversity**: Avoiding extreme narratives rooted in rapid judgments.

Risks of comparisons:

"Smarter," "more beautiful" → radical categorization.

Example: Gender categories and stereotypes.

→ *Comparing risks excluding.*



The example of Gender

Gender = stereotypical representations of social roles.

Example: many men wear a skirt → challenging **stereotypes**.

Inclusive language:

"Researcher·e·s" to include all gender identities.

Goal: Talk about everyone without excluding anyone

Key Insight

*The living world is
based on diversity
Every living being is
unique*





Speak positively to avoid exclusion

Positive language prevents exclusion and harassment.

Formulation:

- "I find Helena very beautiful" vs. "Helena is very beautiful" (universal judgment).
- Comparisons: Potential source of extreme narratives.
- Consequence: Simple words can become the root of extreme comments.



Pay attention to how you speak

- Language reflects our emotions, not absolute judgments.
- Simple words and harmless comments can lead to extreme narratives.
- Language: Should convey what we feel, not what we believe we see.
- Call to action: Become aware of our representations and accept diversity.



Follow Our Journey!

The ARENAS project continues at arenasproject.eu

Béatrice Fracchiolla – University of Lorraine.

Contact: arenasproject.eu
Hashtag: #ARENASProject



Ressources and References

For further reading :

- **European Texts:** fra.europa.eu/en/eu-charter/article/21-non-discrimination
- **ARENAS Project:** arenasproject.eu
- **Inclusive Language:** Best practices guide to avoid exclusion

Key Insight

Diversity is the norm.

In Language as in the world of living beings

