

LCD 144: Language and Social Diversity (3 credits)

Course Description

Students explore dialectal and linguistic diversity as a form of social diversity in various countries around the world. Students read and report on research articles on these topics and collaborate on an original class research project that examines one linguistic phenomenon in its social context.

Fulfillment of PLAS criteria

The course fulfills the *Analyzing Social Structures* area of knowledge. As the course title implies, the course is a direct examination of social diversity through the lens of language. Specifically, students will analyze compare different identity factors, such as race, age, gender, class, geographic, and national identity, and their effects on language form and use.

The course also fulfills the criteria for the *World Cultures* context of experience. The studies used include a variety of contexts in both the first and third worlds, including many regions that many QC students or their families have immigrated from.

Required Purchases: Textbook And Supplies

Textbooks: Laurie Bauer & Peter Trudgill. (1998) *Language Myths* London: Penguin.

Weekly Tentative Schedule

| WEEK | TOPIC | READINGS | |
|---|--|--|----------------------------|
| | | from <i>Language Myths</i> | Articles |
| Week 1 | Introduction: language and diversity around the world | | |
| <u>Part 1: Different languages around the world: America, Australia, New Zealand, China, Europe, and Polynesia</u> | | | |
| Week 2 | <i>Bilingualism</i> Why do some communities speak two languages? | | Zentella (1997) |
| Week 3 | <i>Language Shift</i> What happens when communities shift languages? | “Some languages just aren’t good enough” | Makihara (2004) |
| Week 4 | <i>Linguistic Diversity</i> Can a society permanently be multilingual? | | Bastardas (2007) |
| Week 5 | <i>Language and Culture</i> How does culture shape expression? | “French is a logical language.” | Scollon and Scollon (1997) |
| Week 6 | <i>Language choice</i> How do bilinguals deploy languages strategically | “Italian is beautiful and German is ugly | Kang (2003) |
| <u>Part 2: Different ways of speaking one language: America, China, Brazil, Japan, and Cyberspace</u> | | | |
| Week 7 | <i>Linguistic Stereotypes:</i> What do people think about different dialects? | | Bayard, et al. (2001) |
| Week 8 | <i>Linguistic Profiling</i> | “They speak really bad | Purnell, et al. (1999) |

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| | Do people judge you because of the language you speak? | English down south and in New York City" | |
| Week 9 | <i>Language and identity</i> What does language have to with being a "smooth operator"? | | Zhang (2005) |
| Week 10 | <i>Language and Youth</i> How do young people change language? | "Children can't speak or write properly anymore?" | Roth-Gordon (2007) |
| Week 11 | <i>Language and the Internet</i> Do new technologies change language? | "TV makes people sound the same" | Tagliamonte & Denis (2007) |
| Week 12 | <i>Language and Men</i> Why "dude"? | | Kiesling (2007) |
| Week 13 | <i>Language and Women</i> Do women speak differently than men? | "Women talk too much" | Ocamoto (1994) |
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| Week 14 | Research Reports | | |
| Finals | Final | | |

Grading:

1. **Contextualizing:** Identify the source of the reading. Describe the author(s), including affiliation and specialty and prominence in the field. You may have to google the information. DO NOT SIMPLY COPY. THAT IS PLAGIARISM.*
2. **Literature Review:** What research is the reading building off of or opposing? Don't mention every study, but only the most important ones. Mention also how the author categorizes the studies in terms of theoretical frameworks. This section ends with identification of the research questions.
3. **Methods:** Describe how the data were collected the data.
4. **Data:** What data were collected? How were they analyzed?
5. **Conclusions/ Findings:** Summarize any conclusions, including specific findings, theoretical claims, and general points.
6. **Response:** Provide a personal response: What did the reading teach you, if anything? How did you feel about it? Evaluate the reading in terms of how convincing it is. You may want to critique the reading by identifying limitations or weaknesses

Reading response grades:

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|--------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| | Excellent (4) | Good (3) | Fair (2) | Weak (1) |
| Elements 1-5 | complete and accurate | one aspect missing or inaccurate | more than one aspect missing or inaccurate | area ignored |
| Element 6 | Insightful and original | Intelligent engagement with ideas | engagement but misinterpretation | mostly misinterpreted |

* Note the following "Academic dishonesty is prohibited in CUNY and is punishable by penalties, including failing grades, suspension, and expulsion" as provided at: <http://qcpages.qc.cuny.edu/provost/policies/index.html>.

Bibliography

- Bastardas-Boada, Albert (2007). ["Linguistic sustainability for a multilingual humanity"](#), *Glossa. An Interdisciplinary Journal*, vol. 2, num. 2
An essay on the advantages and historical reluctance to embrace multilingualism in Europe.
- Dailey-O'Cain (2000) The sociolinguistic distribution of and attitudes toward focuser like and quotative like. *J. of Sociolinguistics*, 4, pp.60-80
A quantitative study of the newer uses of the word "like" in the conversations of young people, and the attitudes towards these usages.
- Kang, A. (2003) Negotiating conflict within the constraints of social hierarchies in Korean American Discourse.
A study about how language choice among Korean Americans is constrained by a desire to express or avoid certain hierarchical relations mandatory in Korean and difficult to express in English
- Kiesling, Scott (2004) Dude. *American Speech* 79, pp. 281-305.
A history and current sociolinguistic account of the word "dude"
- Makiyara, Miki (2004) Linguistic Syncretism and Language Ideologies: Transforming Sociolinguistic Hierarchy on Rapa Nui (Easter Island) *American Anthropologist*, 106(3), pp. 529–540.
An examination of how as Easter Islanders shift from their Polynesian language to the state language, Spanish, they maintain their distinctive linguistic identity.
- Purnell, T., Isardi, W., & Baugh, J. (1999). Perceptual and phonetic experiments on American English dialect identification. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 18(1), 10-30.
Studies how listeners can distinguish speakers' ethnicities and the consequences of those categorizations. Gave rise to the term "linguistic profiling," which has been discussed in the media
- Roth-Gordon, J. (2007) Youth, slang, and pragmatic expressions: Examples from Brazilian Portuguese. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 11(3) 322-345.
Shows, using a Brazilian example, of how young people create their own distinctive linguistic markers.
- Tannen, D. (2004) The relativity of linguistic strategies: rethinking dominance and power. *Sociolinguistics: the Essential Readings*. (Christina Bratt Paulson & Richard Tucker, (Eds) Malden, MA Blackwell.
Examination of how different patterns of women's and men's speech can be misconstrued as signaling male dominance of women.
- Okamoto, S., 1994. "Gendered" speech styles and social identity among young Japanese women. In: Bucholtz, M., Liang, A.C., Sutton, L.A. and Hines, C., Editors, 1994. *Proceedings of the third Berkeley Women and Language Conference, Berkeley Women and Language Group, Berkeley*, pp. 569–581.
How Japanese "women's language," is really a way of constructing specific ideas of gender.
- Scollon, Ron & Scollon, Suzie Wong 1997. Point of view and citation: Fourteen Chinese and English Versions of the 'same' news story. *Text* 17(1):83-125.
How culture shapes both practices of what should be cited and how information is evaluated.
- Tagliamonte & Denis (2008) Linguistic Ruin? LOL! Instant messaging and teen language. MS U. of Toronto.
Explores the relationship between linguistic change and instant messaging using quantitative sociolinguistic means.
- Trudgill, P. and Bauer, L. *Language Myths*: A series of short essays written by prominent sociolinguists that debunk common misconceptions about language. They will be used as introductions to specific research areas that are explored in greater detail in the research readings.
- Wolfram Schilling-Estes *American English: Dialects and variation* (Introductory Chapter). Contains an overview of dialectal diversity in the US.
- Zentella, A. (1997) Chapter 1 of *Growing Up Bilingual*. Malden, MA: Blackwell. A description of how this ethnography of communication was carried out and some observations the author noticed in a Puerto Rican community in East Harlem.
- Zhang, Qing (2005), A Chinese yuppie in Beijing: Phonological variation and the construction of a new professional identity. *Language in Society* 34: 431-466. How people use linguistic resources to create a new archetype: the Beijing smooth operator.