

LINGUISTIC CREATIVITY THROUGH THE LENS OF CONSTRUCTED LANGUAGES

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In recent years, the phenomenon of constructed languages has been the subject of a growing interest, as can be seen from the current issue of the academic journal *RiCOGNIZIONI* titled *Linguistic creativity through the lens of constructed languages*. The articles published in the current issue follow on from the conference on constructed languages held in Orléans in July 2024, which has been organised by the Laboratoire Ligérien de Linguistique (LLL, UMR 7270, Université d'Orléans, Université de Tours, BnF, CNRS). The conference was the second edition of I-ConLang, previously organised in Turin in 2022, whose proceedings can also be found in the journal *RiCOGNIZIONI* (2022, vol. 9, No. 18, edited by Simone BETTEGA, Elisa Corino, Roberto MERLO).

The interest for constructed languages can be explained by many factors. First, the phenomenon is significantly ancient, as it is possible to go back as far as the 17th century for philosophical languages (Eco 1993) and even before that period for language projects with a religious aim (Hildegarde de Bingen, Muhyii Gülşeni). Besides, the number of projects is quite significant (near a thousand projects of constructed languages have been recorded), as can be seen with the various books devoted to the subject (see for example Albani & Buonarroti 1994). Finally, the vitality of the phenomenon has never ceased, whether in the actual practice of constructed languages (see in particular the case of Esperanto, Fiedler & Brosch 2022), or in the invention of new languages, that is the activity of conlanging, a practice favoured today by the Internet and the new technologies.

Constructed languages are a fertile ground for new ideas and innovations, in the field of language, which calls into question the human ability to propose new forms of linguistic expression. The phenomenon is of interest not only to linguistics, but also to other disciplines in the humanities and the arts. They are becoming an increasingly important part of our cultural environment through artistic, literary or fictional languages, and they are also a promising terrain for linguistic reflection through didactic, logical and experimental aims.

It is therefore worth asking how constructed languages develop. First of all, it is important to note that the phenomenon has both a historical and prospective dimension: how were the languages designed? How are new languages constructed today and in the future?

The epistemological dimension of those questions is explored by GOBBO through an article in which he considers the achievements of interlinguistics thanks to a retrospective approach, in order to clarify the possibilities and obstacles the creators of language face. Through the available

means for conlanging, the article of NOMBLOT and THOMAS discusses the use of technology in the creation of new languages, and the impact of automated tools on languages that are developed today. Furthermore, DIEUMEGARD sheds some light on the public's perception of constructed languages through a survey exploring their notoriety.

Once the vitality of the phenomenon is acknowledged, the question is what similarities and differences can be found between constructed languages and natural languages. Different authors (Schubert 1989, Koutny 2009, Stria 2015) already demonstrated that there is a continuum. Hence, it is difficult to draw a clear line between both types of languages. We therefore need to assess their similarities and differences.

The question is addressed in various articles of the issue. ENGUEHARD investigates the specific position of revitalised languages in such a continuum through the study of the Norman language. HUTCHINSON, for his part, explores the question from the current perspective of today's conlangers and tests their intuition of what tends to distance constructed languages from what is observed in natural languages.

Among the constructed languages most closely related to natural languages from the point of view of usage, the particular case of Esperanto is discussed in more detail. GUÉRIN offers to study how the self-specified nominals function in Esperanto and in natural languages, in order to evaluate the similarities and differences. PLANCHON, for his part, considers the special case of affixes in Esperanto, based on the hypothesis that the actual use of Esperanto leads to a natural use of these markers, without the language users necessarily being aware of the phenomenon.

The very use of constructed languages is therefore an important issue, and it is also relevant when the languages are initially developed in the context of works of fiction. Several articles explore that question. COMANDINI and DEDE considers the extent of innovation and actual production of words and sentences in Elvish languages in the texts produced by different fanfiction authors.

Indeed, the strategies for writing and the ways in which constructed languages are appropriated are key issues for fictional languages. MELUZZI's article explores the use of proper names in the adaptation of Hamlet into Klingon. From another point of view, PIRÈS analyses the inclusion of a constructed language in Pelot's work (a Palaeolithic fictional language) in order to examine the code-switching and glosses phenomenon. Finally, the article written by GHIA, at the end of the issue, offers a comparative analysis on the use of plant names in various fictional languages (quenya, dothraki, na'vi...), thereby demonstrating the value of crosslinguistic analysis in the study of constructed languages.

The comparative and crosslinguistic approach undeniably permeates all the articles published in the issue, whether between constructed languages and natural languages, or between constructed languages. Therefore, the questions surrounding constructed languages fundamentally deal with the diversity of human languages and with the infinity of their interactions and evolution. Linguistic creativity sheds light on the ability of human beings to create and invent new forms of expression. The current issue invites readers to delve deeper into the subject.

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