

Editorial

Editorial for Volume 21, Issue 2: Critical Perspectives and Approaches for Speech-Language Therapy in the Global South

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As part of the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of speech-language therapy in Chile, we are pleased to present a special issue of *Revista Chilena de Fonoaudiología*, entitled "Critical Perspectives and Approaches for Speech-Language Therapy in the Global South". This issue includes eight original manuscripts that propose epistemological, methodological, and political discussions on speech therapy, professional practices, and approaches to issues such as development, disability, and biases related to gender, age, and cultural dialogue. Among the manuscripts, you will find essays and results of unpublished research, with reflections and experiences from Brazil, Colombia, Spain, and Chile. In addition, this special issue is enriched by three reviews of works that contribute to the conversation, with an emphasis on interdisciplinarity and practices that seek to overcome exclusion and social injustice.

The purpose of this issue is to serve as an academic platform that promotes a discussion about the profession, the knowledge it offers, and its practices, all from critical perspectives. By "critical perspectives", we mean those that contribute to the development of a utopian prospect of dialogue and social justice, based on the recognition and understanding of historical processes of exclusion and extermination experienced by large human groups due to various factors, whose ultimate origin is the Western capitalism developed in recent centuries (Arruzza et al., 2019; Dussel, 2005; Walsh, 2010). A critical perspective, from this point of view, is committed to revealing the pervasiveness of systems of oppression in our practices and knowledge, and to offering heuristic and emancipatory alternatives (Chapela Mendoza, 2013) that do not disrupt the autonomy and dignity of people and communities.

The title of this special issue includes the expression "for speech-language therapy in the Global South" as the manifestation of a collective desire –emerging from countless conversations and academic exchanges– to build an epistemological, methodological, ethical, and political alternative that problematizes the epistemic colonialism in which we are immersed (Quijano, 2014; Walsh, 2005) in relation to the hegemonic centers of knowledge production –the so-called Global North. Moreover, this alternative should allow creating practices that critically integrate *other-knowledge*, which refers to the knowledge that has been silenced and invalidated by the modern tradition underlying our academic spaces, and without which it is impossible to overcome the historical conditions of violence and exclusion (Santos, 2007, 2011). Thus, we understand Global North and Global South not as geographical regions on the map, but as epistemic, ethical, and political territories that fight for the construction of knowledge that ultimately defines who is considered human and what is meant by dignity (Césaire, 1955; Dussel, 1977; Mbembe, 2016).

Of course, we understand that these processes are complex, that along the way we may encounter moments of progress, obstacles, and setbacks, and that they might destabilize the foundations of our institutions, curricula, and professional practices. Moreover, we recognize these processes run the risk of becoming mere intellectual exercises that do not lead to real transformation and only serve to dispute the control of knowledge production, or of working in superfluous ways that lack confrontation and only lead to self-satisfaction for a well-intentioned and moralistic –but ultimately empty– rhetoric. We have faced these risks with the seriousness and responsibility that the purpose of this issue requires and, with greater or lesser success, we have kept them in mind throughout this publishing process.

We believe that speech-language therapy can no longer avoid addressing these topics. We publish this issue in the framework of a commemoration that, as any commemoration, invites us to review and reflect on the questions that gave rise to the discipline. Furthermore, we see this event as an opportunity to focus on the profound processes of transformation in which the health professions have been immersed for decades. The desire to outgrow the hegemonic biomedical model (Chapela Mendoza, 2013; Martínez Hernández, 2011) surfaces everywhere, not only questioning the use of certain labels or practices, but also pushing for a revision of the epistemic, ontological, methodological, ethical, and political foundations with which the professions approach their practices, knowledge, inter- and transdisciplinary dialogue, their contribution to public policies, and their training.

Despite the above, it has not been easy, effortless, or obvious for speech-language therapy in Latin America and Spain to join this discussion. We have thoroughly analyzed the epistemic, methodological, and political discussions and explorations of our sister disciplines (Almeida Filho & Silva, 1999; García-Ruiz et al., 2019; Guajardo, 2020) and we have noticed a persistence in our field to resist changes or attempt to address them superficially. However, on a more positive note, we recognize increasingly systematic efforts, starting at least a decade ago, of voices that have emerged from Colombia, Brazil, Argentina, and Chile. These voices have denounced the pathologizing approach of the profession, the normalizing perspectives of human development, the prevalence of individualized approaches that are disconnected from the social, cultural, and political processes that our communities go through; the overbearing importance given to the so-called areas of speech therapy, the distancing of the profession from conversations about disability, community action, and law, gender, and interculturality approaches. We see a recent and fragmented history of efforts made to look at, question, and open ourselves to new dialogues with the people and communities with whom we work, a history this issue wishes to be a part of. We are driven by our commitment to the profession, to its history, and, above all, to the life trajectories of the people and communities with whom we interact.

Is there space, within what we call speech-language therapy, for a deep epistemic transformation? Or is “speech-language therapy”, created amid the macro-processes of neoliberal capitalism, the biologization of health, and a neurocognitive view of development, a concept that we should outgrow? What would be the sense of maintaining this label, which embodies in itself the division of the fields of action that it claims as its own? Insofar as our conceptual bases adhere to assumptions that commit to overcoming the deep social injustices and exclusions in our

territories, calling ourselves "speech-language therapists" will probably become unimportant, and the traces of the biomedical model will be diluted. We acknowledge we are part of an extensive history of approaching communication and feeding issues in individuals and communities, we understand the historical framework in which this profession arose, and, without forsaking or ignoring the work and commitment of so many who built this profession for decades, we want to recognize those origins within a historical and health context that today needs to be unpinned from the status quo that allowed for the discipline to be validated among highly medicalized professions. Like any process of this kind, we recognize this one has light and darkness, and it is composed of failed explorations, as well as convictions that open new paths. Proposing a collective use of the term "critical speech-language therapy" as an adjective is our honest and proud attempt to show the diversity of proposals, the still not solved contradictions, and the back side of the fabric, with its irregular weavings and loose threads, although deeply committed.

We have done our best to ensure that the articles published in this special issue make contributions in the desired direction. Considering the depth of these topics, the product of this issue may turn out to be, in more than one sense, insufficient, weak, or not entirely consistent with the theoretical framework that guides it. We assume the risk, resting in the fact that we have offered a set of manuscripts that is as rigorous as possible, with the conviction that they will generate reflections and challenge our spaces of work.

Issue number 2 opens with the essay written by Gloria Bermúdez Jaimes, entitled "Reflections on the Conceptions of the Body in Speech-Language Therapy and the Challenges that Arise from Cripistemology" (Bermúdez Jaimes, 2022). In this essay, the author directly questions the frameworks based on which speech-language therapy was founded in Latin America, guided by an ideological system about bodies and human lives that exceeds the mere scope of the profession, but that has defined it with a normative and binary perspective. In this context, the proposal to rethink ourselves from Cripistemology also invites us to a profound reconceptualization of practices and knowledge, by centering bodies and voices that have been historically oppressed and are reclaiming their liberation.

The collective essay proposed by Dora Munévar Munévar, Coni Guevara Urrego, and Wilson Rodríguez Buitrago, "*Sentipensar* (Feeling-Thinking) Collectively about Human Communication, its Processes, and its Knowledge" (Munévar Munévar et al., 2022) follows a similar line. In this essay, the authors propose three decolonizing and anti-ableist exercises that dismantle the

assumptions about communication on which speech-language therapy has been built, and that are centered around a logic of deficit established as expertise, that has enabled professionals to make judgments about the embodiment and communication of others. Each exercise offers explorations to subvert the colonized normality that has prevailed in the development of the profession regarding human communication.

In a similar vein, we find the essay by Christian Peñaloza, Nelson Muñoz Lizana, and Jenan Mohammad Jiménez, "Life Course Perspective: Thoughts and Challenges for a Transformative Speech-Language Therapy" (Peñaloza et al., 2022). In this document, the authors analyze the principles of the life course perspective and argue that its incorporation into speech-language therapy does not imply a mere change of label from the "life cycle" but entails a profound revision of the basic assumptions about human development and agency. The authors explore possible ways in which disciplinary and professional actions could consistently incorporate a life course perspective.

Continuing with the life course perspective, we have the fourth manuscript of this issue, the essay by Alondra Castillo Delgado, "Women Living their Old Age Autonomously: New Readings from Life Courses and Historical Injustices" (Castillo Delgado, 2022). The epistemic and political reflections this article offers are strengthened by the voices of the people around which it is centered; in this case, women experiencing their old age. In this context, it becomes crucial to understand the notion of autonomy outside the traditional liberal and functional margins.

The article by Paula Curihual Aburto, "Intergenerational Meetings between Adolescent and Older Persons as Participatory Action towards a Society without Ageism" (Curihual Aburto, 2022) follows a similar direction. In it, the author shares part of the results of an action-research focused on exploring new intergenerational participation dynamics that contribute to the reduction of stereotypes and prejudices about older persons.

Along the lines of dismantling the assumptions that underlie speech-language therapy and normalize processes of invisibilization, we continue with the essay written by Nadia Ahufinger and Mari Aguilera, "The Impact of Sexist Stereotypes on the Study, Detection, and Evaluation of Developmental Language Disorder: Proposals for a Feminist Approach" (Ahufinger & Aguilera, 2022). This article questions the numerous studies on Developmental Language Disorder, as they reproduce sexist biases that ultimately determine their results. The authors call for an in-depth revision of the ideological premises that usually shape research designs.

From Brazil, we present the choral essay written by Marcos Ribeiro de Araújo, Vladimir Rodrigues Arce, Bárbara da Silva Lima, and Mauricio Pinto Telles, "Contributions of Collective Health in Brazil to the Reorientation of Speech-Language Therapy Training and Practice" (Araújo et al., 2022). In it and related to the transversal discussion raised in this issue about overcoming the biomedical model that founded the profession, the authors propose a historical, epistemic, and political review of the field of collective health that makes it possible to reorient our professional training, with a democratizing and social justice perspective.

Finally, Daniel Rodríguez Marconi, Camilo Morales Cárdenas, Michelle Lapiere Acevedo, Fabián Contreras Reyes, Pedro Elgueta Linares, Claudio Risso Ríos, Claudia Ulloa Ferrer and Javier Vidal Vásquez present the manuscript entitled "The Approach of Mapuche Health to Speech and Language Disorders in La Araucanía, Chile: Towards an Intercultural Speech-Language Therapy" (Rodríguez Marconi et al., 2022). This article widens the discussion to include a complex field that, in our opinion, has hardly been explored: the search for horizontal dialogues around the knowledge of communication and human development of the Indigenous peoples of America, in the context of health. We value the proposal of Rodríguez Marconi and collaborators as a respectful approach to a complex issue, where we are just beginning to understand and assume the scope of interculturality and the decolonization of knowledge.

As mentioned, this special issue includes three reviews. In the first one, Javiera Vivanco Escobar explores the text "*Encuentro de Rehabilitación Comunitaria en Latinoamérica: Experiencias en Pandemia. Registro de Presentaciones*" [Meeting on Community Rehabilitation in Latin America: Experiences during the Pandemic. Record of Presentations] (Núcleo Desarrollo Inclusivo, 2021), which gathers the experiences shared during this event. This review offers a broad reflection on one of the rehabilitation approaches committed to social transformation in the different territories of Latin America, especially in the context of the health crisis of recent years (Vivanco Escobar, 2022). In turn, Marcelo Saldías O'Hrens provides a review of "*Manual del Curso Conceptos LGBTQIA+: Desde un enfoque afirmativo y garante de derechos*" [Manual for the Course "LGBTQIA+ Concepts in Healthcare: From an affirmative and rights-guaranteeing approach] (Colegio Médico de Chile, 2021). In this course, the conceptual approach to gender diversity incorporated the voices of both gender dissident activists and health professionals who are committed to reducing the violation of rights against people from the LGBTQIA+ community (Saldías O'Hrens, 2022). Lastly, Nelson Muñoz Lizana reviews the book

"Fonoaudiología: ¿Comunicación para el desarrollo humano? La experiencia social y comunitaria de la Universidad del Valle" [Speech-Language Therapy: Communication for Human Development? The Social and Community Experience of Universidad del Valle] (Torres & Aguilar, 2020), which systematizes the community-based experience and participatory research of the authors, offering relevant perspectives for the work and training of Latin American speech therapists committed to processes of justice (Muñoz-Lizana, 2022).

We are grateful for the immense trust that the board of *Revista Chilena de Fonoaudiología* has placed in this issue's editorial team, which was created in March 2021 and is formed by Bernardita Alvear, Daniel Larenas, Macarena Martínez, Jenan Mohammad, Nelson Muñoz, Marcelo Saldías, and Sara Tapia, each of them a member of *Departamento de Fonoaudiología, Universidad de Chile*. We are also grateful to our over twenty colleagues –women and men– from different academic and professional backgrounds, for their willingness to act as external peer reviewers, contributing with their experience, wisdom, and enthusiasm to the crucial task of evaluating the manuscripts. Through their observations and suggestions, we have felt their commitment to the task of putting together the best possible special issue.

Finally, we are grateful for the work of Leonardo Jibaja and Claudia Araya, who contributed by proofreading the abstracts in Portuguese and English of each text; in addition, Leonardo Jibaja edited and prepared the Spanish version of the manuscript by Araújo and collaborators, whose original version is written in Portuguese. We particularly thank *Lamgen Flor Caniupil Huaiquiñir*, for enriching this issue by translating the abstract of the text by Rodríguez Marconi and collaborators into Mapudungun, and we applaud all the efforts being made to encourage the use of Mapudungun in academic spaces and the transmission of knowledge and practices.

We invite you, then, to explore the articles included in this special issue of *Revista Chilena de Fonoaudiología*. We trust that this initiative, along with many others that are arising in different corners of the Global South, will raise the collective awareness of the need to transform ourselves in order to construct fairer societies in which dignity is customary.

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