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Online Interaction: The Changing Meanings of Social Context

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2013

Total number of authors:
1

XVIII ISA World Congress of Sociology
July 13-19 2014
Yokohama, Japan

RC 25 Language & Society Program

Below is a call for papers for each of 14 sessions organized by RC25. Abstracts will be accepted online June3-September 30, 2013. If you have questions about any specific session, please feel free to contact the session organizer for more information.

On-line abstracts submission: June 3, 2013 - September 30, 2013 - 24:00 GMT
www.isa-sociology.org/congress2014

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Program Theme: The Language of Inequality

Migrations and Conditions of Belonging
Organizer & Chair: Erzsébet Barát, University of Szeged, Hungary. Email: zsazsa@lit.u-szeged.hu

This session seeks talks that explore the relationship between linguistic and cultural dimensions of (collective) identity formation. We expect papers that situate their research within multilingual/multicultural context and examine the complex interpersonal negotiations of diverse ideologies of belonging.

We are interested in papers that problematize the commonsense assumption and its ideological effects that adoption of languages (dialects) should automatically and inherently entail adoption of life style. This assumption can result in apparently oppositional dominant language ideologies that "speaking the local language" should be a 'natural' cause for either a concern (in hostile dispositions towards "invasion") or automatic satisfaction (interested in unproblematic 'integration'), yet equally producing relations of inequality.

The papers should therefore ideally explore the tensions effected by the fact that the various languages/dialects do not hold out the same cultural capital. They would focus on how various language competencies contribute to the distinction between desirable and non-desirable flows of people in the global processes of inclusion-integration. At the same time we are also interested in papers that address migrants' and relevant institutions' decisions about language learning or planning and interrogate their conceptualizations of 'speaking a language" and the ideological work the particular meanings perform in the struggles over the conditions of exclusion/inclusion.

Online interaction: The changing meanings of social context
Organizer & Chair: Anders Persson, Lund University, Sweden. Email:
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Our understanding of communication and social interaction is to a great degree founded on physical proximity – indeed the sociological meaning of situations where people meet assumes face-to-face interaction. One example is the system requirements that Goffman formulated regarding talk as a communication system in his article "Replies and Responses" (1976). Not surprisingly physical proximity is more or less taken for granted in this article.

A lot of today's communication and interaction are however conducted in absence of physical proximity. Of course this holds for older media such as the telephone, but it is an increasingly pervasive condition given the rise of "new media" (e.g. Facebook and Twitter), as well as in electronic environments such as e-learning, e-working, e-gaming, e-dating and comes with social consequences that include e-bullying and e-hatred. In these contexts individuals communicate and interact in total and/or partial absence of physical proximity.

This session seeks papers that take up a broad range of debates on this topic including but not limited to the following questions. Are there corresponding theoretical developments in fields of communication and social interaction that can take into consideration the absence of physical proximity? Similarly what are the corresponding methodological developments that are needed to study communication and social interaction in absence of physical proximity? How can we understand this phenomenon as part of a special kind of "linguistic turn"? Does it hold specific consequences for traditional axes of inequality such as age, gender, ethnicity and class? And which substitutes for physical proximity can be observed and how do they influence our understanding of social interaction?

This session is open to all theoretical, analytical and methodological approaches as far as they focus on communication and social interaction in absence of physical proximity.

Popular & Sociological Discourses on Inequality
Organizer & Chair: Frédéric Moulène. University of Strasbourg, France. Email:
frederic.moulene@voila.fr.

Scholars are not immune from the commonsense knowledge that popular discourses construct. For example, many researchers endorsed the simplistic vision of an irreversible movement toward a society where class differences no longer mattered. Consider U.S. President George Bush's assertion that "class was for Europeans" and added "We Americans are not going to let ourselves be divided by class" or French President Sarkozy's vision of a classless society; even Socialist President Hollande rarely speaks of class. Classless does indeed appear to be a popular media discourse—the word "class" is seldom even used. At the same time, and paradoxically, the opposite has occurred, notably in the United States and Britain, where the neoliberal discourse sometimes took inequalities as acceptable realities because dynamic on an economical aspect. Pierre Bourdieu argued that sociology, as scientific approach, has to make an epistemological break with "common sense." Although the entire sociological community widely agrees with this general principle, we are not

immune to accepting convenient simplifications that we accept as evidence. Scholars as distinctive as Giddens seems to have embraced the notion of societies undivided by class. This session seeks papers that will examine relationships between sociological discourses and the commonsense discourses in media and popular views about the presence and meaning of "class". We invite papers that explore both gaps and resonances between popular and sociological discourses.

Identity and institutional categorization

Organizer & Chair: Frida Petersson, University of Gothenburg, Sweden. Email:
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This session is concerned with language and interaction, with an emphasis on the way language functions and is used within institutional settings and through institutional dialogues. Institutional categories such as "homeless", "unemployed", or "alcoholics" with accompanying subcategories, are used to make sense of the circumstances, lives and personal concerns of the help-seeking individuals, as well as to facilitate and legitimize decisions. While such categories may be crucial for professional work, these discursive environments also produce more or less stigmatized institutional identities.

However, those who are attributed troubled identities do not simply accept them but talk back or develop counter discourses. In this session we will from a micro-sociological perspective explore how institutional discourses exercise power, create, reproduce and express inequality. This links to the overall conference theme on facing inequality, in that it mirrors the broader global debate relating to the rhetoric and discretionary power of human service organizations working with groups "at the margins" of society.

In this session the aim is to explore situated talk and interaction in a variety of institutional practices, representing many different voices, including the ones of clients/users, from different perspectives. Participants are encouraged to use and expand new theoretical and analytical approaches and ideas on this subject matter. Papers based on theoretically informed empirical studies are especially welcome.

Activism, Media and Justice

Co-organized by Dr. Roberta Villalon, Associate Professor, St. John's University, United States), villalor@stjohns.edu and Dr. Natalie Byfield, Associate Professor, St. John's University, United States, byfieldn@stjohns.edu
Chair: Dr. Roberta Villalon, Associate Professor, St. John's University
Discussant: Dr. Natalie Byfield, Associate Professor, St. John's University

Texts – cultural representations that are signifiers of social interactions, practices, institutions, structures – inevitably reflect and often challenge power and power relations. The varied components, forms, and uses of language and the structures of discourse result from and contribute to multiple constructions, deconstructions and reconstructions of intersecting relations of inequality. In this panel, we seek to explore the relationships between the languages of collective struggles for equality, and the ways in which they converge and/or diverge with media and systems of justice across the world.

The realms of activism, media, and justice have all different paces, dynamics and structures. The three, however, are interrelated. For example, activists make use of media to communicate their demands and raise their claims for justice, while media re-interpret those messages as they disseminate news about collective struggles' losses and gains, as the justice system absorbs and/or rejects such collective demands in various degrees.

The languages spoken in each realm as well as the possible conversations and understandings between them are rich sites of sociological investigation: they function as magnifying lenses for embedded inequalities and the unfolding of struggles to alter power relations. Intersecting gender, sexual, class, racial, and ethnic social inequalities filter and feed languages, discourses, and conversations of and between activists, media, and justice systems, while all these struggle to keep or dismantle the very same inequalities. Researchers across the world are welcome to share particular analyses of such relationships while contributing to theoretical debates on the links between language, inequalities, and power broadly defined.

Old and new conditions of language endangerment

Organizer & Chair: Olga Kazakevich, Research Computing Centre, Lomonosov Moscow State University, Russia. Email: kazakevich.olga@gmail.com
Discussant: Svetlana Burkova, Novosibirk State Technical University. Email: burkova_s@mail.ru

The value of cultural and linguistic diversity is now widely acknowledged, as is the fact that in the modern world this diversity is seriously endangered. Linguistic inequality can be currently observed in the overwhelming majority of multilingual communities all over the world. Linguistic inequality is among the most significant factors leading to language shift and thus contributing to language endangerment.

The objective of the session is to examine various components, manifestations, and consequences of linguistic inequality, as well as the particular social, geographical, and historical contexts in which language shifts develop. We would like to consider to what extent language ideologies are shaped by political economies and their institutions.

We invite papers that explore the conditions under which families choose not to pass their native languages on to their children analyzing particular situations of language endangerment all over the world from an historical perspective.

Producing Counter-Hegemonic Knowledge

Organizer & Chair: Nadezhda Georgieva-Stankova, Trakia University, Bulgaria. Email: nadyageorgieva@abv.bg

Facing a world of rising social inequality, sociology needs to further elaborate strategies for studying the mechanisms through which hegemonic knowledge is created, sustained and resisted. Understanding the production and circulation of counter-hegemonic knowledge is increasingly important. Studies of language offer us powerful tools both for developing

insight into how dominant forces manufacture consent and for understanding active resistance to relations of domination.

The session aims to explore power contestation and resistance through language and discourse. More particularly, papers included in this session will analyze how people actively create and resist articulations of dominant power in their particular social settings (Hall, 1996). Also of interest are papers that examine the nature of power residing in various inter-discursive forms of ideology in producing consent (Gramsci, 1992; 1996), which help to "hegemonize" the "national popular" existing in everyday discourse, practices and interactions (Hall, 1985).

Particular attention will be paid to social access to the production of discourse, speaking out particular visions of social justice, and to the control, circulation and regulation of discourses. Therefore, we are interested in some key questions:

- Which forms of truth are promoted or subjugated in the knowledge production process?
- What are the means and strategies for resisting and subverting such hegemonic discourses producing dominance and equality?
- Who are the social agents holding the potential for such counter-hegemonic transformation?

We welcome papers that may be related to some or other of the following problems:

- Counter-hegemonic discourses regarding social groups on the basis of nationality, ethnicity / "race", gender, sexuality, social class or disability;
- The rise of nationalism, populism and of the extreme right;
- The plight of minority or migrant groups, such as the Roma, in the contemporary context of rising discrimination, racism and xenophobia;
- The role of old and new media in maintaining or resisting dominant consensus.

The Language of Borders: Exclusion and Resistance
Organizer & Chair: Trinidad Valle, Fordham University, United States. Email: valle@fordham.edu

Discourses of difference are constantly shaping and reshaping borders of all kinds. The social construction of 'borders' is a key area in the struggle for power in any social group: the power of naming the frontier between "us" and "them" is a central asset. In the context of a globalized, post-colonial society, borders are supposedly fluid, malleable and flexible. Yet at the same time they are reified in discourses of exclusion as solids, permanent and stable. This reified notion of stability is at the roots of current struggles over borders, in terms of nationality, ethnicity, religion, or sexuality.

Scholars have explored the process of border formation and border crossing in terms of national, race and ethnic borders. Language has been defined as a key area in the construction of borders, for example in terms of narratives on nationality and ethnicity (Bhabha, 1990; Said 1978). The concept of border has also been applied to the study of the social construction of gender and sexuality; since the pioneer discussion of Lakoff (1975) on language and gender many authors have studied the role of language in defining and legitimizing gender

and sexual borders (Butler, 1990; Anzaldua, 1987). Furthermore, the concept of border is also relevant for new areas of research: the discussion of the post-human (Haraway, 1991; Latour, 2005), involves at its core a redefinition of the borders of the human body and mind.

The panel session will discuss issues related to the construction of social borders through language, emphasizing processes of exclusion and resistance. Authors are invited to explore the multiple aspects of the discourse on borders, in different social settings. In this manner the panel looks to have an open debate relating, but not exclusive to, issues such as: discursive violence associated to border formation and border maintenance; the language of border crossing and its challenges; the relevance of an intersectional perspective to study overlapping borders; the discourse on borders and the crisis of the Nation-State; the language of migratory fluxes and bodies; and the redefinition of borders through resistance discourses.

Privilege and Stigma

Organizer & Chair: Thomas Horejes, Gallaudet University, United States. Email:
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Language is a driving mechanism in the development and maintenance of one's cultural boundaries. In this sense, language is not only a marker of belonging to a specific culture but of one's humanity. Within and across cultures, favoring one language as a form of privilege often becomes as a socially constructed tool for measuring normalcy, stigma, and constructing what it means to be human.

This session welcomes paper submissions that focus how the production of language inequalities continue shape representations of marginalized or minority groups. Papers may also include the maintenance and/or enforcement of language use in social institutions (e.g. schools and workplaces) and the grave implications of stigmatizing practices that determine what is most "natural" and "privileged."

By examining a wide variety of inequalities in a range of societies and countries, this session aims to identify and reveal the intersecting forms of language inequalities for these marginalized or minority groups. It is through this approach that such an examination would provide resources and multiple pathways for rethinking the relationship between the center and the margins of power between themselves and society.

Markets, Power and Language

Organizer & Chair: Laura García Landa. Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, México. Email: garlanster@gmail.com

Globalization has intensified both the internationalization of workplaces and increasing demands for information. The increasing importance of information and information technologies has meant that language has a central role in economy, while increasing internationalization makes the management of linguistic diversity a top priority. All of this takes place within the context of dramatic changes in immigration policies and labor organization. An increasing number of agents, such US multinational companies and transnational political elites (i.e. European Commission), are contributing to new language policies aimed at language hegemonies within specific markets or specific social contexts.

The widespread use of English in specific markets (science, business, technologies) can be understood as a part of this new hegemony, which serves the particular interests of dominant groups on global scale. The presence of new actors and their language policies require that we revisit Bourdieu's assumptions regarding the presence of a State-based unified marketplace for language. At the same time, this new context also directs us consider Bourdieu's approach to the ways that people who are 'legitimate language' agents can exercise their social competence, their social power, and can impose their authority.
 Depending on the market and the relations of power, the same discourse may produce different effects (profit/price) depending on the degree of legitimacy that the speaker has on the market. From the perspective of linguistic diversity, in a context of extended diglossia, language learning and language choice becomes crucial to have success in a context of competence for resources. In this session we seek papers that explore the relationships among language diversity and workplace practices in both public and private organizations.

Roundtable Session: Current debates in Japanese Scholarship on Language & Society
Co-organized by: Amado Alacón Alarcón, Rovira & Virgili University, Spain. Email: amado.alarcon@urv.ca, and Keiji Fujiyoshi, Koyasan University, Japan. Email: fjosh524@hotmail.com

This session will consider a wide range of current debates regarding sociological studies of language carried out in Japan. We invite papers that contribute to the following questions: How do Japanese scholars conceptualize sociological studies of language? What methods and theories are commonly used? In what ways are various methods and theories contested?
 What is the place of sociological studies of language within the broader discipline of sociology? What are the main points of debate about the relationships between language and society among Japanese scholars? What are the primary sociological concepts and theories about language developed in Japan? To what extent are western concepts and theories about language limited/useful for Japanese social reality? How might distinctively Japanese theories and concepts can benefit international scholars working on language in other countries? Some research topics about language in Japanese society are of special interest for this session since they can empirically address previous questions. For example, but not limited to, some topics than can foster the debate could be old and new language hegemonies within Japan and its international context or particular relations in Japan among language, nationality, ethnicity and culture. This session is open to all scholars who are doing sociological research, theoretical or empirical, in Japan on language and society.

Roundtable Sesion: Sociological Analyses of Language
Organizer and Chair: Celine-Marie Pascale, American University, United States. Email: pascale@american.edu
Discussant: Amado Alarcón, Rovira & Virgili Universitat, Spain. Email: amado.alarcon@urv.cat

Language is an integral part of all social relations. This session will explore the unique capacities that sociological studies of language provide for understanding social and economic inequalities. We seek papers that disciplinary questions regarding the efficacy of various styles of sociological studies of language, as well as a broad range of topical issues.

Themes for paper submissions may include but are not limited to: a) Recent developments, approaches and trends in studies of language; b) Controversies and debates regarding sociological studies of language; c) Innovative studies of language; d) Methodological or theoretical problems; e) critiques and inequalities in which sociologists of language are embedded; f) studies of language in relation to discourses of social science.

Language and Work: Representations of Psychosocial Health at Work
Joint Session: RC 25 Language and Society (Host) and RC 30 Sociology of Work.
Co-Organizers: Stéphanie Cassilde, Centre d'Études en Habitat Durable, Belgium. Email: stephanie.cassilde@cehd.be, Adeline Gilson, Laboratoire d'Économie et de Sociologie du Travail, France. Email: adeline.gilson@univ-amu.fr

Since the end of the 1970s working and employment conditions are worsening because of various constraints: intensification of work, casualized labour of employment, domination of cost-effectiveness criteria, divorce between expected and concrete tasks, conflicts of values, geographical mobility, and mandatory distance between familial and work locations. These elements are even more salient in a context of crisis.

At the beginning of the 2000s agents of professional risks prevention labelled the negative effects of these constraints on psychosocial health at work "psycho-social risks" (PSR). To which extent this labelling cover the various representations systems of psychosocial health at work? Which are these various representations systems and which labelling are used in these systems? How this participate to create various classifications of psychosocial health phenomena at work? How these language elements give us information about the various ways of dealing with it?

The objective of this session is to give a central place to language in the analysis of representations of psychosocial health at work to advance sociological knowledge concerning language and work. It deals with the analysis of individuals discourses about their experiences (as workers, managers, social partners, etc.) to learn and understand the existing representations systems. It deals also with the various labelling used within these systems, and thus, finally, with classifications of psychosocial health. The aim of this joint session is to broaden the knowledge of performative power of language regarding attitudes and behaviours at work, i.e. how individuals might act/react/not act to ensure/defend their psychosocial health at work.

Contributions will shed light on the variability of representations/labelling/ classifications of psychosocial health at work. Notably, contributions will use spatial, time, sectorial, and/or intra-firm agents comparative perspective.

Langage et Travail. Représentations de la Sante Psychosociale au Travail.

Depuis la fin des années 1970, les conditions de travail et d'emploi se dégradent sous l'effet de contraintes multiples : intensification du travail, précarisation de l'emploi, domination des critères de rentabilité, divorce entre travail prescrit et réel, conflits de valeurs, mobilités géographiques, et distance imposée entre habitat familial et de travail. Ces éléments sont encore plus saillants en contexte de crise.

Au début des années 2000, les acteurs de la prévention des risques professionnels qualifient les effets négatifs de ces contraintes sur la santé psychosociale au travail de « risques psycho-sociaux » (RPS). Dans quelle mesure cette qualification couvre-t-elle les divers systèmes de représentations de la santé psychosociale au travail ? Quels sont ces différents systèmes de représentations et quelles qualifications sont utilisées dans ces systèmes ? Comment cela participe-t-il à la création de classifications concernant la santé psychosociale au travail ? Comment ces éléments nous éclairent-ils sur les différentes manières d'y faire face ? L'objectif de cette session est de donner une place centrale au langage dans l'analyse des représentations de la santé psychosociale au travail afin de fournir des avancées en termes de connaissance sociologique dans les domaines du langage et du travail. Il s'agit d'analyser les discours des individus sur leurs expériences (en tant que travailleurs, chefs d'équipe, partenaire social, *etc*.) pour prendre connaissance et comprendre les systèmes de représentations existants. Il s'agit également d'analyser les diverses qualifications utilisées dans ces systèmes, et donc, finalement, de mieux comprendre les classifications de la santé psychosociale au travail. Cette session conjointe vise à approfondir la connaissance du pouvoir performatif du langage eu égard aux attitudes et comportements au travail, autrement dit comment les individus pourraient agir/réagir/ne pas agir afin d'assurer/de défendre leur santé psychosociale au travail.

Les contributions chercheront à mettre en lumière la variabilité des représentations, des qualifications, des classifications de la santé psychosociale au travail, notamment dans une optique comparative spatiale, temporelle, sectorielle ou encore entre acteurs d'une même entreprise.

Roundtable Session: Naming Marriage as Gendered
Joint Round table session: RC32 Women in Society (Host) and RC25 Language and Society.
Co-Organizers: Shobha Gurung, Southern Utah University, United States. Email: gurung@suu.edu, and Melanie Heath, McMaster University, Canada. Email: mheath@mcmaster.ca

How does the language of sex and gender matter in the same-gender marriage debate? In the Supreme Court arguments on Proposition 8, California's ban on same-gender marriage, the lawyer defending the referendum argued that defining marriage as a "genderless institution" could harm the institution and the interests of society. In France, most of the opposition has focused on the purported dangers of same-gender parenting since legalizing marriage would make it considerably easier for lesbian and gay couples to become parents. Feminists have long been concerned with the ways that institutional marriage has supported patriarchal and capitalist systems. This session will examine in broad terms, and from cross-national perspective, the ways that the language in the same-gender marriage debate plays a critical role in reflecting, reinforcing, and/or challenging gender hierarchy within marriage.

Business Meeting

RC 25 After Hours Activities
Reception and Awards
Language Discourse & Society: Working meeting for the RC 25 journal editors and authors