# SLA Meeting Abstract List

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March 8 Section 1

8-10 A.M.

Metapragmatic Discourses
Rm 345

Farzad Karimzad
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Title: ‘No, we don’t mix languages’: Ideological power and the chronotopic organization of ethnolinguistic identities

Building on previous work that discusses the multilayered dialogic nature of chronotopes and their deployment within discourse (Bakhtin 1981; Agha, 2007; Wirtz 2016; Blommaert & De Fina 2017), we illustrate how chronotopes structure linguistic and metapragmatic practices related to ethnic and linguistic identity. We use an ethnographically grounded discourse-analytic approach to trace the impact of various chronotopes on participants’ discursive acts of ethnolinguistic identification. Focusing on naturally occurring in-group conversations about Azerbaijani and Uzbek identities among migrant communities in the United States, we illustrate how the interaction between chronotopes leads to conflicting images of ethnolinguistic categories and how speakers are associated (or not) with these categories. We also find evidence for the idea that chronotopes can differ in terms of their power depending on the ideological force behind them, and that these power differentials influence the linguistic and metapragmatic output of the involved speakers. That is, more powerful chronotopes may elicit unmarked alignment and be invoked with increased epistemological certainty, while relatively less powerful chronotopes may elicit less unmarked alignment, be invoked with decreased epistemological certainty, and require more extensive explanation. This is evident in the fact that while our participants’ past histories, including their transnational migration, has exposed them to the shifting indexicals of various types of linguistic practices, the indexicalities of language-mixing as stigmatized and subordinated remain relatively more stable, as participants consistently read these practices through the dominant and powerful chronotope of the nation-state populated by ideal monolingual speakers and thus align positively with criticisms of language-mixing.

Alexis Black
Concordia University
Title: Wor(l)d-building: Metaphor and Unknown Worlds

Using critical discourse analysis (Van Dijk 1997) and Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) (Charteris-Black 2004), this study examines data collected from 40 interviews to document the metaphorical process as individuals imagine human existence beyond the planet Earth. This research inquires beyond the traditional boundaries of CMT to explore the metaphorical process when individuals imagine and describe the unknown. What role does language, especially metaphor, play in the process of ‘making sense’ of the unknown and how does this sense-making influence how we conceive of and build new worlds?

Research indicates that analogy and metaphor are fundamental to human language and cognition (Kövecses 2002, Hofstadter and Sander 2010). However, the function of metaphor in discourse concerning the imaginary or the unknown is less documented than metaphor’s functioning in the traditional metaphoric schema (i.e. metaphors consist of a source domain and a target domain, both domains ‘known’ through previous experience or generalized cultural knowledge). Understanding how metaphor makes the unknown known is key to understanding how language functions to ‘wor(l)d-build’ (Black, forthcoming) by facilitating the cognitive processes that bridge human imagination and emergent reality.

By focusing on language and the construction of worlds through words, this paper participates in a long-standing discussion concerning the creation of meaning and the influence of old meanings upon our ways of knowing and creating new knowledge. If our metaphors are motivated by preceding knowledge and experience, how do we come to know something new, to innovate, or to create profound change?

Krystal Smalls
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

Title: Love Signs: Embodiment and the Enregisterment of Memes as Means of Care

Digital sociality provides new media for performing the most banal and ancient of human activities. Showing care and caring are two such activities through which we can explore the ways digital technology engenders novel modes of symbolic and embodied interaction that can be embedded in people’s daily lives (Hine 2015; Tufekci 2012). Whether mediated via ephemeral snapchats or immortal tweets, the updates, selfies, nudes, and memes that significantly contribute to many young people’s sociality reflect humans’ relentless innovation towards a more elaborate and extensive symbolic life even as we remain grounded in the materiality of our bodies and our physical world (Boellstorff 2012; Bonilla and Rosa 2015; Hine 2015).

This paper considers how, among many young people (under age 35) in the U.S., the act of sending memes semiotically functions as a sign of care and materially serves as a
practice of caring for young racialized, gendered, and classed bodies and minds, often in a ways that are said to combat mental unwellness (namely, depression). The named practice of ‘send{ing} memes’ includes still memes and moving GIFs (graphic interface format) and is explicitly theorized as symbolic of care and as a way of actively caring for another’s wellbeing by the subjects in this study. From a corpus of more than 2000 original tweets about memes and a collection of more than 50 retweeted “metamemes” (memes about memes), I analyze metapragmatic commentary about the meaning and function of ‘sending memes.’ I consider sending memes a particular type of computer-mediated communication (CMC) that is discursively conventionalized, or enregistered (Agha 2007), as a sign of care about one's existence and psychological well-being (and in some cases, as indexical of platonic or romantic love). I consider how it also becomes a practice of caring because it reportedly fulfills emotional needs for many receivers by generating pleasure. Some discourse segments express the centrality of sending and receiving memes in one’s daily life in rather straightforward ways, while others use a kind of ironic gravity and layered indexicality (Ochs 1990; Silverstein 2003) to convey the salience of this social practice in relationships. Many declare the impossibility of genuine romantic attraction or fulfilling friendship without an embedded practice of sending memes. Moreover, a number of the tweets and metamemes specifically addressed the significance of race in the content and construal of memes. Overall, the analyzed tweets suggest via verbal or visual hyperbole (sometimes grim) that the practice is vital for psychological wellness, or, even for physical survival - as was signified in a trending meme featuring a frequently recontextualized photograph dubbed “Dying Orangutan” (i.e., an image of a baby orangutan in a hospital bed on a ventilator) and an urgent message in white block text: “Please send memes.”

Siv Lie
University of Maryland

Title: The Stakes of Secrecy: Manouche Language Ideologies and the Politics of Betrayal

This paper focuses on the theme of betrayal: for speakers of a dying language, under what conditions do linguistic preservation efforts constitute acts of cultural betrayal? I center my discussion on the politics of the Romani language with regard to language preservation, concealment, and sharing among the Alsatian Manouche subgroup of Romanies (“Gypsies”). The varieties of Romani spoken by Manouches in Alsace are orally transmitted, non-standardized, and potentially endangered. Many Alsatian Manouches are extremely reluctant to share their language with outsiders, due largely to fears of cultural “theft,” the perceived utility of Romani as a means to securely manage encounters of persecution, and the belief that the use of Romani is a unique privilege available only to cultural insiders. Of particular concern to these Romani speakers is the potential for the uncontrolled circulation of the language to destroy implicit “meanings” knowable only through group belonging and immersion. However, the recent, unauthorized publication of books on Manouche Romani by a young non-Manouche entrepreneur has ignited debates within Manouche communities about
linguistic propriety and the consequences of betrayal. Drawing on several years of ethnographic fieldwork in Alsace, I discuss how Manouche customs of linguistic secrecy dialogue with changing relations between Manouches and non-Manouches, with desires to document and revitalize Romani as its number of speakers dwindles, and with contemporary forms of technological mediation that blur boundaries between public and private realms. Speakers’ endeavors to reconcile such tensions reflect a critical juncture for Manouche language ideologies.

Kevin Petit Cahill
Université Lyon 2

Title: A hundred years of summer Irish language camps

Every summer, more than 20,000 Irish teenagers travel to the west of Ireland to learn Irish for a few weeks in language camps called ‘summer colleges’. This popular activity actually dates back from the beginning of the 20th century, when the Gaelic League, an organisation for the promotion of the Irish language and culture, created immersion courses for Irish language learners in ‘Irish speaking-districts’ where communities of native speakers could be found.

In this contribution to studies of Irish language revitalisation, I review press articles about Irish summer colleges that were published at the beginning of the 21st century in order to understand the cultural-nationalistic discourses which fuelled the architects of the summer college enterprise. I also analyse the lived experiences of students and discourse of stakeholders in the Irish language camps of today.

Whereas the first president of the Gaelic League emphasized the “Necessity for De-Anglicizing Ireland”—one of the very same tropes about language and national identity mobilised by students, teachers, and parents in the summer colleges I observed—some contemporary participants conceived their summer college experiences as a tribute to their national cultural heritage even though it did not lead to an improvement in their Irish language proficiency. Summer colleges make Irish culture a commodity that is consumed in the Gaeltacht by the middle class as a way to assert their national identity. The Irish language can now be mobilised for nationalistic purposes and economic development whether it is actually spoken or not.

Politics, Competition, and Language
Rm 328

Kelsey Campolong
North Carolina State University

Title: The (Re)Production of the Meaning of Truth in Polyphonic Political Discourse
The present paper is part of a larger project concerning the construction and representation of ‘truth,’ broadly speaking, in what I call ‘Trumpian discourse.’ Previously, this term has been used to describe a particular brand of right-wing populist (RWP) discourse, both related to and unique from more widely studied contemporary European RWPs. While the concept of linguistically-delineated truth in political discourse has been considered briefly in historical contexts (e.g. totalitarian language, Arendt [1968]), the recurring question of truth as a supposedly shifting semantic category in the current political climate warrants a more rigorous study than pop-culture blogposts can offer. We must critically engage with such discursive ‘contradictions’ to more accurately describe this increasingly important social use of language.

I focus on a corpus of campaign-style rallies that Donald Trump has held since becoming president. Here, I attempt to elucidate the multiplicity of voices that are constructed, called upon, and enregistered within the context of unscripted Trumpian political speeches, with particular focus on the heterogeneity of perspectives that may otherwise appear logically inconsistent or contradictory. By using a range of methods from political discourse analysis, linguistic anthropology, and CDA more generally, including van Leeuwen (2007), Agha (2005), Jäger & Maier (2016), etc., I aim to demonstrate that the semblance of incongruity, produced through agentive deletion, obscured evidentiality, and creative deixis, is nonetheless consistent with Trump’s and overall RWP political ideology. Through strategies of active legitimation, polyphonic ‘truths’ are constructed on the micro-level, only to be understood on a macro-level.

Grace Reynolds
University of Virginia

Title: Choosing not to choose: Linguistic choice and ideology in Barcelonese social movements

While the mainstream politics of opposing Catalan and Spanish nationalisms paints a simplified portrait of similarly opposed linguistic choices on the parts of speakers, new research shows that these old indexicalities are changing (Pujolar & Gonzalez 2013; Woolard 2016). Engaging with this work, this paper is concerned with how linguistic choices play out in the everyday context of activist speech in Barcelona, and with the role of historical movements and the activist values that connect them across space and time. I focus on the speech of one elderly Barcelona activist, whom I call Santos, who defies traditional understandings of code choice in order to prefigure and inhabit a ‘free space’ in which he can make the very Bakhtinian choice of ‘not choosing at all’ amongst the different politically-charged linguistic varieties in his heteroglossic Catalonian repertoire. In general, elderly Barcelonese activists, many of whom are living reminders of the lucha obrera (labor movement) that they maintained clandestinely under the Franco regime (1936-1975), now evoke through their very presence a contentious
historical memory that is often swept under the rug in a whitewashed narrative of a ‘transition to democracy’ in the late 1970s. In this case, Santos’ language use gives us a glimpse of how speech choices can simultaneously preserve old values and transmit a new ‘model’ of speech. By ‘not choosing’ one or the other of the politically charged codes of Spanish or Catalan, Santos enacts the historical values of autogestió (self-management) and autodeterminació (self-determination) that were crucial elements of resistance movements before and during the Franco era, and which remain vital across the broad Barcelonese social movement spectrum today.

Tamara Warhol
University of Mississippi

Title: From Pop Idol to Pop Icon: Mutually Interpreted Performances on Lip Sync Battle

This study explores the iconicity between the actual performers on Lip Sync Battle (LSB) and those being performed. LSB is a television show, in which celebrity contestants compete by lip syncing sections from two songs. The audience votes to decide which celebrity performed better. LSB is “high performance” (Coupland 2007), where contestants not only do, but must, consciously deploy different communicative practices to embody the original performer (Bucholtz & Hall 2016; Rymes 2014). Contestants serve as living icons of the person, or type of persons, they are imitating. “The form of the sign”- the LSB contestant - "recapitulates the object in some way" - syncing the original performer (Mannheim 1999). Nevertheless, the contestant, who most closely matches the original performance, does not necessarily win. Rather, the winning contestant aligns their performance to the original through intertextually linked reiterations “allowing for particular linguistic and cultural patterns to become mutually interpretable” (Mannheim 1999). For example, contestants who perform songs by members of the opposite sex must select among performer-specific practices and circulating gender discourses to create a recognizable - not cloned - form of gendered personhood. Iconicity plays a pivotal role in how the contestant interprets the original performance and how the audience interprets the contestant’. Using Wortham & Reyes’s (2015) analytic method for new media, this paper analyzes a LSB episode, adding iconicity as a theoretical lens. Although entertainment television, LSB provides a venue for understanding how iconicity aids in interpreting multimodal communication.

Catherine Davies
The University of Alabama

Title: On-line citizen-satirists and the creative insult

How are Americans reacting to a president who violates norms of civility by routinely using insults as part of his public discourse? Donald Trump’s typical insults (e.g., Crooked Hillary, Lyin’ Ted) have not, until very recently, elicited insults in response, and
seem not to be intended to be humorous. The insult as a speech act is unusual in that the most important element is the perlocutionary effect of harming the target; the effect is amplified if there is an audience. Comedians in the public sphere, such as Colbert, have responded to Trump’s insults not in the classic “insult comic” style of Don Rickles, but rather with satire. This presentation offers a window into ordinary Americans’ responses to this political discourse climate in the private sphere of everyday interaction. It focuses on the collaborative construction of stance by citizen-satirists through the on-line sharing of private insults concerning Trump. The data are a corpus of 748 comments on an article on the progressive website Daily Kos that was about a private insult directed at Donald Trump by his former professor. The commenters present the insults that they have formulated and claim to use privately (e.g., IQ45, Doturd, His Assholiness), appreciate and respond to each other, provide metacommentary, occasionally digress to discuss political issues, and ultimately return to the sharing of their clever insults that ridicule Trump. The insults draw on complex intertextuality and appear to build solidarity through the display of linguistic creativity in the construction of a shared political stance.

Ethnographic Perspectives on Languaging
Rm329

Coleman Donaldson
University of Pennsylvania

Title: “Know-how, Work and Discipline”: Linguistic and Civic Refinement in Manding-speaking West Africa

What role should indigenous languages and literacy play in education and society in West Africa in the 21st century? My book manuscript project investigates N’ko (???)—a heterogeneous group of pan-Africanist students, ethno-nationalist traders, and Salafi Muslims—that labors to promote mother-tongue literacy for Manding-speakers. In the strictest sense, N’ko refers to a non-Latin-, non-Arabic-based script was invented by peasant intellectual Sulemaana Kante? in 1949 to write what he held to be a single language. Today, Kante?’s conceptualization of Manding as one language—united by the primarily written register of ka?ngb?—continues to spread across areas where people have post-colonially understood themselves as speakers of distinct, albeit related, varieties such as Bamanan, Maninka or Jula. This can be attributed to at least two factors explored in this talk. First, the ka?ngb? register—in part, codified into the N’ko orthography itself—is a linguistically compelling analysis of Manding phonology and etymology, as demonstrated by the current words of N’ko teachers and students. Second, the ka?ngb? register—indeed independent of linguistic facts—is upheld and embraced as a component of a larger N’ko ethos of “know-how, work and discipline” (ko?i?n’, ba?ara’, te?len’). Cultivating themselves to be able to read, write and potentially speak
the clear form of Manding is the means by which students and activists aim to hone themselves discursively into the opposite of people they see as responsible for the disorganized and poorly developed state of the West African countries and region in which they reside.

Chaim Noy
Ashkelon Academic College

Title: linguistic anthropology in museums new and old: Ethnographic notes on materiality, mediality, and the semiotics of writing

A major consequence of the shift museums are undergoing from collection-based to audience-based institutions, is a radical change in the means and media by which audiences can interact with the museal display. In this multi-sited and multi-media ethnography, I look at both sides of audiences’ discoursal participation in museums new and old: first, the types of media that older and newer museum offer/afford their visitors with the aim of encouraging public contributions and deliberations, to then consider the written discourse that the latter actually produce onsite and as part of the ritual of the museum visit.

The paper builds on comparative media ethnographies of interactive media installations in two history museums: the National Museum of American Jewish History (PA, USA) and the Ammunition Hill Museum (East Jerusalem). It looks at the affordances of these museums’ media, and at the public comments that audiences produce. Media materialities and semiotics are discussed, as are indexical and intermedial characteristics of visitors’ discourse.

Nested in a rich history of the relations between anthropologists and museums (and the interrelations between Anthropology as a discipline and Museum Studies), this paper brings linguistic anthropology into the museum. Concluding notes will reflect on the semiotics of handwriting and of handwritten texts/documents in the beginning of the 21st century, and on the notion of newness as seen from an anthropological perspective.

Nicholas Emlen
John Carter Brown Library, Brown University

Co-author: Dr. Bruce Mannheim
University of Michigan

Title: Colonial sociolinguistics: What happened to Pukina?

In the 16th century, when Europeans first arrived in the Central Andean highlands, they encountered three *lenguas generales* (lingua francas) that would allow them to
communicate with the region’s inhabitants: Quechua, Aymara, and Pukina. Quechua and Aymara persisted as vital languages throughout the colonial period, and are each still spoken by millions of people today; however, Pukina quickly declined as its speakers shifted to Quechua and Aymara, and disappeared from written sources entirely in the early 19th century. What explains Pukina’s rapid decline, in contrast to Quechua and Aymara? This paper draws on colonial sources and a new analysis of the Pukina language—drawn from the sole surviving text in the language—to shed light on the shifting sociolinguistic dynamics of the Central Andes between the Inka and the colonial periods. During the Inka period, the profound linguistic diversity of the Southern Peruvian highlands was organized in a mosaic of stable differentiation; during the colonial period, Quechua became institutionalized within a hierarchy of languages, as a means of gaining control over the local population. We argue that this reorganization of the region’s pre-colonial linguistic ecology, and the emergence of Quechua as the primary vehicle of colonial control, led to the disappearance of Pukina.

Christopher Green
University of Pennsylvania

Title: Decolonizing Difference: Perspectives of Racial Difference in the Picasso Primitif exhibit at the Musée du quai Branly

Walking into the recent temporary exhibition at the Musée du quai Branly, visitors are greeted by the title, Picasso Primitif, and a quote from Pablo Picasso demonstrating how highly he regarded “primitive” art. Opposite the welcome text is a disclaimer, somewhat out of sight but significant for its appearance in a French exhibit. It warns visitors that the term “negro” appears throughout the exhibit because the term was used by the collectors of Picasso’s time. Hoping to distance themselves from the “unacceptable connotations” of the term, the Musée du quai Branly prefaces an exhibit that explicitly describes African and Oceanic art as “primitive” with a disclaimer regarding black skin. This is an irony that pervades much of the interpretation at Musée du quai Branly, where blackness of skin is a protected category of sorts while perceived primitiveness of culture/society is not. In this way, colonial narratives reify settler-colonial imaginaries of entitlement to Indigenous lands, property, and even bodies while undermining Indigenous claims to sovereignty on the basis of hierarchical assertions and citations of primitiveness throughout exhibits. This paper contains discourse and citational analysis of museum texts, especially from the Picasso Primitif exhibition, and the ways the narratives explicitly and implicitly characterize difference between their black public and their Indigenous (non-)public. These characterizations can be traced back to strategies of the French state and its various mechanisms and medias to legitimize continued French possession of Indigenous territories while maintaining a façade of protection from discrimination based on difference.
Rachel McGraw  
University of Alberta

Title: New pragmatic valorizations of Totonac

This paper examines the new uses and functionalities of language that are currently emerging in the indigenous Totonac community of Huehuetla, Puebla, Mexico. New domains for Totonac include educational and economic opportunities that benefit Totonac speakers, and institutional and official valorizations of Totonac language and culture. For example, there is a growing ethno-/eco-tourism industry in the Totonac region of the Sierra Norte of Puebla, and there are recently established tourism and language and culture programs, as well as scholarships directed at Totonac speakers, at the local Intercultural University. The semiotic processes at work in these domains, including the interactions of local and global discourses, and the meanings indexed by language and other forms of expression, are studied by way of an ethnographic analysis of language ideologies that are reflected in discourse and practice.

Huehuetla is important to study because it is a Totonac community that seems to have a relatively strong linguistic vitality, indicated by language ideologies and practices that support the sustained use of Totonac in both traditional and new domains of use, alongside Spanish. In contrast, other Totonac communities are abandoning their languages as a result of adopting mainstream ideologies that promote Spanish monolingualism. Understanding the emerging pragmatic valorizations of Totonac in non-traditional domains and their role in language sustainability in Huehuetla yields results that can be applied to best position efforts to support the sustainability, documentation, and revitalization of minority languages in Huehuetla and other communities.

Language, Power, Voice and Identity  
Rm 330

Daniel Ginsberg  
American Anthropological Association

Title: "It's not an antifeminist thing": When a speaker denies the social meaning of her talk

According to the theory of gender as practice (Butler 1990; Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2003), we are all always “doing” gender through interaction. This makes it difficult to pinpoint which aspects of an individual’s talk are gendered in themselves. One opening for analysis is speakers’ comments on their own talk, which Rymes (2014) outlines under the rubric of metacommentary. At times, however, metacommentary is used not to identify but to deny the social meaning of preceding talk—in Du Bois’s (2007)
terms, speakers attribute a stance to their own prior utterance while simultaneously disaligning from it. Using this strategy, I argue, speakers who appear to conform with social expectations nevertheless represent their actions as expressions of personal agency.

This paper considers interviews with PhD students aspiring to non-academic careers. Without prompting from the interviewer, women participants consistently named family concerns as a driving motivation in their career decisions, but went on to specifically deny the gendered nature of this consideration via affective stance metacommentary: “it’s not an antifeminist thing, I’m not saying like oh I have to be at home and like look after my children.” This stance move reveals contradictions that face someone attempting a feminist approach to career development, particularly in an academic setting. Not only does this analysis advance the use of metacommentary to understand affective stance, but it has implications for advising PhD students in a way that is responsive to their personal commitments, while attempting to mitigate gender imbalances in the professoriate.

Alice Mitchell
University of Bristol

Co-author: Fiona M. Jordan
University of Bristol

Title: “Donkeys dig holes, do they?”: Knowledge transmission in Datooga interaction

The transmission of sociocultural knowledge to children crucially depends on language. For cognitive scientists, the key role of language in knowledge transmission is to provide labels for conceptual categories and to encode propositions (Gelman & Roberts 2017). This paper uses the tools of linguistic anthropology to consider how language is used to transmit propositional knowledge to children in non-institutional contexts, with data from Datooga-speaking pastoralists of Tanzania. Building on work in language socialization (Ochs & Schieffelin 1986) and the anthropology of learning (Lancey et al 2010), we explore how more knowledgeable members present “new” information to Datooga children, and the role that children themselves play in these pedagogical interactions.

We examine two kinds of pedagogical sequences: (a) child-initiated knowledge transfer, where a child attempts to gain knowledge from a more experienced person by asking a question such as “what is X?”; and (b) knowledge repair, in which a child demonstrates a misunderstanding of some aspect of the world and an “expert” attempts to amend their knowledge. In knowledge repair sequences, a caregiver often presents a child’s current knowledge in the form of a question with a contrastive focus particle, implying that the proposition is false (as might be achieved with a tag question in English), e.g., “Donkeys dig holes, do they?”. The design of the turn thus invites the child to publicly amend their
understanding. By exploring the collaborative, interactional nature of knowledge transmission, we provide some ethnographic grounding for Csibra & Gergely’s (2011) concept of “natural pedagogy”.

**Gregory Thompson**  
Brigham Young University

Title: The Message of the Medium of Academic Language: The Academic Language Debate and Language Minority Students

*Academic language* has emerged as a new and attractive construct for characterizing the language of schooling (e.g., Schleppegrell, 2001). Developed from the tradition of systemic functional linguistics (Halliday, 1978), academic language refers to a register of language that is used in schools and has particular characteristics (e.g., detached and authoritative stance, concise and dense information load, and nominalization (Snow and Uccelli, 2009)). Proponents of academic language propose that this construct is useful for helping to create more equitable opportunities for language minority and bilingual students (Proctor et al, 2011, Schleppegrell & O’Hallaron, 2011). Critics of the construct contend that it further marginalizes these students by casting them as deficient in this register (Flores & Rosa, 2015, and relatedly, Avineri et al 2015). Following the tradition of Hymes (esp. 1992), this paper enters this debate by considering what each side might be “taking for granted”. Proponents of the construct have taken for granted that the construct is useful, without having clarified how or presented data to this effect. Critics of the construct have taken for granted that the construct is a tool of the powerful. At present, the burden of proof rests with those making the positive case for the construct. These proponents need to: 1) identify the value of the construct, 2) provide evidence that the construct provides this value, and 3) demonstrate that this value is uniquely acquired in schooling. The paper closes with some possible ways of addressing each of these concerns.

**Miki Makihara**  
Queens College & the Graduate Center, City University of New York

Title: Modern Indigenous Citizenship and the Politics of Indigenous Language

The study of recent indigenous language revitalization projects such as those in Maori, Hawaiian, and Rapa Nui (Easter Island, Chile) language communities provides a focus for understanding modern indigenous identity formation processes and its role in political and sociolinguistic change. Based on long-term ethnographic and linguistic research on Rapa Nui and comparative analysis, I describe how activists and participants have come to develop and appeal to what I call *modern indigenous citizenship*. This highlights dimensions such as the following: First, the cultivation of new reflexive subjective forms of identification of indigenous actors to nested layers of local, national, regional and
global communities; second, their role in imagining and creating future-oriented political projects that appeal to authority and legitimacy outside and beyond the national state. The (anticipated) establishment of such new affiliations, rights, and responsibilities have acted as stimuli to individual and collective participation and effort in civic life and community projects such as language revitalization projects. The paper further explores the political and economic contexts that have shaped these indigenous language projects and the ways that activists and participants have forced or enlisted the support of national and/or international entities in their causes. Success has also depended on the ability to mobilize a critical mass of participation to motivate individual speakers and families to invest in the effort of purposefully transforming the social ecology of the community.

Misty Crooks
The Graduate Center, City University of New York

Title: Voting as a Bureaucratic Act: A Study of Poll Worker Training and the Framing of Political Participation

Recent Supreme Court cases over voter identification laws and gerrymandering as well as public concern over the US electoral system have highlighted issues of voting and political access. This project seeks to understand the role of electoral bureaucracy in constituting a specific meaning of voting in which these concerns are muted to construct an ideal of consistent and secure democracy contingent on obedience to state guidelines and procedures. Data consists of transcripts of a poll worker training session and interviews with experienced poll workers. The bureaucratic discourses circulating through trainer talk and training paraphernalia establish and regulate specific meanings for the act of voting. A poll worker register consistently sets and reinforces parameters that frame voting as an exciting and liberatory act possible through accurately performed logistical tasks. In training talk, poll worker trainers use a dispreference for information seeking questions, reminders that trainees will be surveilled during election work, and exhortations to a team mentality to socialize poll workers into an ideology of voting that requires adherence to guidelines set by authorities. Interviews with poll workers and conversations between trainees reveal an infrastructure in which regulations often give way to personal preferences and polling site realities. Trainers manage emergences of this disjuncture through interactional moments of overlapping speech, error correction, refusal of response, and foregrounding training manuals. These moments function as messages through which trainees learn to perform adherence to, understanding of, and agreement with bureaucratic regulations seen as the basis of voting rights.

Session 2
This paper considers relationships between language and violence through a focus on the constitutive role of discourse in justifying and furthering the conditions of genocide through modern circulations of injurious speech. It draws upon three different analytic perspectives, Kaplan's (2009) historical analysis of Nazi language, Butler's (1997) feminist perspective on hate speech, and linguistic anthropological approaches that track the consequences of language through an analysis of context-specific linguistic and cultural features that make language use a form of action. It integrates and mobilizes these three orientations to understand the power and efficacy of Ríos Montt’s public discourse in furthering his genocidal project against Maya peoples. It argues that the speeches General Ríos Montt delivered to the Guatemalan public on television during 1982, as genocidal violence in rural Maya communities burgeoned, engendered a model of the Guatemalan nation as a unified patriarchal family in which Maya people were well outside of the “we” of national familial belonging. It shows how the discursive erasure of Maya people from the polity was, in turn, productive in justifying the material erasure of the population through genocide. The analysis further demonstrates how Ríos Montt’s public discourse highlighted on-going violence in the countryside even as he naturalized state terrorism as a strong parental response to conflict. The findings of this analysis suggest that genocide scholars shift from an focus on the illocutionary aspects of injurious speech to show their perlocutionary force in producing genocidal consequences through mass-mediated circulation.

Karl Swinehart
University of Louisville

Title: The Raciolinguistics of Gender in Highland Bolivia

This paper examines the lamination of gender difference onto raciolinguistic difference in highland Bolivia, specifically through the figure of a “bilingual” who is often gendered as female, situated as rural, and racialized as Indian. I examine the figure of “la bilingüe” across mediatized political discourse, musical performance, and within personal narratives of Aymara and Quechua Bolivians and consider this figure within widely circulating semiotic frameworks for linking language with raced and gendered bodies. The varied footings that politicians, media personalities, and urban Bolivians take up
towards this figure include emotional valences of care, pity, and pride but also contempt and suspicion. Personal narratives of bilingual media professionals illuminate how political and social changes in Bolivia are unsettling some previously enregistered indexical links between race, language and gender, while simultaneously extending others.

Joyce Bennett
Connecticut College

Title: Gender, Semiosis, and Conflict: Revitalizing Kaqchikel Maya in Interpersonal Relationships

Kaqchikel Maya is an endangered language of highland Guatemala where semiosis is constantly changing. Understanding a users’ meaning behind the use of Kaqchikel versus Spanish requires a dynamic approach that centralizes speakers’ intersectional identities. Whereas Kaqchikel was once the lingua franca of most towns in the Kaqchikel-speaking region, that is no longer the case. Today, Kaqchikel is typically reserved for use in relationships among natal family and close acquaintances. Women are more likely than men to speak the language because of their role as “culture bearers” and the social expectation that they pass on the language. Generation is a significant factor; Kaqchikel is more commonly spoken among older people than younger. In addition to the complex interplay between age, gender, and social distance, there is a revitalization movement working to reclaim domains. Given these factors, the semiotic value of Kaqchikel is undergoing significant change, particularly during interpersonal exchanges.

This paper focuses on young Kaqchikel women who attempt to reclaim domains for Kaqchikel. The paper argues that young Kaqchikel women’s use of Kaqchikel instead of Spanish is an attempt to shift the semiotic value of Kaqchikel. The women in this paper use Kaqchikel instead of Spanish in pre-established relationships as part of their efforts to revitalize the language. Using two ethnographic examples I gathered during 18 months of fieldwork between 2010 and 2015, I argue the intersectional identities of both the young women and their interlocutors are essential to how the interlocutors interpret the shift to Kaqchikel.

Bruce Mannheim
University of Michigan

Title: Social doubles, language, and ethnography in the southern Andes. The colonial emergence of a Quechua overlay and why it matters today

Instead of the imposition of the colonial language, Castilian, on an indigenous population, the Spanish settlement of the southern highlands of Peru resulted in the emergence of settler registers of two of the indigenous languages, registers that remain...
living languages today, even though their political-economic base has been transformed. The settler register was regimented to Spanish semantically, pragmatically and structurally. The doubling of Native Andeans was thus itself doubled. First-language Quechua speakers have a classical DuBoisian double consciousness, seeing themselves in part through the evaluative eyes of others, but so too do non-Quechuas see them through the lenses of cultural, social, and linguistic overlays. Today, scholars, such as linguists and anthropologists are more likely to find their research intermediated by the overlay—the Spanish-inflected Quechua—than by the Quechua of monolinguals, and to not recognize the fundamental differences between them. Pretenses to the intimacy of fieldwork notwithstanding, scholarly knowledge of the Andean languages and cultures is filtered through the overlay, meaning that language structure and social practice are both rendered invisible. What we are facing is the flipside of Scott’s notion of “legibility,” through which populations that cannot easily be shoehorned into the rationality of a state-ordered society find that their language, culture, and social relations are literally rendered invisible in favor of the overlay.

Melissa Krug
Temple University

Title: “We’re losing identity”: Co-construction of tastes in Peruvian fair-trade handicrafts

Fair-trade products may be in some ways “alternative” to conventional products but they must still compete within the global economy and appeal to consumers’ tastes (Besky 2008; Lyon 2007). In this paper I explore how perceived preferences and tastes originating in the Global North are recontextualized and circulated throughout a fair-trade exporting organization in Peru. In their meetings to innovate new handicraft designs, the organization’s marketing director, artisans, and Northern clients draw on varying classifications of taste such as colors, size, and shape, while also discussing practical concerns such as shipping regulations, packing needs, and costs. Unlike mass-produced industrial products, ethical or high-end products often contain indices of their places of origin which imbue them with value-adding authenticity (Cavanaugh 2007; Heller 2014; Meneley 2004, 2007; Mullin 2001; Pratt 2007; Trubek 2008; Wherry 2008). “Peruvianness,” however, is often compromised in favor of more “worldly” or “trendy” designs. I expand Bourdieu’s (1984) class distinctions to a global scale to examine the ways in which the “field of [handicraft] production” draws on the distributed messages of the “field of the dominant class” to consider how the perceived and varying tastes of Northern consumers influence fair-trade product-innovation discussions in the South. In the global fair-trade distribution network, dominant class messages are mediated and distilled through the organization’s staff to the artisans with whom they work. I argue that fair-trade products are co-constructed using various sets of contradictory meanings and tastes. Handicrafts should be traditional yet trendy, Peruvian yet global, and authentic yet innovative.
Alternate Languages and Alternate Worlds
Rm 328

Beth Semel
MIT

Title: From words to waves: machinic listening and the im/mediation of psychiatric speech

How are language ideologies linked to assumptions about listening? How do efforts to develop artificial intelligence-enabled listening technologies reinforce but also reconfigure these assumptions? I explore such questions drawing from ethnographic fieldwork with U.S.-based research teams building prototypes for assisting in psychiatric diagnosis by correlating acoustic features of speech with pathological affective states.

These researchers – trained in computer science, neuroscience, psychiatry, and psychology – design their technologies to circumvent the semantic dimensions of speaking altogether and instead treat speech in diagnostic contexts as sound: indexical emanations with formal properties connected to objective, neurobiological substrates of psychopathology. This “machinic listening” contrasts with the interpretive practices surrounding North American “talk therapy,” which privilege attention to the denotational function of speech. Yet in the creation, testing, and maintenance of these technologies, researchers still participate in the “human listening” conventional to U.S. mental health care: they must monitor a research subject’s talk for indications of suicidal or homicidal intentions, or facilitate assessment interviews with subjects in order to generate datasets for building and training algorithms. While the goal is to create technologies that make the link between spoken utterances and inner states more immediate, I illustrate the oftentimes hidden, undervalued, and emotionally challenging labor pivotal to enabling and mediating this supposed immediacy.

Researchers negotiate the value of machinic versus human listening in the situated praxis of collaboration. In so doing, they materialize in their technologies competing ideas about which skills – empathy, accuracy? – and sensory modalities matter to psychiatric diagnosis in the age of big data.

Sally Ann Ness
University of California, Riverside

Title: Trans-Species Signs of Movement: Semio-genesis in Iconic Sign Performance

The birth of signs or “semio-genesis” is a main focus of inquiry for the rhetorical branch of Charles S. Peirce’s pragmaticist semiotic. Following Peirce scholar Vincent Colapietro, Peirce’s rhetorical branch focuses on the creative ways in which signs accomplish their
purposes as evolving works-in-progress, foregrounding their processual and dynamically triadic character as “moved and moving movers.” This relatively neglected branch places emphasis on sign mediation, broadly conceived, rather than on sign representation specifically, and on sign performance rather than on sign information, as such information might be evident in stable or fully-formed sign-object relations. “Performance” is conceptualized as a sign’s way of making emergent relational connections innovatively consequential even in cases where they might seem to be inevitably over-determined. To exemplify sign performance rhetorically conceived, and the originative role iconic sign performance in particular plays within it, the opening movements of an animal act performed by a traveling Eastern European circus in the Swabian area of Southern Germany are presented. In this performance, audience members experience the initial stages of a trans-species process of sign creation that is magnified and extenuated by the staging design employed. The performance affords the opportunity to observe semio-genetic processes unfolding “under a microscope” as it were and to track the progression of relational stages in which participants are moved from pre-relational anticipation (non-knowing-ness) into the emergent presence and eventually the conscious and linguistic recognition of a non-human, bio-Symbol: a living Peircean Term.

Terra Edwards
Saint Louis University

Title: Re-channeling Language: the mutual restructuring of language and infrastructure among Deafblind people in Washington DC

This presentation is concerned with the re-channeling of language. It asks: how do you turn a language for the sighted into a language for the blind, and what role does the material environment play? To pursue this question, I examine the mutual restructuring of language and infrastructure among Deafblind people at Gallaudet University. Since 2005, new walkways, buildings, furniture, and other aspects of the local urban landscape have been reconfigured with practices of Deaf people in mind. The goal is to support the cultural and linguistic practices of Deaf people, while at the same time, opening up routes for, and intensifying, the circulation of people, languages, novel sensory experiences, and other valuable things. Recently, “protactile” Deafblind perspectives have been incorporated into these projects. The protactile movement, which began in Seattle in 2007, is based on the idea that all human activity can be realized via touch—that hearing and vision are not necessary for co-presence, navigation, interaction, or communication. In order for protactile practices to develop, however, grammatical pointing systems and other parts of the grammar must be rooted in and reinforced by environments that are knowable through kinesthetic, tactile, olfactory, and thermal senses. This paper asks how new infrastructure might amplify, reinforce, or hinder the emergence and development of language among Deafblind
people. In doing so, it aims to contribute to current debates in anthropology about how patterns in perception, language, and interaction are shaped by, and respond to, the technologically saturated material structures undergirding modern life.

Ashlee Dauphinais
The Ohio State University

Title: A Comunidade de Guerreiras: Production of community in a group for Turner Syndrome

This study advances different theoretical constructions of community in sociocultural linguistics through examining an intersex population with Turner Syndrome (TS) in Brazil. I collected ethnographic data from an online group of individuals with TS from Brazil and through on-site interviews and participant observation, which I accessed as someone diagnosed with TS at a young age. Through this data, I propose a new model for examining communities. TS is a genetic condition resulting in deletion of one of the X chromosomes, causing stunted growth and development, infertility, impaired nonverbal processing, and others. Within these groups, relationships are formed in part due to a biological reality and shared experience with TS, but also interact with broader discourses about what it means to be female, and how bodies are regulated by the medical community. While aspects of previous models used in sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology such as speech communities, communities of practice, and discourse communities provide a useful starting ground, examining them through the lens of TS communities the difficulty of these models when examining groups with intersecting identities or overlapping populations. I particularly examine how conceptions of the sex binary intersect with issues of class and race in the Brazilian context from a sociocultural linguistic point of view. This is important not only to understand TS populations, but additionally for understanding how communities are not isolated, static entities but dynamic and intersecting. This research also contributes to the studies in language, gender, and sexuality in a previously unstudied intersex community.

Maureen Kosse
University of Colorado

Title: Mock Jewish: exploring a performative style of the alt-right online

The alt-right movement, coined by white supremacist Richard Spencer of the National Policy Institute, is an emergent conglomeration of ultra-conservative white-nationalists who trend white, male, and millennial. While the core of the movement draws upon the works of Oswald Spengler, Julius Evola and other eugenicists who argue for genetically-established differences in intelligence and disposition between races, the end goal of this movement, ostensibly, is an “ethnonational state” in which whites either remove all
ethnic minorities (as well as other ‘degenerates,’ as they describe them) or create an
environment that would compel such people to leave on their own. Born of such
websites as 4chan and 8chan, the alt-right organization is largely online and
characterized by the prolific use of memes and internet in-jokes. 4chan and 8chan are
also notorious for their anonymity and are known for internet harassment and doxing
(posting identifying information, including social security numbers, home addresses, etc.,
of others onto the internet), distributing child pornography, and “edgy” humor
concerning minority populations. Central to these communities is a shared self-image of
irony and disaffectedness.

This paper concerns a collection of features, primarily linguistic, that the alt-right
employs in its social spaces, which I call Mock Jewish. Generally speaking, mock
languages are characterized by the use of iconized elements of a language for their
indexical value: for instance, Hill (1995) notes that instances of Mock Spanish index a
speaker as fun-loving, laid-back, or funny. However, instances of mock languaging
display what Hill terms dual indexicality: the mock language, uttered by a non-Spanish
speaker, indexes a (white) speaker as having the aforementioned positive qualities but
the utterance concomitantly indexes Spanish speakers as lazy, cheap or vulgar (Hill
1995). Other authors have taken up Hill’s framework to analyze other mock language
varieties and how they produce covert racist discourses (Bucholtz & Lopez 2011; Lippi-
Green 2012; Meek 2006; Vessey 2014; and others).

This paper draws on several months of observation on diverse alt-right platforms,
including the (now defunct) alt-right subreddit on Reddit, the “identitarian”
subverse on Voat, the /pol/ forum on 8chan, and alt-right entertainment videos on
YouTube. The data that I have collected spans from mid- to late-2016 through today. Of
the stylistic practices observed among the alt-right the most consistent trend is the
production of the Mock Jewish style. Although the underlying anti-Semitism in this
practice is clear, this linguistic practice also reflects many of the cultural elements
associated with 8chan and Reddit. I argue that Mock Jewish enactments in alt-right
spaces are only fully understood and effective (1) with a presumed white, non-Jewish
speaker and (2) through the higher indexical orders (Silverstein 2003) cultivated by the
intertextual minglings of ‘4chan/Reddit culture’ and white supremacist ideologies. The
paper therefore examines how the alt-right movement straddles the thin line between
overt and covert expressions of racism.

Mike Mena
Graduate Center, CUNY

Title: Categorically Performative: Achieving ‘Interraciality’ in Online Pornography

On April 10, 2016, porn giant Xhamster.com—currently ranked “75th most traffic[ked]”
website in the world (Alexa Statistics)—blocked access to a substantial portion of its
content to users living in North Carolina as “punishment” for the now infamous
“Bathroom Bill” (HB2), the legislative bill requiring transgender individuals to use public restrooms that match the biological sex written on their birth certificate. The overall media coverage gave Xhamster’s political action a positive spin (USA Today, BBC, Verge, Buzzfeed), thus contributing to the popular discourse praising the “democratization of porn.” However, I will show that the organization and division of online porn into video “categories” (such as “interracial” or “lesbian”) are anchored in ideologies of white heteronormativity, rendering online porn at the very least "non-democratic" and at worst "anti-democratic."

Porn video “categories” are performative (Austin 1962)—that is, video categories do not only denote, but semiotically regiment (Silverstein 2003, 2005) particular configurations of indexical signs in such a way that only specific videos achieve inclusion as tokens of specific categories. This paper focuses on the porn category “interracial” across three versions of the website Xhamster, which serves to perpetuate “interraciality” as being iconically represented as a relationship between a white(-indexing) body and a black(-indexing) body. Furthermore, through a kind of citational (Butler 1993) feedback loop, pornography websites unilaterally (re)produce their own authority to organize knowledge about race, bodies, and sexualities by citing themselves as the authority to define “categories”—a self-referencing (Benveniste 1966) and self-authorizing (Crpanzano 2016) non-democratic institutional practice.

Language, Space, and Place
Rm 329

Jessica Ray
University of Arizona

Title: Black Detroiters, stance, and negotiations of race and racism in white suburban space

As of 2010, Detroit, Michigan was the most segregated metropolitan area in the United States, despite Detroit itself containing the highest proportionally black population of any US city (Logan and Stults 2011). Recent trends, however, show that a wave of ‘black flight’ is occurring as black Detroiters leave the city for the predominantly white suburbs. This has produced great anxiety in the public discourses of white suburbanites, as most of them have only had contact with black people and culture exclusively through media representations (Hill 2008). Here, I examine the underexplored lived experiences of young black men whose families moved from Detroit into the suburbs. This paper uses discourse analysis to examine stance-taking (Irvine 2009) in semi-structured interviews as former Detroiters negotiate their experiences of race and racism in white public space (Hill 1998). Mediatized images of black men as threatening ‘predators’ influence both how black Detroiters experience life in the suburbs, as well as how they can talk (or not talk) about race and racism. Through assigning stance to shadow subjects (Taha
whether it be white suburbanites or other black Detroiters, my interviewees distance themselves from stances that are reduced to racial group membership. Instead, these men construct stances that align with local ideologies of working-class resilience and toughness, exemplified by popular sayings such as ‘Detroit Hustles Harder.’ While their stances respond to and reject mediatized racial stereotypes through emphasizing individuality, they subsequently limit the potential to challenge racial hierarchy through the erasure of personal experiences of racism.

Jeff Millar
University of Cincinnati

Title: Semiotics of Urban Renewal: Language, Gentrification, and the Making of (New) Place

Drawing on the growing literature on the materiality of language as a place-making technology (Jaworski & Thurlow, 2011, Papen, 2015, Trinch & Snajder, 2017), this paper presents an analysis of the semiotic dimensions of urban renewal in the Midwestern American city of Cincinnati, OH. Viewing gentrification as involving a resignification of place, making ‘old’ places ‘new,’ it identifies the semiotic processes of iconization, fractal recursivity, and erasure (Irvine & Gal, 2000) involved in the mobilization of German language resources within the linguistic landscape of the gentrifying neighborhood of Over-the-Rhine (OTR). The paper argues that the iconization of the area’s German heritage, specifically its beer brewing history, in the semiotic landscape contributes to the symbolic erasure of the neighborhood’s more recent past and (largely African-American) population. At the same time, however, the new sense of authenticity being indexed semiotically in OTR contrasts with, and has prevented a more corporate-led gentrification, and more corporate forms of signage, from being pursued in the area.

William Silcott
Binghamton University

Title: “Just a Shot and a Beer Place...”: The Semiotics of Class and Place in Southern Tier New York.

Alcohol has become an increasingly prominent area of anthropological research. Systematic research is often traced to Mary Douglas’ 1987 insight that “[d]rinking is essentially a social act, performed in a recognized social context” (Douglas 1987: 4). Linguistic anthropology similarly increased attention to alcohol; as Paul Manning states, the key is understanding “the materiality and meaning of drinks, drinks as things and drinks as signs” (Manning 2012: 4). This paper follows drinking as a social, semiotically-laden event, though focused not on the act and rather on its social context. Drawing on geosemiotics, habitus, and social semiotics theories, I argue that class identity in
drinking contexts must be understood as dialectically created between speech events and their surroundings. Based on three New York state establishments, bars are framed in terms of class, locality, and comfort. The element of public comfort, a habitual constructed in light of others, exists in a field of visual semiotics as they index these same speech events. This is further facilitated through ‘place’ semiotics, or the material world in which semiotic processes take place, created by owners. These concepts meld as the ‘place’ becomes enregistered, stereotyping verbal and visual signs of class, locality, and comfort. As geosemiotic events in a dialectical, mutually indexing relation of discourse and the environment, the textual, registered, and differentiating processes of identity unfold on and between each level. Through an analysis of how this array of indexing constructs identity, a fuller understanding of context is revealed for this social and semiotically-laden act.

Patricia Markert
Binghamton University

Title: Place-Worlds and Chronotopes: Combining Narrative Analysis, Oral History, and Archaeology at Timbuctoo, NJ

Archaeology and linguistic anthropology seldom meet in practice, despite being subfields of the same discipline. I argue that incorporating approaches from linguistic anthropology into archaeological practice can produce deeper understandings of how perceptions of spacetime shape the past. In this paper, I explore two areas for productive crossover between the subfields. The first is theoretical: Bakhtin’s chronotope concept has seen rich use in linguistic anthropology, but has unexplored potential in archaeology, despite our sub-disciplinary focus on space and time. The second is methodological: as historical archaeologists increasingly use oral history in their study of the past, narrative analysis offers a tool to understand these spoken sources. To illustrate, I discuss my work at the historic site of Timbuctoo, NJ, which existed as many “places” throughout its two-hundred year history: a 19th century free Black community, home to dozens of families, an empty field, an archaeological site. My work has included oral history with former residents – deeply personal accounts of life at Timbuctoo during the mid-20 century that are rooted in particular conceptions of space and time. These stories shed light on the way different conceptions of place, space, and time are created and maintained, particularly at archaeological sites of memory. Using Bakhtin’s chronotope and narrative analysis, I examine the way former residents of Timbuctoo invoke particular conceptions of space-time through storytelling. Overall, I argue that a turn towards linguistic anthropology and analysis allows archaeologists to better realize the potential of these narrative sources in our work.

Forrest Young
University of Hawaii, Manoa
Title: Animacy Hierarchies within the Moral Geography of Marine Conservation at Easter Island

This paper examines the moral geography of the development of a Marine Protected Area (MPA) around “Easter Island” (Rapa Nui) through multi-sited digital and grounded ethnography of language research. Engaging the notion of “animacy hierarchies” formulated by linguistic anthropologist Michael Silverstein as adapted within critical linguistics to biopolitical theory by Mel Chen, I reveal animacy hierarchies in the production and circulation of the meaning of the project across different contexts: mass media, international meetings, island lives, and e-mail. Language use of elite social actors in global media and on the floor of the 2017 United Nations Ocean Conference that animates the project as a benevolent step for conserving marine life and conditions that will help manage the Anthropocene through international standards like the 2030 UN Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Climate Accord is contrasted to language of Indigenous Rapa Nui leaders that proposes the MPA as entangled in interests of non-conservatory stake holders. Pew Charitable Trusts, whose parent company—Sunoco oil—merged with the notorious Energy Transfer Partners behind the Dakota Access Pipeline in 2017, has been the primary NGO promoting the MPA; and Chile (the state controlling Rapa Nui) disclosed in 2017 that it has begun collaborating on a “blue economy” Megaproject with China to develop a new transoceanic submarine fiber optic cable connecting the states across the Pacific Ocean. Amidst Rapa Nui movements for self-determination, MPA discourse appears as a tool of eco-governmentality that “blue washes” an all too familiar reality for Indigenous peoples: dispossession by conservation.

April Reber
UC Santa Cruz

Title: “Accordions, beer and Whiteness: Exploring the political role of symbols in German protests.”

This paper examines political practices of intertextuality to understand how citizenship is rearticulated by ethnonationalist groups such as Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the West (Pegida). Pegida is a nationalist organization founded in Dresden, Germany in 2014; members are predominately retirees and elderly Germans who protest “Islamisation” and German joblessness. Pegida's voice is integral in Germany's political debate over citizenship because of its well-attended weekly rallies, which have continued for more than three years, and ability to mobilize voting blocs that influenced recent German national elections. At their weekly rallies, Pegida members redeploy historic symbols to make claims on citizenship and belonging, e.g. elderly Pegida members, espousing xenophobic and nationalist ideologies, sing an anti-Nazi song written by the famous executed priest, Dietrich Bonhoeffer to protest the current liberal democratic government. On one level, by using this symbol Pegida
espouses anti-Nazi rhetoric; on another Pegida asserts the image of fighting against an injustice government.

Using Pegida as a case study, I follow intertextuality’s political role as a persuasive technique to claim ethnic (White) cultural continuity by mapping Pegida’s use of historical symbols. I investigate how whiteness, instead of being an unmarked, unconscious category, is overtly engaged with in ethnonationalist movements. Finally I explore how citizenship and participation are imagined on local and national levels by ethnonationalist movements such as Pegida.

**Identities negotiated, created, achieved**

Rm 330

Sonya Pritzker
University of Alabama

**Title:** Negotiating Relational Identity: Human Physiology and the Communication of Emotion-Messages in Intimate Relationships

This paper presents data from an ongoing, collaborative study that combines theories and methods from linguistic anthropology and biocultural anthropology in the examination of the physiological effects of emotion communication in everyday life among couples, ages 65-75, in the Southeastern U.S. With an eye towards the ways in which emotion influences all interaction—not just those in which emotion is intentionally articulated and made a referent (Goodwin, et al. 2012; Ochs and Schieffelin 1989; Wilce 2009), the study draws upon video-recorded interactions, in-depth interviews, as well as heart rate variability (HRV) and cortisol to show how emotionally “infused” (Besnier 1999) interactions literally get under the skin (Hinton 1999, Worthman 1999). This paper presents video recordings alongside HRV data from several couples in moments where couples are negotiating their individual and relational identities, with varying degrees of dis/agreement. Following Gottman and Driver, who discuss how partners’ everyday interaction can be read in terms of “bids for emotional connection” (2005: 64), this paper analyzes what we call “identity bids.” These are emotionally charged moments in which partners negotiate who each person “is,” relaying messages about their personality traits, habits, and tendencies, and what it means for what the relationship “is,” in everyday interaction. Findings demonstrate how integrative methods expand researchers’ ability to interpret the meaning of communication and its impacts on the body in the context of particular relationships. Our results further support the expansion of linguistic anthropology with the incorporation of methods from psychophysiology and biocultural anthropology (Pritzker 2016, Mendoza-Denton et al 2017).
Artanti Sari  
The Ohio State University  
Co-author: Leslie C. Moore  
The Ohio State University  

Title: Transnational families’ online socialization into languages and religion  

In transnational families who came from cultures where extended families and communities play significant roles in children’s upbringing, the use of online technology is important in raising the next generation. Studies in the field of Sociology have suggested that the use of online technology has generated a transformation of interactional co-presence among family members in different nations (Nedelcu & Wyss, 2016) and parenting routines (Madianou, 2012; Madianou & Miller, 2012). However, in the field of language acquisition, research of transnational individuals’ online communication has mainly examined communications among non-familial adolescents’ and adults’ (e.g., Christiansen, 2015 & 2017; Lam, 2012 & 2014). The presentation discusses a study which enriches online language socialization research by exploring the roles of parents, extended families, and communities in children’s socialization. Using the analytical lenses of transnationalism (Levitt, 2001; Vertovec, 2009) and simultaneity of connection (Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004), this ethnographic study examined the ways four Indonesian-Muslim families who migrated to the US used online technology in socializing their children into languages and religion. The research suggested that the participants’ movement to the US shaped the way parents apprentice their children into multiple communities: the host country, the home country, and the global Muslim community. The study also indicated that the socialization was not a unidirectional process as children developed independence and agency which reciprocally increased parents’ socialization development. The influence of simultaneous connections in multiple communities toward transnational children’s language and literacy development increased the richness of their out-of-school experiences.

Bina Brody  
University of Pennsylvania  

Title: Voicing Femininity in Senegalese Wrestling  

While speech is a prime locus for analysis of discursive behavior, important mechanisms of indexicality emerge when investigating events of greater complexity and elaboration (Agha 2007), which utilize other vocal media as well. Recently, linguistic anthropologists have investigated forms of indexicality that emerge when speech is coupled with music (Faudree 2012, Feld et al 2005, Byrd 2014). Their studies show song to be a unique communicative strategy for layering of semiotic content, shaping social contingencies of voice through performance.
In this paper, I investigate how singing is employed in the reconstruction of gender roles within contemporary performance of traditional Senegalese wrestling matches, called Lámb. In Senegal, an overwhelmingly Muslim country, tradition dictates clear restrictions on behavior according to gender in both religious and secular arenas. Yet in recent years Lámb, an overtly male practice, has engaged traditional women singers to perform on national television, as authorities of ancestral knowledge and spiritual protectors of wrestlers (Faye 2002, Kringelbach 2013). The performative space of this ritual, as it is reshaped by modern technologies, demands a shift in functional roles of voice, as it straddles the multiple semiotic channels of song. In this paper, I ask what is the role of Lámb singing traditions in positioning the female voice in a male-dominated environment? How has the introduction of national television to a newly-commercialized ritual restructured Senegalese perspectives of gender? This paper suggests that Lámb is a key site for analyzing processes of gender construction through voice, enhancing theoretical discussions of complex semiotic practices of language.

Bernard C Perley
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Title: re:Vision:Intermedialities of Native American Vision Quests

The trope of the vanishing Indian in the late nineteenth century was a key and deeply problematic aspect of the popular imagination that reverberates through to today. Popular media as well as ethnographic salvage projects seemed to confirm the inevitable disappearance of North America’s native peoples. Ironically, late twentieth century language experts echoed the disappearance tropes with a call to action to save what was left of “disappearing languages” by using multiple media to convey the crisis of disappearing languages, cultures, and landscapes. Despite the severe stress Native American communities endured during these disappearance epochs many have adapted to their changing worlds by re:visioning their traditional practices to potentiate possibilities for new visions of health and prosperity for their respective communities.

This paper explores some historical antecedents for re:vision in Native American cosmologies. I highlight that difference between revision and re:vision to argue that the incorporation of new media and textualities have always been a part of the traditional process of incorporating new experiences and materialities into existing practices as an important ground for semiosis I characterize as vision quests. I argue many communities have and continue to re:vision those alien/foreign materialities as part of their cosmological futures such that they become intermedial expressions of Native American vision quests. I present antecedent examples followed by contemporary examples of intermedial innovations reflecting the long tradition of envisioning perceived alien/foreign materialities as native. This paper celebrates Native American vision quests as traditions of innovation.
Esra Padgett
The Graduate Center

Title: “I’m Amber when I have to be, Mandy when I can:” Transgressions of Personhood in the Indexically Fraught

This paper argues that female porn performers create a language of the self that serves as a medium for multiple subjectivities to be constructed and interchanged through the semiotic spaces of porn performances, social media practices and daily conversation. Drawing on ethnographic interviews with female performers in the US porn industry, the paper explores how the indexical realm of figures of personhood is used by speakers to create mediatized subject positions, which are always simultaneously held in tension with both the bodily experience of performers as well as institutional and structural constraints. Focusing on speakers’ self-narration and social media representations, the paper follows the mediatized processes of authentication and branding, tracing person deictics to explore how multiple subject positions are invoked, transformed, and maintained. Charting the semiotic field referenced by first person deictics establishes a topology of personhood that supports and contests existing ideologies about porn stars as split between authentic and branded personae. Instead, attending to the metapragmatic work of parsing subjectivities allows for an understanding of branded and authentic subject positions as mutually constitutive. The paper suggests the concept of entwinement as a way to consider how these performative processes interact with each other as well as how they are applied to multiple subject positions which are themselves entwined in a single speaker. Thus, considering entwinement as a link between mediatized discursive and semiotic forms and corporeality can also lead to a reframing of the notion of figures of personhood as bounded to specific bodies.

Mariana Irby
University of Pennsylvania

Title: Migrant Workers and Modern Brides: Gendered Bilingualism in Post-Soviet Tajikistan

Little scholarly attention has been given to the gendered nature of language change in the newly independent ‘Stans of Central Asia. In the post-Soviet Republic of Tajikistan, one of the most remittance-dependent countries in the world (Reeves 2015: 121), large numbers of men must pursue both seasonal and long-term employment opportunities in the Russian Federation. This phenomenon of outbound migration of Tajiks to Russia has not only consolidated the Russian language as valuable cultural capital (Bourdieu 1979), but has also left the women who remain in Tajikistan largely responsible for the transmission and maintenance of the national language, Tajiki Persian. However, Tajik women must also take on primary roles in the bilingual socialization of their children, particularly of sons who will ultimately leave to work in Russia. Thus the pressure on women is to embody “Tajikness” through the use of a semiotic register that extends
beyond language to include sartorial practices, indexing a nationally imagined traditional ideal. This paper draws upon two months of preliminary ethnographic research in Tajikistan during the summer of 2017 and an analysis of the three-part Tajik film series Aroosi Zamonavi (‘Modern Bride’). This paper argues that in post-socialist Tajikistan, women face distinct pressures prompting them to both performatively embody the paradigm of a “true” Tajik woman while bilingually socializing their children in both Russian and Tajiki, ultimately operating as agents between the socially consequential loci of “pride” and “profit” (Duchene and Heller 2012).

Session 3

The Labor of Translation under Neoliberal Conditions
Rm 345

Panel Organizer: Laura Kunreuther

Co-author of the Abstract: Laura Kunreuther (Bard College), Ilana Gershon (University of Indiana-Bloomington)

Panel Abstract:

This panel explores how the labor of translation, and in particular the labor of speaking for others--often voicing others’ words--is performed under neoliberal conditions, that is to say, in contexts in which to be a translator is to be a paradoxical figure. How does one engage in the labor of translation under neoliberal conditions when mediation is both essential to accomplish certain social tasks and a problem for neoliberal subjectivity? Focusing on quintessential language mediators, this panel is in explicit dialogue with the panel on ‘The Labor of Mediation under Neoliberal Conditions’.

The panel takes neoliberalism to originate as a socioeconomic philosophy developed by Hayek, Friedman and others of the Mont Pelerin Circle as a historically specific perspective on how best to enact capitalism, a perspective that currently dominates most capitalist practices worldwide. In implementing a Hayekian vision, practitioners on the ground had to develop a vision of the neoliberal subject, commonly described as an entrepreneurial self, conceived of as a bundle of skills, assets, qualities, experiences and relationships that must be constantly managed as one might manage a business, and thus continuously enhanced. Social relations, from this perspective, are contractual relationships in which risk and responsibility are ideally equitably balanced among actors who act according to their market-defined interests. For the purposes of this panel, there are a number of aspects to note in this description of neoliberalism. Selves are supposed to act in their own self-interest. Because contracts require this, selves are supposed to be stable entities with visible, knowable qualities that allow others to view these selves as predictable. And all social relationships hinge on a form of contract
between stable and knowable entities in which the primary focus is balancing risk and responsibility equitably.

Neoliberal logics are supported by language ideologies that assume that a person’s voice unproblematically represents a unified ‘self’. Such language ideologies assume that even when someone is communicating on another’s behalf, the process is both transparent and direct, thereby erasing the labor of translation. As a result, certain roles, under this neoliberal perspective, exhibit the “wrong” kind of agency, however essential they might actually be for social interaction. These include mediators of many kinds, such as those who seem to act in others’ interests and those whose work entails voicing or facilitating the words of others – and this is particularly the case for translators and interpreters. This panel explores different types of interpreters through their communicative labor, and asks how they negotiate the paradoxical conditions of interacting in ways both in line with and counter to neoliberal expectations of agency. We are particularly interested in the strategies of voicing employed by those in a diverse set of mediating positions. We explore how interpreters navigate the contradictory requirements of being both transparent vehicles for others’ words and visible, knowable subjects negotiating for their own interests (how, whether, and when they make these choices). Through ethnographic attention to the production and representation of voices in these contexts, we seek to understand how effects of transparency, immediacy, and authenticity are produced, and the kinds of affect, forms of agency, and social roles and relations that are generated through these mediating roles.

Marcy Brink-Danan
Hebrew University

Title: Bibliodrama as 'Translator': A Semiotic Analysis of Polyvocality and Authenticity in Interreligious Contexts

This paper analyzes a theatrical practice called “Bibliodrama” in order to consider, more broadly, the role of mediators in negotiating neoliberal ideas about agency, voice and authenticity. Bibliodrama – derived from psychodrama – involves improvisational role playing of Biblical stories in which a director reads a text and invites participants to speak for the personae represented. Do the personae in religious texts have authentic voices? Who is authorized to animate their voices? Based on over two years of recording and participant-observation in interreligious Bibliodrama sessions in Jerusalem, this paper builds on Fenigsen and Wilce’s suggestion (2012) that semiotic analyses can serve anthropological inquiries about ideologies of authenticity and how they relate to each other. The juxtaposition of different conceptualizations of authenticity as individual and internal (something is authentic because I believe it to be so) with another (something is authentic because it is universally true) brings into relief how seemingly distinct ideologies about authenticity’s criteria (internally or externally
anchored) coexist and conflict. This paper focuses specifically on the role of the translation metaphor (Brink-Danan 2015), regularly deployed in descriptions of Bibliodrama’s mediating function, in negotiating the paradoxical demands of authenticity as simultaneously polyvocal and unified.

Inmaculada M. García-Sánchez
Temple University

Title: Paradoxes of Being an Immigrant Child Language Broker under Neoliberal Conditions

Previous literature in child language brokering has identified the many sociocultural, ethical, and interactional paradoxes that immigrant children have to negotiate when they mediate communicative encounters on behalf of their families in the public and/or institutional spheres (e.g. García-Sánchez 2014; García-Sánchez and Orellana 2006; Orellana 2009; Reynolds and Orellana 2009; Reynolds, Orellana, and García-Sánchez 2015). Among them, we find the paradoxical positionality of being children speaking to and for adult authority figures, or of being the children of immigrants interacting with members of dominant society institutions. One of the most important of these paradoxes for the purposes of this panel is that immigrant child language brokers are expected to be neutral and detached translators (since, like the panel abstract argues, neoliberal logics are supported by language ideologies that obscure the labor of mediation, and renders the process of interpreting unproblematically direct and transparent). In practice, however, linguistic anthropological approaches to the study of language brokering have shown that, far from being transparent conduits of information, immigrant child language brokers have to manage multiple identities as institutional interpreters, patients/customers/students, agents of the institution, family advocates, (racialized) immigrants, children, and members of multiple communities.

This paper discusses how neoliberal conditions have actually exacerbated the paradoxes surrounding the practice of immigrant child language brokering. In addition to those that I have already mentioned above, the paper will explore two additional paradoxes. The first paradox focuses on the invisibilization of the labor provided by child language brokers. While neoliberal labor conditions and economic policies have been a catalyst for children increasingly finding themselves acting as child language brokers (in that these policies promote both global migration flows and shrinking social services for immigrants in receiving countries, including translation/interpreting services), there is almost a total lack of formal or institutional recognition of children as regular and important providers of institutional language services (Antonini 2016). Beyond erasure, this lack of recognition often also plays a part in a second paradox. For example, in my own ethnographic practice, educational and medical institutions greatly relied on children’s labor as language brokers; however, invoking neoliberal tropes of normalized childhoods, which are often class- and race-coded, the
institutions simultaneously spoke out against the practice in ways that pathologize it. This leads me to the second paradox, which focuses on the intersection between neoliberal childhood ideologies and racialized ideas about immigrant children and their families. It is well documented that middle class families in post-industrial societies are heavily invested in discursive practices that nurture the *entrepreneurial child*, who can display creative language and problem-solving skills, as well as autonomy (Ochs and Kremer-Sadlik 2015). Neoliberal child-centered discourses indeed emphasize children’s participation in agentic ands purposeful activity. While there is mounting evidence that those developmental outcomes are common for immigrant children who regularly act as language brokers (Orellana and Guan 2015), immigrant child language brokering is routinely pathologized as psychologically damaging and as “role reversal” that gives children too much power.

Diane Riskedahl
University of Toronto Scarborough

Title: Translating the social contract: mediating the alignment of Canadian private sponsorship groups and Syrian newcomers

The Canadian private sponsorship program allows small volunteer groups to work jointly with the Canadian government to aid in the financial and social support of relocated refugees for their initial year of relocation. These relationships bear the hallmark of the social contract framed in the rhetoric of good deeds. Taking into consideration the politics of aid, tensions regarding duties and obligations for both sponsors and newcomers can often emerge. This creates a challenging dynamic for the translator. How does one translate unspoken sensibilities or implied demands along with the emotion that these things can generate? Drawing on interactions in sponsorship group meetings, this paper focuses on the role of the translator in aligning the goals and expectations of both parties. In particular, I focus on how the translator in these exchanges relays the affective stances of the two parties while navigating their own response to the interaction. A focus on transference of emotional states is used to tease apart facets of the labor of translation to move beyond framing translation as not only voicing others’ words, but also navigating unspoken aspects of the message. In this process, misalignment can be framed as a breakdown in translation. This paper will also query the construction of translation as a locus of blame when perspective stances are at times incommensurable.

Laura Kunreuther
Bard College

UN Field Interpreters, Global Citizenship and the Necessary Fiction of Invisibility

Paper Abstract:
This paper is part of the panel: The Labor of Translation under Neoliberal Conditions

What is entailed, materially and affectively, in speaking two or more voices at once – none of which is “one’s own”? What is at stake when the medium for circulating the voices of so-called ‘global citizens’ is another human being, a person whose labor is often imagined as mechanical? This paper examines the labor of UN field interpreters, whose work is largely invisible, but essential to global organizations. Translators and interpreters are, after all, what make international relations possible. Based on lengthy ethnographic interviews with field interpreters who worked for UN organizations in Nepal, I discuss a tension between being both a witness to often harrowing testimonies that they voice in the first person and the prevailing notion held by UN officers that interpreters are neutral conduits of voice. These two seemingly opposed positions unite in the body and labor of a field interpreter. Guided by neoliberal frames of agency, along with ideas of global citizenship and transparency at work in organizations like the UN, the interpreter’s mediating labor necessarily becomes invisible. The interpreter’s dissociation from the both the principal and authorship of their utterance creates this illusion of neutrality and transparent evidence that an organization like the UN needs. But the illusion of invisible neutrality is interrupted frequently in the field, depending on the position of the interpreter. In this paper, I will discuss such moments of interruption as they are experienced differently by ‘national’ (Nepali) interpreters and by an ‘international’ (non-Nepali) interpreters. Though achieved in different ways, both ‘national’ and ‘international’ interpreters, I argue, become the invisible labor needed to produce widely circulating ideas like transparency and global citizenship.

Changing Linguistic landscapes in Asia
Rm 328

Cheryl Yin
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Title: Linguistic Role Models amidst Cambodian Linguistic Anxiety

When the communist Khmer Rouge regime ended in 1979, few educators survived. Cambodians believe that the deterioration of the Khmer language in the subsequent decades was a product of unqualified and inconsistent teachers. Some say Khmer is currently riddled with mistakes in both written and spoken forms. The recent prevalence of international schools lead some to surmise that Khmer will cease existing as the younger generation prefers to speak foreign languages over Khmer. These metapragmatic discourses (Silverstein 1976) echo other speech communities who feel their language is endangered or threatened. Cambodians are participating in a
“complaint tradition” (Milroy & Milroy 1999) and in discourses of nostalgia (Hill 1998; Cavanaugh 2004), recalling a past golden era as they lament the demise of Khmer. First, I explore historical, social, ideological factors that lead to such language attitudes and linguistic anxiety. Who are and who are not complaining, and why? What linguistic forms are singled out and whose speech is targeted?

Under these conditions, special linguistic scrutiny is placed on some actors. I focus on Cambodian media personalities who are expected to speak proper Khmer because of their visibility. Broadcast media are important sites for the circulation of discourse (Spitulnik 1996) and language revitalization (Urla 2015). Accordingly, media personalities are viewed as linguistic role models, an important node for disseminating language (Eckert 1989). Bringing together rhetoric and media, I discuss the role of public language amidst linguistic anxiety through ideologies of exemplary speakers, language standardization, and language endangerment.

Jie Cui
Nanjing University of Science and Technology

Title: Semiotics and Mediated Chronotopic (Self-)representations of the She (Ho Ne) Minority Nationality in Southern China

The Bakhtinian (1981) notion of chronotope highlights the ways that space, time, and models of personhood are linked in narrative frameworks. This concept has inspired researchers to investigate event configurations between the “present” and the “past” (e.g., Bauman and Briggs, 2003; Perrino 2006; Inoue, 2006; Wirtz, 2011; Woolard, 2004). This paper focus on She (Ho Ne)—an endangered language community located in the Pearl Delta Economic Zone in Southern China. Building from the ways that chronotopes have been theorized within linguistic anthropology (Silverstein, 2005; Agha, 2007), I am interested in the roles played by the semiotics of collective memories among the Ho Ne (endonym) and the media representation of concurrent She(exonym) nationality in space-time constructions that figurate Ho Ne in China’s imagined past and present. Three pieces of data drawn from ethnographic artifacts and publically available media reports will be discussed:1. Character transposition that enables speakers to calibrate the realm of their legend of origin with the imagined position of coevelness; 2. the extexualization of the bitter past experience through one singular piece of Ho Ne singing; 3. the commodification of Ho Ne cultural heritage throughfashioning an ethnic minority persona that performs authenticity in ways that are recognizable to the Han Gaze. I suggest that although Ho Ne speakers believe that the (endangered) Ho Ne language is the main (if not the only) repository of their tradition that provides historical past-to-present continuity, mediated representations of She continually framed it as an indigenous petit objet a in the distant past.
Based on the author’s recent ethnographic research in the Chinese Altai, this paper reports a linguistic practice in which Kazak herders deliberately violate the Kazak grammatical rule of subject-verb agreement. In this emergent speech style, the speaker uses a first- or second-person subject and a third-person verb in the same sentence. Originally, this generalized use of the third-person verb was a typical mistake made by Han Chinese with some limited knowledge of Kazak. Today, the subject-verb mismatch is not only found in the speech of Han Chinese, but also in that of Kazaks among themselves and with their Chinese neighbors. This stereotypically Chinese way of talking is being incorporated into Kazaks’ own speech as a new expression of playfulness, disrespect, casualness, and condescension. Due to its pragmatic values, Kazak speakers in Altai consider the ungrammatical style to be especially appropriate in joking relations. As a joking register, this Mock Chinese has gained some new significance in the recent years, as more and more Kazak herders choose to form their herding groups with their joking partners (someone outside their own clans) rather than with their paternal relatives (someone from their own clans). The resultant networks of herders are based on a shared mode of communication. This speech style is useful precisely because of its capacity to construe someone as a joking partner – a fundamentally relational concept.

Jin Li
University of Arizona

Title: Patriotic Hip-Hop and Chinese Youth’s Political Identification

Patriotic hip-hop has become an online sensation in China’s social media in recent years. These songs were produced by Chinese youth rappers who cared much about politics and world affairs. This paper contextualizes the cultural form of hip-hop and the patriotic theme within Chinese youth culture. It explores the dynamics within the “indexical field” (Eckert, 2018) organized by hip-hop in China, where patriotism joins coolness, rebelliousness and authenticity as a potential indexical meaning. It also draws on Silverstein’s “indexical order” (2003) to investigate the creativity and performativity of hip-hop in relation to the new context. The newness is twofold: first, it is a glocalization process where the appropriation, adoption and adaption of such a music genre are infused with Chinese local lives and emotions; secondly, social media serves as a crucial site where hip-hop meets Chinese youth and the youth meets the nation-state and the Communist Party. On the one hand, Chinese youth use hip-hop to compete with and supplement other music genres, such as folk and orchestral styles which are representative of the old-generation’s expression of patriotic feelings, in order to channel their own patriotic emotions and brand their political identity; on the other hand, the nation-state and the party involves themselves in the production,
circulation and promotion of patriotic hip-hop to communicate with their youth and inculcate nationalist emotions. Through the productive incorporation of patriotic hip-hop, we see how the trajectories of the youth’s and the Party’s political projects converge at this point and in particular identify the pursuit of subjecthood by Chinese youth both as a national subject and a global citizen.

Edwin Everhart
University of California- Los Angeles

Title: Old Language, New Speakers, and New Meanings in Northeastern Japan

This presentation describes how concrete linguistic features are (re)produced as tokens of nonstandard local language in Iwate Prefecture (northeastern Japan), arguing that ‘dialect’ is best conceived as a primarily ideological category. State policies of language standardization and ‘dialect eradication’ (Carroll 2001:183) have been gradually removed over the past forty years, but sounding local still puts young people at risk of a stigma of backwardness. During my 12-month ethnographic study at Iwate University, some students identified themselves on their own terms as authoritative ‘dialect’ speakers, but most sought to avoid having their ‘accent’ mentioned by others. Since the boundaries of these codes are porous, power lies in the act of enregisterment more than in speakers’ choice of code. I suggest we consider ‘dialect’ not as a static object, but instead as a language-ideological process that creates a hierarchy of appropriate contexts of language use, indexed to stereotyped personae (cf. Johnstone 2010:17). In doing so the process of ‘dialect’ establishes a hierarchy of adequacy and deficiency, justifying inequalities in economic and cultural capital. Drawing on a corpus of spoken interaction collected during participant-observation, I use concrete examples of “reflexive processes... of reanalysis” (Agha 2007:141) in which speakers reveal the boundaries of ‘local dialect’ in their approach to particular features, boundaries fraught with local political meaning. I foreground a critical lens on the reification of codes, and explore the implications for discourses of linguistic discrimination and ‘dialect endangerment.’

The Pragmatics and Ideologies of Social Media
Rm 329

Jona Fras
The University of Edinburgh

Title: Enhancing Liveness: Jordanian Radio Broadcasters and the Metapragmatics of ‘Facebook Live’

How do media ideologies affect the integration of ‘new’ media technologies in established settings of mass mediation? The Facebook Live service, in which videos are
streamed live via a Facebook page and recorded for later perusage, is one of many social media techniques adopted by radio broadcasters in Jordan to address digitally literate audiences and broaden channels of participation. I analyse the use of Facebook Live by two popular Jordanian radio personalities, the ‘radio preacher’ Muhammad Nouh and the morning talk show host Muhammad al-Wakeel, in order to explore the discursive and semiotic functions of enhanced digital ‘live-ness’ for radio broadcasting.

As demonstrated by Nouh’s practice of transmitting video recordings live from the studio, enhanced liveness allows radio to overcome its conventional affordances of sonic exclusivity and temporal linearity – providing a visual record that is digitally archived for later re-circulation – while also continuing to define its media texts as radio discourse through visual and linguistic cues. For al-Wakeel, Facebook Live plays a different function: it allows him to circulate ‘field videos’ recorded outside the studio, while retaining interdiscursive links to the dominant mediation setting of his morning show through his linguistic practice and persona. In order to understand the significance of liveness in contemporary remediated settings, close attention is therefore needed to linguistic and semiotic practice. Generalised accounts of ideological or institutional configurations do not tell the whole story; it is through linguistically and semiotically anchored metapragmatic processes that ideologies of liveness become relevant in the mass media and beyond.

Keisha Wiel
Temple University

Title: Ideological Notions through Discourses about Papiamentu Use in a Facebook Setting

Language socialization within the Dutch Caribbean context primarily deals with ways people are socialized to think about their native language, Papiamentu, in contrast to other languages (Dutch, English, and Spanish) spoken in Aruba and Curacao. These ideologies stigmatize how languages are viewed and used within social contexts. It also manifests through language policies that dictate which languages are best suited for specific institutions, such as education. In this paper, I propose to look at how Facebook facilitates this socialization process. Specifically, this topic will focus on the discourse surrounding Papiamentu as a language of worth and on the ways in which Papiamentu is discussed in relation to the other languages present on the islands.

The data was collected from Facebook posts that have been sourced and saved from personal accounts as well as public pages. As the Facebook posts are primarily about language use, there are several categories that further define the myriad of ways in which Papiamentu is discussed on the islands. For the purposes of this paper, I have chosen to crowdsource posts into three specific categories: public shaming, policing, and critiquing discourse. These three categories represent how language is not only
debated and critiqued but how users make efforts to incorporate the creole alongside its European counterparts. This paper will delve into how Facebook represents an alternative platform where multilingual speakers on the islands can engage freely in discussions about language use as opposed to institutional spaces where ideologies about European languages as superior are upheld.

Dominika Baran
Duke University

Title: Narrative dimensions on social media: The co-telling of stories among former refugee women in a private group message on Facebook

This paper explores ways in which new interaction platforms such as social media structure the telling of narratives and discursive negotiation of identities. The research participants are six Polish women who met as teenagers in 1987 in an Italian refugee camp. Later they moved to different Anglophone countries, and reconnected on Facebook in 2008. The data comes from the women’s Facebook group message discussions about immigration, identity, and heritage during 18 months in 2012-2013. As the women invoke and reinterpret shared memories of life in Italy and subsequent experiences of immigration to the U.S., Canada, and Australia, this shared history becomes a resource in the joint endeavor of producing a new group identity. The Facebook group message becomes a translocal, transnational, superdiverse space (Vertovec 2007, Arnaut and Spotti 2014, De Fina 2016) in which the participants negotiate their friendship and their participation in their small online community, partly through the exchange of stories and the joint reconstruction of a shared past.

Drawing on Ochs and Capps’ (2001) framework of narrative dimensions, and on Georgakopoulou’s (2013) social-interactional approach to narrative study, this paper examines how the spatial and temporal features of a private Facebook group message offer new possibilities for storytelling and for the discursive enactment of identities. In particular, I explore the narrative dimensions of tellership and co-tellership, linearity, embeddedness in the surrounding discourse, as well as multimodality and intertextuality afforded by the use of resources such as photographs or diary pages that can be instantly shared in the message.

Kate Lyons
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Title: #livelaughlove: The Enregisterment of the ‘Basic Bitch’ Social Media Register

This paper addresses the evolving forms and functions of social media by investigating the enregisterment of the semiotic repertoire of the ‘Basic Bitch’ figure of personhood (Wortham et al. 2011; Agha 2007). I discuss how the ‘Basic Bitch’, initially a
characterization of personhood within African American communities who enjoys material items and social practices viewed as trite, conventional or pretentious has “fractionated” Agha (2007: 81) to additionally index a white female counterpart with its own distinct semiotic register, increasingly composed of social media behaviors. Positioning multimodal semiotics employed by users (text, emojis, hashtags, photos, memes, gifs, videos, etc.) as particularized registers that through enregisterment acquire pragmatic value to transform into “social facts” regarding resources employed and in turn index (congruous and contesting) characteristics, roles or personhoods (Agha 2007: 80; Agha 2011), I track the sociohistories of the semiotics of these registers (e.g. hashtags like #basic, #livelaughlove and related variants; specific filters on Snapchat) as well as the extensive metapragmatic commentary (Buzzfeed ‘listicles’; wikihow pages, etc.) that surrounds these figures and the semiotic registers that link them. In doing so, hashtags are seen to link or index traits in an abstract theoretical sense (Peirce 1940; Silverstein 1976) and act as literal indexes, in a click directing the user to a collection of posts that share the same tag—allowing both analyst and user to view embodiments of semiotic transmission chains. Thus, this paper highlights how enregisterment operates in new media(s) and the relationship of these processes to cultural models at large.

Lavanya Murali Proctor
Lawrence University

Co-author: Joshua Raclaw
West Chester University

Title: What is Like? Baby Please Heart Me: On the Indexicality and Interactional Function of the Twitter?

How do you heart tweets? Let us count the ways. This paper is a semiotic and sequential analysis of online interaction that explores the use of the heart (?) button on the microblogging site Twitter. The heart is a technological affordance of the platform that is coded as “liking” (or in Twitter’s own terms, “to show appreciation for”) a tweet. Given the importance of social media (and Twitter in particular) in today’s political and cultural climate, understanding the meanings of interactions on Twitter has become a salient concern. Drawing on a corpus of cases where speakers produce metacommentary on the presence or absence of hearts garnered by their tweets, we focus on how hearts mediate interaction. We note that hearts are treated by users as a salient interactional resource that in many ways parallels the production of a preferred response. Moreover, in some contexts, the absence of hearts is perceived as a notable absence that is accountable and in need of mediation. We argue that, far from being a simple indicator of liking or agreement, the Twitter heart is polysemous—a complex tool in online interaction that indexes a range of meanings and messages.
This paper examines language ideologies and the dynamics of code-mixing in the text-messaging of Tibetan youth via the social media app, WeChat. The text-messaging analyzed here originates in Qinghai province, part of greater Tibet where inhabitants speak varieties of Amdo, one of three major Tibetan languages. Due to bilingual schooling, most Tibetan youth in Qinghai speak and write in both Tibetan and Chinese. Consequently, they participate in a linguistic ecology consisting of two diglossias—the distinction between spoken Amdo and literary Tibetan, and the divergent national Chinese standard (Mandarin) and regional vernacular (Qinghai hua)—as well as three writing systems—the Tibetan alphabet, the Chinese character system, and pinyin (Romanized transliteration of characters). Here, smartphone technologies crucially shape youths' orthographic choices on WeChat. To represent Chinese, users type on their smartphone in pinyin, and choose an associated character. To represent Tibetan, users install a Tibetan keyboard and form graphemes themselves, opening the possibility for spelling errors. Heated debates over language shift to Mandarin focus on these orthographic choices in new media like WeChat, and articulate ideologies about both linguistic purity and ethno-linguistic loss. While youth take critical stances on the educational, economic, and political forces that encourage the use of Mandarin over Tibetan, indexical links between literary Tibetan and religion discourage innovation in Tibetan writing. This analysis of code-mixing, especially the representation of spoken Amdo in Chinese characters, considers how Tibetan youth navigate competing ideologies of linguistic purity and ethno-linguistic survival through the new media of WeChat.

Investigating the Metapragmatics of South Asian Publics

Panel Organizer: Indivar Jonnalagadda
Discussant: Llerena Searle
Panel Abstract:
The analytic tool of “publics” has been widely used in the field of South Asia Studies to think about the emergence of national and linguistically bounded communities. Building on classic works on the notions of print capitalism (Anderson 1983) and the public sphere (Habermas 1989) a number of influential works have developed these themes in new directions in the context of South Asia and South Asian languages (Chatterjee 1993, Chakrabarty 2001, Orsini 2002, Mitchell 2010). These works have tended to focus on the emergence of vernacular language ideologies and the role of the printing press in affecting national and state group identities along linguistic lines. Other scholarship by feminist and subalternist scholars have challenged the idea that publics coincide with national or state projects, and instead show how they can be fragmented along various
social axes (Nijhawan 2012, Cody 2013, Ingram 2014). At the same time, these accounts continue to privilege print media as the mode of constructing public identities, foregrounding technology and the ideology of languages at the expense of attention to everyday interactions.

The notion of publics has been used in the context of colonial South Asia, and these analyses remain important and influential. However, in line with the topic of this year’s meeting of the Society for Linguistic Anthropology “Media, Meanings, Messages, E-Motions”, we are interested in investigating how analyzing metapragmatic discourse across new forms of media and new social contexts in South Asia might challenge us to look at “publics” in new ways. A new set of discourses around ideas of New India, around the neo-liberal push to open economic frontiers while consolidating nationalist and religious boundaries, notions of “post-truth” and the circulations of “fake news” on social media, and changing ideas of the nation, present us with new challenges in thinking about publics, particularly in a context like South Asia where right-wing nationalist regimes polarize everyday political discourse.

Linguistic anthropology and theories of metapragmatics (Silverstein 1976) provide an alternate method of analyzing the quotidian social interactions that underlie ideologies of publics across different mediatized interactional spheres. Paying attention to the metapragmatics (i.e. discourse surrounding the use of language itself) of publics raises the following questions: How are publics enacted through mediatized interactions and discourse? How do mediatized construals of publics constitute emblems that are available to be taken up as individuals negotiate membership within larger communities? Further, how might an attention to metapragmatic discourse shed light on publics that have been previously ignored and challenge ideas of publics that have been taken for granted?

This panel on “Investigating the metapragmatics of South Asian publics,” by looking across different mediums of interaction, such as books, film, government orders, social media, chai shops and corporate training, seeks to attend to how individuals engage with talk about publics as they negotiate their own social positions.

Indivar Jonnalagadda
University of Pennsylvania
Title: Citizens in the Making: The Uptake of Government Orders in Hyderabad, India

Urban studies have moved beyond a conception of “citizenship” as a disembodied set of rights towards thinking of dynamic processes of claim-making (Chatterjee 2004; Holston 2008) and also of embodied forms of performing belonging (Butler 2015). These approaches often take for granted the rift between putative “first-class” and “second-class citizens”. In contrast, I wish to argue that “citizenship” is the cumulative effect of a series of communicative events between the government and the citizen. Each event results in a reflexive reanalysis of the citizen’s position vis-à-vis the sovereign state. In
the present climate of thinking about the “neoliberal state” and the deleterious effects of its exception-making on citizens and the very notion of citizenship (Ong 2006), this semiotic approach will be a useful way of looking at how emblems of citizenship are not simply a product of interpellation by the state (Agha 2011), but a result of contentious dialogue between government and citizen, and always with reference to a history of communicative events.

I will look at the issuing of two specific Government Orders (GOs) in Hyderabad, India in December 2014 as a specific event of communication by the government and use ethnographic fieldnotes to examine how messages of the government’s intent circulated through various media, how they were uptaken and analyzed in light of previous GOs and how a reanalyzed meaning circulated through social media and in public meetings. In the GOs, the government classified the population into two broad categories of Below-Poverty-Line (BPL) and Above-Poverty-Line (APL), each entailing a different set of concessions and entitlements. BPL and APL were neither objective nor pre-determined categories. Instead, various groups made claims to identify as either BPL or APL by citing histories of communication with the government (through documents, photographs, recordings, etc.) to reflexively reanalyze their positions as citizens and to contest the government’s stereotypic formulations of the concessions and entitlements they are owed.

Elliot Montpellier
University of Pennsylvania

Title: Sectarian and secular talk in South Asia: two case studies of Pakistani media

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, print media impacted the place of authority in Islamic discourse and debate. (Robinson, 1993) In related ways, print culture also shaped the formation of Urdu publics (Orsini, 2009). The impact of print has been characterized as an attack on traditional forms of Islamic knowledge transmission, a democratization of Islamic authority and a refiguring of scholars’ place as authority (Robinson, 1993; Zaman, 1999; Ingram, 2014). Yet, this attention to the materiality of language and to relationships between elite producers of discourse and new media forms has failed to consider how individuals participate in and identify with the publics produced. In Pakistan, the last ten years have witnessed a vibrant yet tumultuous embrace of social media and a proliferation of private media conglomerates. How can this moment, where an ever-increasing variety of media forms communicate linguistic signs, highlight how religious identities are shaped? This paper examines the novel Pir-e Kamil (Urdu, 2004; English 2011), written by Umera Ahmed and the film Khuda ke liye, (2007) written and directed by Shoaib Mansoor, to think about the ways that individuals relate to religious discourse and religious authority through mass-mediated messages about religion. Given its historical interest, the paper also takes up questions on the change and persistence of meaning across forms of enchanted registers of the
religious and the secular. The paper argues that *Pir-e Kamil* and *Khuda ke liye* are two cases of rival metapragmatic discourses in the production and reproduction of sectarian and secular talk. They work by affecting particular states and dispositions to these distinct forms of speaking about religious discourse, both by affirming particular stances and by negating others. This paper explores how individuals draw on the tropic nature of identities personified in these narratives to shape religious and secular personas.

Kristina Nielsen
University of Pennsylvania

Title: You can't train Indianisms: the metapragmatics of the global Indian

This paper analyses the use of the metapragmatic category “Indianism” in the call center hiring and training industry. The term Indianism is used more broadly among the speakers of English in India to denote a linguistic practice that is associated with India. The call center is one place where this practice has been taken up formally. Indianisms are not ungrammatical, according to call center language and accent trainers, but are undesirable for employees who interact with foreign customers. Moreover, grammar mistakes can be corrected through training, Indianisms are more difficult, if not impossible to train. Some Indians speak with Indianisms and some do not, this difference is a marker of class, but also is emblematic of a presumed difference in media consumption and schooling. Drawing from field work conducted during the summers of 2016 and 2017 in New Delhi, India, I analyze interactions between accent trainers and potential job candidates where certain speech patterns are labeled as Indianisms, and others are labeled as grammar errors. In this paper, I think with and beyond the concept of an Indian public to understand how the concept of Indianism is part of a range of metapragmatic behavior that distinguishes for the members of the call center industry a “global” Indian public from a “local” Indian public, an ideology which I argue is central to Indian international call center culture.

March 9 Session 1

Political Discourse, Mediatization, and the Resurgent Right
Rm 345

Panel Organizer: Hilary Dick
Session Abstract co-author: Alejandro Paz
Discussant: Shalini Shankar

Panel Abstract:
In recent years, there has been a resurgence of right wing nationalisms that target marginalized groups as foreign and possibly treasonous. These movements do not
simply target these “others” of the nation, but any liberal institution that has sought to extend the boundaries of inclusion. Supporters of such liberalism are portrayed by right wing activists, politicians, and pundits as corrupters of the nation. With the social media’s impact on the circulation of news, right-wing movements seek to mobilize national publics that strengthen forms of exclusion from the nation state. Seeing this, many warn that contemporary right wing movements are comparable to past forms of totalitarianism. Whether we speak of the anti-EU sentiment, anti-Semitism, or Islamophobia in North America, Europe, and Israel, struggles over state sovereignty are not the only investments in these shifts. At stake is the very basis upon which political claims can be made at all.

This panel explores the political discourse of right-wing movements and the practices for disseminating and, in some cases, mediatizing them. “Political discourse” is understood to refer to talk and writing, from campaign rallies to the crafting of public policy, through which actors articulate positions on topics designated as in the general social good. A long scholarly tradition examining political discourse from a linguistic anthropological perspective has illuminated the semiotic forms, features, and practices through which the nation-state is understood as a sovereign territory, offering a window onto an important set of processes, from the “branding” of messages to the delineation of the boundaries around who belongs. This work also points to the importance of understanding how such discourse is mediatized (bundled into commodity forms for mass circulation); comes to inform the agency of publics; and plays a role in creating and then excluding the “others” of the nation.

The papers on this panel will explore the above problems from several perspectives. Durrani examines the “alt right” policing of political speech on college campuses through a consideration of cases of faculty censure in the United States. Greenberg turns our focus to liberal imaginaries of right-wing dystopia to investigate what politics are made possible through invocations of fascist pasts, focusing on freedom of expression cases at the European Court of Human Rights. Dick offers an analysis of the immigration rhetoric of Donald Trump, exploring the discursive strategies that allow political stances to be converted into commonsense truths. Paz considers Israeli Republicans who campaigned for Trump in Israel, investigating the central role that Islamophobic discourse about Israel as “on the frontier of civilization” played in these politics. Collectively, these papers address interrelated questions: How are right-wing political discourses constituted and conveyed? To whom are they directed and to whom do they appeal? What semiotic practices, forms, and features help enable the resonance of right wing messaging? How do speakers transform positions into unassailable “truths” for certain publics? What forms of transmission and uptake are involved; how and in what contexts are they mediatized? How are liberal institutions both targeted and implicated in these processes?

Mariam Durrani
Hamilton College
Title: The Censure Economy: The Influential and Problematic Role of Alt-right Social Media Campaigns in Contemporary College Life

This paper analyzes the emergent mediatized processes that enable right-wing social media users to become influencers, borrowing from social media marketing, in cases of free speech conduct and faculty censure. Across these cases at public and private universities, ‘alt-right’ social media users, often acting as individual actors, use their online speech acts to criticize professors’ social media and also to threaten the professors and the college. These threats constitute the rationale used by college administrators to place faculty on temporary or even permanent leave, producing an emergent phenomenon I term the “censure economy”. The censure economy creates an environment where the alt-right social media campaigns can indirectly impact college free speech policies and faculty careers. In such examples of right-wing censure, it begins when the faculty member uses their personal social media profile to speak about a contemporary political issue, such as race, the military, or US-Israel foreign policy. These social media speech acts are targeted by certain right-wing Twitter users and used to generate a speech chain (of tweets) that condemn the original speech act (or tweet), the professor, and the college, which, in response, the administration may make a statement or take action against the professor. In this coordinated process of mediatization, where a college believes certain kinds of speech may devalue their institutional reputation and status, we can observe how free speech debates are being negotiated in real-time through social media exchanges between individual actors and educational institutions with the larger audience of the mediatized Twittersphere.

Jessica Greenberg
University of Illinois

Title: When Right is wrong: specters of mediatized fascism at the European Court of Human Rights

In this paper I turn an analytical lens on liberal imaginaries of right-wing dystopia to ask: what politics is made possible through invocations of totalitarian and fascist pasts? How do actors within contemporary liberal institutions police the boundaries of democracy and the exercise of rights in the name of keeping the right at bay? And how does an attention to right-wing discourse as a particularly mediatized form impact Court judgements about the potential danger of speech? Focusing on freedom of expression cases at the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), I ask how lawyers and judges understand right wing discourse to be tokens of fascist types. I argue that in part the danger of speech as violent action is linked not to denotational content of speech, but the specter of speech as readily circulatable and public. That is, mediatization itself influences when and how right-wing speech threatens democracy. In addition to examining case law at the Court, I also think through the ways that judges and registry lawyers invoke historical precedent and the weight of the past in thinking through the
possible public effects of right-wing speech. I suggest that some forms of contemporary European violence do not find their way into ECtHR legal frameworks precisely because judges do not see them as analogous to past histories of violence that have taken on tropic, and thus legally actionable, status.

Hilary Dick
Arcadia University

Title: Commonsense Racism: Latin American Immigration in the Time of Trump

The US immigration regime has long worked to position mobile populations from Mexico and Central America as a threat to US sovereignty and national unity. As part of this history, the category of “illegal alien” has become conflated with an image of the “south-of-the-border” migrant as a dangerous criminal Other. Thus, the US immigration regime is racializing, producing an “immigrant illegality” that constructs certain migrants as irredeemably dangerous. In this paper, I use analysis of Trump’s immigration rhetoric in his public speeches to explore the discursive strategies that connect Trumpism to these legacies. Trump extends and amplifies racializing immigrant illegality by constructing it as commonsense: a form of truth posited as inherent and obvious to any reasonable person. The effect of commonsense allows Trump to position overtly racist speech—such as claiming all Mexicans are rapists—as an unpleasant fact that must be spoken, a key tactic of the contemporary right. Trump creates such commonsense racism through the production of encompassing, reductive dichotomies (between North and South, the United States and Mexico, Legal and Illegal, Good and Bad) that are interrelated through semiotic practices that produce likeness between otherwise unlike terms. Trump’s analogous dichotomies extend racializing immigrant illegality by multiplying its likeness across an ever-greater set of social arenas in ways that allow them to function, also, as forms branding—and, in some instances, commodifying—group belonging to the nation.

Alejandro Paz
University of Toronto Scarborough

Title: Trumping in Hebrew: Mediatizing the Israel Message

More than ever, US presidential politics involves addressing Israeli publics in order to address US publics, all a part of messaging competence and strength in the Middle East. Israel is now a vital site for US presidential hopefuls to appear, as well as for presidential policy: Mitt Romney and more recently Hillary Clinton travelled to appear in front of Israeli audiences, and Barack Obama is severely criticized by many Israelis and their American supporters for the souring of relations between the two countries. In the last presidential election, Israeli Republicans campaigned among dual-citizens in Israel in favor of Trump, despite misgivings about antisemitism from his milieu. The complex
mediatization of this message—of disseminating political message to multiple publics through mass distributed commodities—was amplified in the 2016 election in important ways through the ultra-nationalist Israeli government and its supporters. The joint message often turned on an Islamophobic image of the US and Israel fighting together a civilizational struggle on the frontier of the Middle East. In this paper, I explore these processes of mediatization and their racializing repercussions by looking at Donald Trump’s messaging on Israel, as well as that of his surrogates there. In August 2016, Israel’s Republicans set up campaign offices in Israel to campaign among the estimated 250,000 US citizens (including the opening of a Hebrew twitter account). Drawing on recent work on mediatization and political messaging, this paper explores how Trump’s messaging on foreign policy and Israel helped reinforce overlapping right-wing publics in the North Atlantic.

English’s Others: Problems with 'Complexity' and 'Hybridity'

Rm 328

Panel Organizer: Joshua Babcock
Discussant: Lisa Mitchell

Session Abstract:
In Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows (2007), Alastair Pennycook articulated a now canonic position on the globalization of English:

[English] cannot be usefully understood in modernist states-centric models of imperialism or world Englishes, or in terms of traditional, segregationist models of language. Thus, while drawing on the useful pluralization strategy of world Englishes, I prefer to locate these Englishes within a more complex vision of globalization (Pennycook 2007: 5).

The “more complex” vision advocated by Pennycook and others (e.g. Gilley 2017) proposes that “we need to move beyond arguments about homogeneity or heterogeneity, or imperialism and nation states, and instead focus on trans-local and transcultural flows” (ibid: 5 – 6). In similar ways, scholarly accounts of cultural “hybridity” and “mixing” in pre- and post-colonial contact situations emphasize the obsolescence of state-bounded analytic approaches to languages in plural societies (cf. Furnivall 1956[1948], Chua and Kwok 2001) or new nations (Geertz, ed. 1963, Castles et. al 2014[1993]). “Local” or “regional” Englishes, whether celebrated or excoriated, have been identified everywhere and at virtually every possible analytic scale (Palmié 2006)—analytic, in that it falls to the analyst to identify the pure types that ostensibly precede any given hybrid situation.

This panel challenges two assumptions that emerge in a wide variety of sociolinguistic scholarship on the trans-national appropriations of, engagements with, and local (hybrid, mixed, blended) transformations of English, as both language of command and register.
of globalization. The first is the assumption of a scholarly we that can give up on passé projects of decolonization so we can focus on the “more complex” reality. The second is the assumption that “new forms of power, control and destruction” as well as “new forms of resistance, change, appropriation and identity” (Pennycook 2007:5) are somehow antithetical to, and can fall somehow beyond the rubric of, both theories of decolonization and analyses of language and power.

This panel reconsiders the categories of “English” and “Englishes” as they are defined by speakers alongside or against the backdrop of this “new” scholarship, and explores the consequences and limits of ideologies of linguistic flux.

Joshua Babcock
The University of Chicago

Title: Making a Local Hybrid: Critical Literary Technologies and the Ambivalent ‘Failures’ of Mid-Century ‘Engmalchin’ Poetry

In 1950, a 16-page booklet of poetry, *Pulse*, was published in Singapore. Its 12 poems in a range of styles, from rhymed metrical stanzas to free verse, met with reactions ranging from glowing praise to fierce criticism. Authored by 19-year-old Wang Gungwu, today the collection is noted not only for its theretofore unprecedented effort to eschew British literary style in favor of a “distinctively Malayan voice” (Holden 2008), but also for its “hybrid” “artificial interlanguage” (ibid): “Engmalchin,” a “mix” of English, Malay, and Chinese that could act as the ideal medium through which to entextualize a Malayan “hybrid” identity. Despite the fact that Wang’s poetry met with contemporary critical acclaim, however, Engmalchin was simultaneously declared dead on arrival by colonial education specialists, a “failed” literary experiment doomed from the start by its “self-conscious artificiality” (Vackey 1955).

I argue that the ambivalent ascriptions of Engmalchin’s “success” and “failure” were made possible via a fractally-recursive contrast between an embodied–biographical “hybridity,” on the one hand, and colonial anxieties over the “mixing” of standardized English purity, on the other. Both the positive, nationalistic evaluations performed by Engmalchin poets and the negative evaluations performed by their colonial critics depended on the ability to recruit publishing institutions and technologies to their respective causes, if only provisionally or ephemerally. By considering *Pulse*’s evaluative uptake across student journals and literary-criticism publications, I examine how different actors worked to relocate English-language register contrasts from poets’ individual bodies to the poetry’s denotational-textual structure to the colony–metropole relationship and back.
Jay Schutte  
University of Chicago  
Title: Made in Others’ Wor(l)ds: Chronotopes of the Anglosign in China-Africa Encounters  

This paper engages the forms of stratification and conditions of value that imbricate language and education reception among contemporary African and Chinese students in Beijing. In it I will reveal some of the constraints that Chinese and African students experience in their mutual, but ultimately stratified pursuits of an unmarked cosmopolitanism in contemporary Beijing. In support, I will provide a detailed analysis of important contours of these constraints: the persistence of English as the unit of commensuration in Sino-South encounters where signs of English and whiteness become the only available forms of cultural capital for actors who have been historical others to this semiotic field. In showing how language is not disarticulable from its surrounding indexicalities (Silverstein 1976) and material historical conditions (Marx 1972) – like the signs of race and cosmopolitan mobility – I hope to draw attention to the limits of cosmopolitan aspiration, when its units of commensuration, like ‘neutral’ English, become compromised by the ideological vectors of whiteness and stratified mobility. Drawing on the ideas of Russian formalist thinker, Mikhail Bakhtin, I will propose an analytic through which to interpret an articulated relationship between English and its indexically-associated signs of race and mobility. I term this the Anglosign. Doing so, I suggest, draws attention to the regime of evaluation or arbitration within which Sino-African postcolonial ‘translation’ unfolds.

Velda Khoo  
University of Colorado Boulder  
Title: “Tidying up” hybridity: the enregisterment of Singlish through metadiscourse

In May 2016, literary critic Gwee Li Sui wrote in a New York Times op-ed that the Singapore government’s war on Singlish seemed to be over, as politicians themselves are using the language. To some, this was an exoneration of Singlish, the irrepressible vernacular that connects “speakers across ethnic and socioeconomic divides”, flourishing despite state efforts to cripple its significance as it “thrive[s] on codifying political resistance”. Pro-Singlish discourse has been gaining ground in recent years as part of a nationalistic push for the preservation of local cultural heritage, arguing that Singlish is an embodiment of Singapore’s diverse population, and is therefore, something that needs protection (Wee 2011). The pro-Singlish camp, spearheaded by cultural elites in Singapore, position themselves as historically-silenced “common” Singaporeans ideologically opposed to the ruling class, as they push for the legitimation of Singlish. This stark division of for and against not only ignores the effects of standard English’s symbolic dominance, but erases the voices of minority communities, whose views on Singlish are influenced by their inability to participate in Singapore’s globalized economy (Said-Sirhan 2014). In this paper, I analyze how subjects
“tidy up” and un-chaotize hybrid spaces (cf. Gal & Irvine 2000) to their political advantage, and in that process, reveal the fissures in society along lines of class and race. I also discuss the linguistic effects this debate has on Singlish as it is further enregistered through indexicalities of political resistance, ultimately limiting its power as a radical symbol against the hegemony of English.

Chronotope and Sinophone
Rm 329

Panel Organizer: Yukun Zeng
Discussant: Lily Hope Chumley

Session Abstract:
Semiotic anthropology has drawn on the Bakhtinian concept of chronotope (Agha 2007) to capture the semiotic (re)arrangement of spatial-temporal relationships of speaker(s) in social interactions. Although Bakhtin (1981) originally borrowed this term from Einstein’s breakthrough theory of relativity, the (re)arrangement of chronotope does not need to be new. Some chronotopic semiotic arrangements appear to be quite fixed, anchoring the speakers in hegemonic “envelops” (Silverstein 2005). Famous examples include narrations of nation, state, and civilization. In accordance of the entitlement of “New” of the inaugural SLA meeting, it would be a normative calling for linguistic anthropological uptake to re-arrange some long given chronotopic envelops.

This panel takes this uptake to critically employ chronotope-inspired semiotics to engage with the rising field of Sinophone studies (Shih al eds. 2013). Intended to trouble the fixed, hegemonic notion of China, as one of its leading scholars argue, “Sinophone studies takes as its objects of study the Sinitic-language communities and cultures outside China as well as ethnic minority communities and cultures within China where Mandarin is adopted or imposed” (Shih 2013:11). In this way, it is the very naming of sinophone that crystalizes distinctive cases from several disciplines, Chinese American writers who write in Chinese (Diaspora Literature), Chinese-speaking Muslims (New Qing History), sinitization education (Critical Ethnic Studies), among others (Shih 2013:8). But are these all the same? In what degree, “Sinitic-language”, or even Mandarin, is another envelop frozen in space and time? Should decentering “sino” entail another fetishism of “phone”? Far from delineating an alternative chronotope to understand Chinese language users, Sinophones could be better understood as a theoretical provocation for empirically investigating the semiotic unfolding and enclosing of China as a spatial-temporal arrangement for “Chinese language users”, which is also an emergent, co-constructed category.

Drawing on cases from the revitalization of Confucian reading practice (Zeng), online remixes of standardized broadcasting voice in 1990s (Han), second-person stance-taking of Chinese country in online sarcasm (Ke), and the popularization of foreign language
competition in ethnic minority regions of China (Jian), this panel looks into how new chronotopic form and experience could be mediatized in contemporary China or configure “China” for the variety of Chinese language users, and what are the roles of media, meanings, messages, E-Motions in these semiotic processes. The “newness” (Gershon 2017) here does not come from the presupposed discontinuity between old civilization and new era. As the first two cases suggest, China’s particular historicity still resources innovative invention of tradition or imagination of community. On the other hand, what is also suspended is the dichotomy between the scales of “China” and Sinophonic Studies. As the other two cases indicate, this scalar difference is interactionally negotiated by different actors (Carr and Lempert 2016). This panel seeks to account the reflexivity of these actors in the production and mediatization of sinophonic chronotopes.

Yukun Zeng
University of Chicago

Title: Confucian Reading and its Modern Fate

When President Xi visited Qufu, Confucius’ birthplace, in 2013, to comment on the use of Confucianism for China’s development, he might be reminded of the pessimistic diagnosis of Confucian China by the great sinologist Levenson in Confucian China and its Modern Fate. “The museum where they posed Confucius may be a storehouse of value and inspiration. And 'museumified' is not 'mummified'. Still, the 'museumified' Confucius does not speak” (1968:82). In contemporary China, people may easily adopt quotes from the Analects to verify socialist slogans or self-improvement doctrines, but how could the Confucian texts be read as canons again?

This presentation tries to answer this question by scrutinizing the case of Dujing or “reading the (Confucian) canons”, a controversial educational movement in China. Claimed to be the authentic traditional Chinese pedagogy, Dujing features repetitively reading aloud of ancient canons without interpretation. This way of reading is argued to help readers access “perennial” moral wisdoms in Confucian canons, in contrast to “monetary knowledge” taught in public schools.

My analysis will focus on 1) how Dujing’s canonical reading is meaningful for its students as a chronotopic practice that embodies both repetitive temporality of reading and perennial historicity of canonical knowledge; and 2) how Dujing’s reading is debated by public media and Confucians scholars. The debate on how to read Confucian texts is a conflict between not only different chronotopic framings of China’s past and future but how Chinese readers could read through themselves in these sino-chronotopes.

Wenliang Han
University of Chicago
Title: "Being Cruel": the parody practice and generational self-fashioning of a Chinese online community

My paper examines a Chinese online parody video genre known as *guichu*, which reworks 10-20 year-old Chinese television programs, especially those speaking materials typically featuring what is considered “Broadcasting Voice”. I do so firstly through a study of the aesthetics of both the original television materials and the online parody of them. By examining how the online community creatively reworks these “out-of-date” television resources, I clarify the process by which the originally expected interpretation embodied by the television material is reanalyzed and contested. In doing so, I also explore the motivations of online participants to produce and consume such media by analyzing people’s metapragmatic discourses. I argue that this video genre called *guichu* in China orients to a new cosmopolitan and media-savvy voice, in contrast to the kind of “official” and “professional” one represented by the once privileged Broadcasting Voice. Through these contrasting voices, what is in play can be better framed as entire entextualized worlds, as Mikhail Bakhtin (1982) referred to as “chronotopes.” Since Bakthin argues, “voices” are always emplotted in particular time-spaces, linked to canonical settings and temporal flows (also see Agha, 2007). Thus in “citing” the very chronotope embodied in Broadcasting Voice and reflexively constructing a new one out of it, the community of online video makers and audiences illuminates a generational self-fashioning and sense of a new sinophonic identity, since, as Wirtz (2014) have argued, signs of time and place must be meaningfully taken up in order to create chronotopic subjectivities.

Xiao Ke
Duke University

Title: Mass-mediated Stance and Accountability: Politics of Using Ni-Guo in Chinese Language Cyberspace

In 2015, the then independent, now rumored to be state-paid Chinese meme-writer(s), Big Cluck the Rubber Chicken (Chin: da-gu-gu-gu-gu-ji) coined the word *ni-guo* (lit: your country). Referring to China in everyday cyber speech, the term *ni-guo* has sequentially gone viral in Chinese language cyberspace (also translated as “your China”, see Oleson 2015). Questions of “why do some people use the term *ni-guo*?” or “is the term *ni-guo* insulting?” have met hundreds of exhaustive and terse responses in several major Chinese public forums, including Zhihu, Baidu BBS, and Tianya Forum. Many self-claimed non-nationalist Chinese have depicted their experience of using this term in the following way: “at first, I dislike people using ni-guo and refrained myself from using it; but then I cannot stop using it at every occasion!”

How do we understand this expression drawing from linguistic anthropological research on deictics (Silverstein 1976)? What kind of stance-taking process is implicated in using
this term? (Englebretson 2007, Adachi 2016) What kind of chronotope(s) does this term recruit and animate (Bakhtin 1981, Agha 2007, 2015)? In this paper, I analyze the usage as well as metapragmatics (Silverstein 1993) – the discussions of and responses to its usage – of the term ni-guo. I argue the usage of ni-guo relates to an emerging – yet unfinalizable – stance of the self that is slippery in voicing both “our country” and “their country”. Refusing alignment even with the transient voicing self, the voicing subject aspires to present an icon of a firstly-affective-then-impassionate individual within as well as towards the Chinese state.

Ge Jian
University of Massachusetts, Amherst

Title: Performance and Performativity in English Speaking Competitions: a case study on a Uyghur college student in China

Public English speaking competition in China is a genre that is highly formulated in its organization of speech events and structuring of speech production and widely publicized and received through old media such as TV and new media such as TV stations' websites, video-sharing websites, and social media. It is also a discursive site abundant in metacommunicative commentaries about contestants' English language performance, communicative competence, and sometimes, artistic versatility from the judges and audience on site, as well as national audience on public forums. These instances of performance and commentaries in turn evoke “E-motions” such as nationalisms, cosmopolitanism, ethnic pride and contested authenticity circulated on Chinese media.

This paper focuses on Umit Haji, a then Uyghur college student from Xinjiang and the 2010 national champion of a prestigious English speaking competition. Umit was representative of other Turkic-speaking ethnic minority contestants. Like their Han Chinese counterparts, they communicate a kind of cosmopolitan knowingness through stylized public speech pronunciation, hand gestures and body positioning, after months of specialized training and iterative practice. Yet minority students also selectively accept, push back or re-appropriate the stereotyped representation of a minzu identity that has been constructed and popularized over the years through a “minzu paradigm” in both state media and popular discourse, to their own advantage in the English speaking competitions. This paper aims to localize English learning, a global phenomenon, to the timespace of the Turkic-speaking part of market-oriented China, therefore pushing the boundaries of the sinophonic world.

The Meaning of Language Revitalization in a Digital Age: A Tunica Case
Rm 330

Panel Organizer: Patricia Anderson
Session Abstract:
Language revitalization efforts have used a variety of media over the years; from handwritten IPA transcriptions to wax cylinder recordings to automated language parsers, linguistic anthropologists often employ media that are not accessible to the language communities they serve, resulting in anthropologists as the gatekeepers of language documentation. However, the digital age has drastically shifted where language resides and who creates the content. This has had a profound effect on language revitalization efforts; community-led revitalization efforts have grown drastically in the last 20 years. Minority languages have joined the ranks of world languages in online venues. However, traditional media have not been written out of the process, and print resources are often central to language revitalization. Even in the digital age, the affective value assigned to new and old media vary, and community beliefs about different media influence the usefulness of the tool in language revitalization. For example, grammar lessons placed in online game format are deemed more “learnable” while neologisms found in a print dictionary are considered more legitimate.

This is panel examines the Tunica Language Project as a case study for contemporary language revitalization navigating the digital age. The Tunica Language Project is a community-driven revitalization program with collaborators from nearby Tulane University. This project encompasses many challenges typical of contemporary revitalization projects: funding is limited as the “reawakening” status of the language defies most qualifications for grant applications; language learners are geographically mobile and live in diverse geographic regions beyond the traditional language community on the reservation; and new L2 speakers are eager to see their language join the digital ranks of resources that can be found online. The panel analyzes the ways in which new and traditional media are balanced to solve the needs of the language community with the resources available.

The panel presentations speak to many different aspects of language revitalization in a digital age. From updating the language status on Ethnologue.com to getting articles on Wikipedia in Tunica, Abdalian examines today’s digital gatekeepers and how they determine what is or is not language and where it can or cannot be displayed. Walters details a push from Tunica learners and teachers to expand language use in online realms such as Twitter, Tumblr and Facebook. Harvey looks to the digital realm for language learning in innovative ways that accommodates the budget and learner expectations of language revitalization movements. Mora discusses specific needs of distance learners who do are not daily immersed in Tunica language and culture; she looks at challenges and successes in the current language learning model for these students. Anderson compares neologisms as represented in online and print forms of New Tunica Dictionary and asks when does a word become “real” in different domains, such as in the classroom or online? Pierite advocates for the inclusion of the revitalization project in STEM education initiatives, defending the need for diversity and inclusion of indigenous language communities in mainstream educational projects. He
looks at the efforts of the Tunica Language Project included in larger educational efforts and funding proposals.

This panel is of interest to scholars and language activists working within indigenous language communities who are themselves navigating the meaning of revitalizing in a digital age.

Andrew Abdalian
Tulane University

Title: From Extinct to Reawakening: Working with Online Gatekeepers of Language Status

Language status is critical to language revitalization efforts, but it is often decreed not by the language community itself, but by outside institutional entities. Can a language be revitalized? Is the language alive? The way outsiders—and even some members of these communities—find answers to these questions today is to search for answers about language status online, where they will inevitably come across one or more endangered language databases proclaiming the condition of the language. The answers can greatly affect the way members of the heritage community, outsiders, and potential partners view language communities, their validity, and sometimes their existence. The last native speaker of Tunica died in 1948. As such, when the Tunica Language Working Group began, these outside gatekeepers of language status almost universally marked Tunica as “extinct” or, at best, a heritage language. As L2 speakers were emerging, the working group sought to have this information updated, not only to more accurately reflect the current state of the language, but also to positively affect language attitudes within and outside of the tribal community, and to forge partnerships with institutions wary of working with what they would erroneously perceive as a “dead language”. This paper covers the efforts made over the past year and a half to get the status of the Tunica language accurately represented in a variety of online resources by endangered language gatekeepers.

Mackenzie Walters
University of Texas at Austin

Title: How to be a Socialite: Social Media in a Reawakening Language

Social media is an indispensable resource for revitalization projects in a digital age, not only to make the language accessible to people within the heritage group but also to other revitalization projects and potential partners. KYLY started their social media outreach with a Facebook page and a Tumblr blog. Recently the group has made efforts
to expand further into social media by establishing a Twitter feed and an Instagram account. Each account is used for somewhat different aspects of publicizing the project and the language, and I will discuss the benefits of this method. I will also discuss some of the problems these accounts face in maintenance as well as trying to reach heritage speakers of the language and beyond.

**Meg Harvey**
University of Arizona

**Title: Language, Identity, and Play: Video Games and Revitalization**

Many communities interested in revitalizing their heritage language lack the resources to do so. Revitalization projects, with their long timelines and difficult to measure metrics of progress, often struggle to secure funding and many communities do not have access to the necessary materials and teachers. Even those with speakers who can teach the language often find neither the learners nor the teachers have time to devote to a full immersion program.

Linguists have turned towards the use of the internet and computers in language settings, but these efforts focus primarily on online tools for thriving foreign languages. Endangered languages have different needs. However, well-designed video games can address these by emphasizing the social and creative aspects shared amongst language, cultural transmission, and play. Their flexibility, interactivity, and collaborative nature makes them ideal for crafting learning experiences that are more representative of the speaker community itself, rather than simply lessons with the community tacked on as set dressing.

This presentation will look at the Tunica Language Working Group’s gaming projects: one a game teaching vowel elision, one an interactive solar system with Tunica names, and one a text adventure. It will detail the methods we have used, the pitfalls we have encountered, and argue that video games are useful pedagogical tools that not only improve language learning but increase community engagement and increase the chances of outside financial support of revitalization projects. Video games represent an often misunderstood and underutilized resource that could prove invaluable for both revitalization and cultural enrichment.

**Patricia Anderson**
Tunica Language Project

**Title: Is it in the Dictionary? Leveraging lexicographical authority across media types and the New Tunica Dictionary**
Dictionaries have long held sway in the meaning and use of daily language. Dictionaries are viewed as authorities on language form and word meaning, having “final say” on “proper language” in many communities. This paper looks at the New Tunica Dictionary and its authority in varied domains as the gatekeeper of “real” Tunica language use.

The Tunica language, dormant 60 years from 1948 to 2010, is in a very active reawakening state. The new Tunica Dictionary is a recent addition to the overall Tunica revitalization effort. The New Tunica Dictionary is based on the 1951 Tunica Dictionary published by Mary R. Haas. However it makes many notable deviations from Haas’s dictionary, including traditional Tunica words with contemporary senses alongside the publication of entirely original neologisms. New word usage has been driven by different factors in the revitalization project. Certain vocabulary is created specifically for teaching materials, which other terms, such a phrase for ‘you’re welcome’ have been proposed and accepted or rejected through daily conversation. The creation of the New Tunica Dictionary, led by the author of this paper, attempted to leverage lexicographical authority to encourage the proliferation of neologisms as opposed to their suppression. While a dictionary will always be, by its nature, an inherent gatekeeper, the author asks, how can we leverage the authority of traditional media to encourage a language’s proliferation online?

Jean-Luc Pierite
Tunica Language Project

Title: Sáhatéti FAB: Tunica Trail into the Digital Domain

My great-grandmother, Julie Descant Normand, told my mother, Donna Madere Pierite, that the people “tayoroniku” used to watch for the horses flying in the sky at night. Growing up in New Orleans, my mom would often remark how the nations and languages represented meant that the world came to us. Tunica-Biloxi people have looked outside of ourselves throughout our recorded history. From clashes with the Spanish, trade with the French, fighting with and alongside British and Americans; the Tunica Trail along the Mississippi River was formed navigating international relations.

Today, I work for The Fab Foundation which fosters the growth of the International Fab Lab Network. Established as part of MIT’s Center for Bits and Atoms educational outreach effort, nearly 1200 labs in 90 different countries collaborate daily across national and language lines. As with other international accords such as Agenda 2030 and the Paris Agreement, there are emerging conversations about the inclusion of, consultation with, and participation of Native people in the United States and Indigenous people internationally. Beyond the ability for anyone to make (almost) anything, we are looking at the evolution of social sciences and policy to support this next digital revolution.
Increased use of digital tools for language documentation and fabrication will develop new insights into endangered languages. These insights not only have implications and applications for revitalization. Rather, they offer new breath of life for old ways to live.

Elisabeth Mora
Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana

Title: Tunica Language Class on WebEx: Creating Online Accessible Learning

Inspired by the Chahta Anumpa Internet Classes of the Choctaw Nation in Oklahoma and motivated by the need to create online accessible Tunica language learning opportunities for Tunica-Biloxi community members, the Tunica-Biloxi Language & Culture Revitalization Program (LCRP) established a partnership with Northwestern State University (NSULA) Office of Electronic and Continuing Education in June 2014 to utilize eNSU, the NSULA distance learning system, to conduct online classes. The prospect of developing and administering an online language course was encouraged by the desire of tribal families who reside off tribal lands located in Central Louisiana, near satellite communities in Texas and Illinois, and who are unable to travel to weekly classes at the Tunica-Biloxi Cultural and Educational Resources Center (CERC) Library in Marksville. Since the inception of Tunica Language Class on WebEx, the six-week course, currently non-credit, has engaged on average 8 language learners per course. The course has benefited LCRP and Kuhpani Yoyani Luhchi Yoroni (KYLY), a working group comprised of linguists and tribal community members, through pilote lessons created from excerpts of Rowinataworu Luhchi Yoroni: Tunica Language Textbook, currently in publishing. The course has also provided extended practice in conversational Tunica for KYLY members and beginning language learners. I will discuss strategies utilized by LCRP Language Instructors to teach and elicit language over the gradual development of the course including successes and challenges.

Session 2:

Sign and Script in South Asia: New Media and Semeiotic Mediation
Rm 345

Panel Organizer: Christina Davis
Multiple Authors: Chaise LaDousa, Hamilton College

Discussant: Sonia Das

Session Abstract:
South Asia is a collection of nations wherein public spaces are marked by advertisements, directions, and other types of messages conveyed in multiple languages through multiple visual systems (sign and script). Monolingual signage is relatively
uncommon, but signage utilizing multiple languages and scripts pervade public spaces. Semeiotics provides a framework for analyzing the ways in which practices and publics are mediated by visual language. This collection of papers considers the political economy of signage and script against the background of changing possibilities of new media in South Asia. The context considered include sign language in Nepal, scripts in Odisha, linguistic gaffes in Sri Lanka, and educational advertising in Uttar Pradesh. The political economic domains explored by the papers include the nation, post-war reconciliation, social class, discourses of ability, and globalization. We are especially interested in tracing changes in the public use of visual signs and scripts in relation to speakers, institutions, and mass-mediated groups. We explore the negotiation of difference through these semeiotic shifts involving the ways in which publics are imagined through reference and address. This entails looking at the multiple modes of discourse about visual language and imagery. Ultimately, we are concerned with investigating how new representational practices and possibilities can reveal changing political, economic, and social circumstances.

Chaise LaDousa
Hamilton College

Title: Language and Script in a Shifting Indexical Order: Educational Advertising in India

This presentation uses the notion of indexical order to trace changes in the ways in which educational institutions – schools and coaching centers – have advertised over the last twenty years in a small city in India’s Hindi Belt. Advertising by schools and coaching centers employs script distinctions as well and language distinctions. Conventions of advertising for schools and coaching services twenty years back were predictive of parameters of educational institutions and exams such as cost and board affiliation. Now, however, further distinctions have arisen in advertising such that there is a less presupposed relationship between language (Hindi and English) and script (Devanagari and roman) as indexical of types of schools. This presentation uses examples of school advertising to show that the mid-size Indian city’s disposition to education in metros and rural areas has itself become part of the indexical order of school advertising in Hindi-speaking India. This marks a development in the indexical order of educational advertisement, one that is not regimented by lexical and script combinations underpinned by standardization practices fostered by the central government.

Christina Davis
Western Illinois University

Title: Trilingual Gaffes: New Media and the Postwar Sri Lankan Tamil Experience
The Sri Lankan government recently passed a law that requires all public signs to be in the nation’s co-official languages, Sinhala and Tamil, as well as English. This paper explores the multiple, clashing ways Tamils in Sri Lanka, the U.S., and Canada interpret images of Tamil signage errors in relation to majority/minority relations in the postwar nation-state. I particularly focus on public reactions to a Tamil signboard error in public buses in 2014. The Tamil portion of the sign read “reserved for pregnant dogs” instead of “reserved for pregnant ladies.” Drawing on interviews and social media analysis (i.e., Facebook, Tumblr, and news article comments), I discuss how discussions about signage errors reveal fault lines and fissures in the efforts to create a common transnational Tamil experience. A crucial point of contention involves a secondary-discourse on the role of media as social action. Some viewed the Tamil blunders as emblematic of government neglect and even “linguistic genocide,” but others thought a focus on decontextualized sign images emphasizes a narrative of correctness that distracts from efforts to ensure language rights for all Sri Lankans (hospitals and police stations often lack Tamil interpreters). This paper contributes to the study of new media in relationship to the hazards of representation and the role of different representational practices in processes of social and political change (Keane 1997).

Erika Hoffmann-Dilloway
Oberlin College

Title: Picturing Signing: Hybrid Representations Reflecting and Affecting Metapragmatic Awareness

While a range of notation and/or writing systems for sign languages have been developed over the years, none of these systems have yet achieved the status of being widely used in academic, pedagogical, or deaf social contexts. Instead of (or in concert with) such formalized systems, those attempting to encode signing practices in two-dimensional markings may draw on a range of representational forms, such as photographs, video-stills, and single or sequential drawings (Rosenthal 2009). Such (often hybrid) representational practices may be relatively systematic or extemporaneous. This paper draws on ethnographic material from sites of sign language use in Nepal to analyze specific moments in which such representations are created and interpreted to ask how they reflect and affect users’ understandings of signing and signers. Are the affordances and limitations of these means of representation coincident with users’ meta-linguistic and meta-pragmatic framings of their semiotic practices? Or, given the pressures of logocentrism (“the disposition to rank people by presence, absence, or kind of writing” (Collins and Blot 2003:167)) in these contexts, are the perceived limitations of such forms of representation as likely to direct users’ attention to what the texts they so produce fail to capture? Addressing these questions helps further refine our sense of how writing and other representational systems reflect and affect metapragmatic awareness (Silverstein 2001).
Title: Putting Scripts in Their Mouths: Odisha’s Name Change, English Varieties, and India’s Regional Politics of Class

In 2011, India’s parliament approved Constitutional changes to the Roman-script orthography for one of India’s eastern states and its language. This changed the state of Orissa to Odisha and the language of Oriya to Odia. While many dismiss this change as a repeat of India’s other name changes, such as Bombay to Mumbai, Odisha’s name changes are more complex because they entirely center on the “correct” representation of character-phoneme units that do not exist in non-Indian English speech. This paper examines arguments for and against the name changes in official and unofficial texts—including parliament debates, local and national newspapers, personal blogs and social media, and Wikipedia’s contribution pages—as a case study of the interdependencies between multilingualism and democracy in Odisha. I describe conflicting narratives about this change, each predicated on a different organization of linguistic code, script, speech and political futures. Because the key differences between these perspectives pivot on different imaginations of the English-speaking mouths that will pronounce the names, these debates become a site for constructing Odia linguistic identities through alignments with varieties of English—and thus, for some, an uncomfortable site of the state's class positioning.

Sources of Uncertainty: Communities in the Ongoing Process of Becoming
Rm 328

Panel Organizer: Steven Black
Discussant: Netta Avineri

Session Abstract:
This panel presents new linguistic anthropological engagements with the concept of community, focusing on the ways that contemporary scholarship re-theorizes communities as ongoing processes of creation, mediation, maintenance, and transformation through and beyond language. The notion of speech community, developed as part of the ethnography of communication, has endured numerous iterations over the past fifty years. Despite significant poststructuralist critiques leveled against the concept—for instance, that it overstates homogeneity, delineation of a defined group, presence of shared linguistic features, or continuity over time—scholars of language and culture continue to return to community as a way to understand group formation and social action. This panel examines communities in ongoing processes of becoming, analyzing the linguistic, metalinguistic, cultural, and biological practices through which persons constitute themselves as being part of defined communities.
The panel title indexes Bruno Latour’s theorization of Actor-Network-Theory, especially his “first source of uncertainty: no group, only group formation.” This is itself a reframing of the Durkheimian notion that human groups do not simply exist but rather must be actively maintained, especially through orientation toward emblematic symbols that catalyze sentiments of identification. Panelists explore how persons create and maintain communities through practices that fall outside of traditional definitions of speech communities, such as metalinguistic evaluative frameworks, emblematic terms or phrases among heritage language speakers, shared stories among speakers of different languages, and biomedical diagnosis. Of particular interest here are communities that span multiple languages or geographic borders, when face-to-face contact is minimal, and/or in situations of superdiversity that may include “light communities.”

As a group, the papers provide guidance for how to re-conceptualize the role of language in community formation and maintenance in the 21st century, when globalized inequality, political disruption, and resultant migrations fracture historically cohesive linguistic-cultural groups, while new (communicative) technologies afford novel types of intersubjective engagement across time and space.

Steven Black
Georgia State University

Title: Bio-Speech Communities

In the 1990s, Paul Rabinow elaborated on Foucaultian notions of biopower, coining the term “biosociality” to theorize the rapidly growing power of biomedicine to not only explain and treat illness, but also to categorize and alter biogenetic characteristics. Rabinow mused that in the near future people might organize into social groups on the basis of biogenetic markers shared in common. Since that time, medical anthropologists have used biosociality to describe medical communities and support groups, such as diabetics and people living with HIV. I synthesize such discussions of biosociality with recent re-theorizations of the speech community concept. Drawing on fieldwork with global health professionals, activists, and a support group in South Africa and the US, I suggest the concept of bio-speech communities as a way to (1) understand how biopower may shape speech communities and (2) explain the role of language in biosociality.

In this presentation, I analyze the verbal repertoires of US/South African global health professionals, South African HIV patient-activists, and other South Africans living with HIV. Global health professionals and patient-activists shared in common an orientation to biomedical terminology and an ideological valorization of biomedical discourse, while patient-activists and other infected individuals shared an understanding of Zulu linguistic-cultural frameworks and HIV positive diagnoses. Patient-activists distinguished themselves by their positioning at the borders of global health and Zulu tradition,
constituting a bio-speech community—not through linguistic practices or biogenetic markers alone, but through the juxtaposition of both.

Miguel Perez-Milans
University College London

Co-author: Carlos Soto
The University of Hong Kong

Title: Light communities? Implications for research on diversity and activism

Abstract

This paper engages with Blommaert’s (2017) call to refocus the target of attention in the mainstream social sciences, from ‘thick communities’, understood as stable systems of collectivity in which individuals share a set of permanent features circumscribed by the nation-state, towards ‘light communities’, towards ‘light communities’ seen as “brief moments of tight but temporary and ephemeral groupness as aggregations of people sharing just the rules of the encounters... but little beyond it” (Blommaert 2017: p. 34; see also Blommaert & Varis, 2015). As part of ongoing discussions of ‘superdiversity’ (Arnaut, Blommaert, Rampton & Spotti, 2016) which invite scholars in the language disciplines to problematize modernist frames in the sociological imagination of social groups under increasing conditions of uncertainty, this call offers, in our view, possibilities for researchers collaborating with activists in the fieldwork. There are, however, important dangers and limitations that need to be acknowledged. These issues are discussed in this paper, for which we draw on our 5-year collaborative project working with social actors commonly labelled as “ethnic minorities” in the Hong Kong context.

References


Esther Schely-Newman  
The Hebrew University

Title: On Linguistic Boundaries: Constituting Communities

Definitions of speech communities vary, traditionally consisting of aggregates of people sharing communicative resources and language ideologies. However, contemporary cosmopolitan world creates spaces where practices define norms of communication e.g., an airport or multinational companies. The rules of engagement, the ways of speaking, may be a criterion for defining the boundaries of the community -- be it a "light" or a "thick" one, online or offline community.

My research focuses on a multiethnic, multilingual, multinational, and multigenerational community in a contested area - Jerusalem, Israel. French Hill community is adjacent to several Palestinian communities that were included in Jerusalem City Limits after the war of 1967. A small commercial center containing offices, a supermarket, banks, restaurants, beauty parlors, et al., serves a population speaking Hebrew, Arabic, English, German, Italian, French, Korean, and Tagalog. This occasional yet repeated coagulation of people in a specific site is the focus of a current ethnographic study of communication patterns. The mixture of codes used on a daily basis, nevertheless allow people with different language repertoires and ideologies to communicate. The analysis of data -- collected in interviews, observation of encounters, linguistic landscape -- explores communication codes for defining a community. Traditional and novel criteria are used in understanding the linguistic co-existence within the context of asymmetrical and ongoing political conflict.

Georgia Ennis  
University of Michigan

Title: Affective Technologies: Radio and the mediation of communities of practice in the Ecuadorian Amazon

This paper examines the affective mediation of an amplified community of practice. Grounded in long-term ethnographic research with a co-constitutive network of producers and consumers of lowland Ecuadorian Quichua radio media in Napo province, Ecuador, I explore how affect is enregistered and recirculated on the air, and the ways that these recirculations mediate a receptive public. Spitulnik (1997) observes that listeners recirculate texts from radio programs, thereby building communicative imaginaries between radio broadcasters and listeners, and among listeners. I move beyond the social circulation of discourse, however, to explore the ways that practices remediated (Bolter and Grusin (1999) from face-to-face interaction are enregistered and
entextualized, and then recontextualized in Quichua-language radio programs. The enregisterment and recirculation of emotions related to love, empathy, and sadness [Quichua llakina, llakirina, llakichina] help to organize a widely-dispersed and ontologically plural indigenous public through locally meaningful understandings of emotion and kinship. The poetics of laments—sometimes still performed by elders and middle-aged mourners at funerals and when remembering the dead— have been remediated in more contemporary forms of Quichua-language media, and recirculated on Quichua-language radio programs. This recirculation of affective interactional practices in turn organizes a mediated community of practice, which emerges through the communicative imaginaries of disparate listeners. In this presentation, I explore how affective forms specific to face-to-face interaction are recontextualized on air, thereby amplifying and extending existing communicative networks of endangered language speakers.

Elizabeth Falconi
University of West Georgia

Title: (Re)producing Narrated Community On and Offline

The data was collected from Facebook posts that have been sourced and saved from personal accounts as well as public pages. As the Facebook posts are primarily about language use, there are several categories that further define the myriad of ways in which Papiamentu is discussed on the islands. For the purposes of this paper, I have chosen to crowdsource posts into three specific categories: public shaming, policing, and critiquing discourse. These three categories represent how language is not only debated and critiqued but how users make efforts to incorporate the creole alongside its European counterparts. This paper will delve into how Facebook represents an alternative platform where multilingual speakers on the islands can engage freely in discussions about language use as opposed to institutional spaces where ideologies about European languages as superior are upheld.

Mediat(iz)ed Discourses of Migration and Mobility
Rm 329

Panel Organizer: Lynnette Arnold
Discussant: Michael Hesson

Session Abstract:
Alarmist framings of human mobility have been widespread in recent years, as seen in media frenzies around the 2014 “border surge” of unaccompanied Central American youth and the ongoing “refugee crisis” in Europe. At the same time, xenophobic political movements have gained strength around the globe, producing policies that seek to constrain the mobility of particular racialized populations through increased policing.
and enforcement that further marginalizes migrant communities. Such dynamics necessitate a deeper understanding of how conceptualizations of mobility and immobility are produced, particularly the discursive and semiotic processes by which these framings circulate and are taken up.

This panel brings linguistic anthropological insights to bear on this issue through an examination of migration discourse or “talk and writing that summons up or presupposes the forms of personhood, rhetorical themes, forms of spatial reference, or logical propositions that people associate with the causes and consequences of migration” (Dick 2018, 10). In particular, the panel focuses on the mediation and mediatization of migration discourse in the Americas, seeking to understand the consequences of such processes for the circulation of imaginaries of migration articulated in narratives of mobility and the forms of belonging and personhood that these produce. The papers examine the complex mediation of migration discourse in social media and radio, via cellphones and letters, through digital databases and virtual translators. Drawing on Agha’s (2011) conceptualization of mediatization, the panel explores how migration discourse becomes mediatized, shedding light on the broader processes of mediation through which mediatization is produced and remediated (Silverstein 2011).

The papers jointly consider the ways media(tiza)tion facilitates the uptake and contestation of dominant migration discourses by communities caught up in mobility/immobility. At times, media(tiza)tion seems to amplify elite perspectives, as Nichols shows in her exploration of the deployment of mediatized discourses of victimhood in email blasts seeking pro-bono legal representation for unaccompanied minors; relatedly, Marsilli-Vargas demonstrates how the multiply mediated processes by which asylum petition narratives are produced suspend the voices of the youth petitioners themselves. In other cases, media(tiza)tion allows for the contestation of dominant discourses of migration, as shown in Chávez’s investigation how migrant youth intercede in public constructions of their personhood through a radio project. Similarly, Arnold discusses how communication between migrants and their non-migrant kin – both in current digital form and in historical letters – constitutes cross-border familial imaginaries that challenge the primacy of national belonging. The salience of historicity is further highlighted in Arispe-Bazan’s paper, which traces how the online and offline travel of migration discourse produces historicized emblems of migration discourse to explain the migration of Spanish citizens to Peru following the 2008 crisis. Through these analyses, the papers highlight the spatiotemporal circulation of migration discourses, elucidating how forms of media(tiza)tion produce both emergent practices and more sustained semiotic strategies. Ultimately, the panel demonstrates that processes of media(tiza)tion are both productive of and shaped by the discursive production of mobility/immobility.
Diego Arispe-Bazan  
University of Pennsylvania

Title: Everyday Semioticians On and Offline: Negotiating History in Migrant Contexts

This paper explores how studying discourses surrounding the migration of Spanish citizens to Peru after the 2008 Spanish crisis allows us to interrogate history as both a political and an intellectual construct (Woolard, 2004), a result of an interdiscursive process (Wirtz, 2014); in other words, an open rather than a closed text. Because migration discourse about Spanish citizens in Peru is organized around negotiations of the past’s relevance to the present, interactions both off and online configure contemporary interactants as arbiters of socio-historical truths. More specifically, interactants enregister emblems and develop narratives that collapse (sometimes multiple) historical chronotopes and laminate them upon contemporary speech events. I explain how we might triangulate ethnographic data with social media commentary, positing that the distinction between online speech genres is one of degree, not kind (Gillen & Merchant, 2013). I argue that word-tokens and phrases deployed online mediat(iz)e construals of categories of personhood—the wronged post-colonial, the greedy colonizer. Migration discourse and historical discourse can be, furthermore, understood as only two of multiple intersecting discursive channels in and by which individuals locate themselves as social actors. Thus roles such as “local” and “migrant” emerge as precipitates from the actualization of these discursive channels in narratives and paralinguistic features of interaction. Because these are impermanent, variable stances individuals take vis-a-vis performed categories of personhood, I contend that "migrant" and "local" are negotiated alignments rather than identitarian ontologies.

Lynnette Arnold  
Brown University

Title: Mediated Family Belonging in Migration Discourse

Migration discourse is fundamentally concerned with the production of spatio-temporal imaginaries that make sense of experiences of mobility and immobility and manage their consequences for everyday life (Dick 2018, 2010; Dick & Arnold 2017). Conceptualizations of national belonging have been particularly salient in mediatized representations of migration, as well as in scholarly mediations of migration discourse. In this paper, however, I explore how a more intimate imaginary, that of familial belonging, is animated in the technologically mediated migration discourse produced by those caught up in global processes of mobility and immobility. Specifically, I investigate how family imaginaries emerge in technologically mediated cross-border communication between migrants and their non-migrant relatives, placing this examination in its historical context by comparing current forms of digital mediation to an older form of mediation: the letter (Mahler 2001, Madianou & Miller 2011, Pennycook 2012). I bring together analyses emerging from my ethnography of
communication within contemporary transnational Salvadoran families (Arnold 2016) with an examination of published letters produced by earlier generations of migrants to the United States (Thomas & Znaniecki 1958, Siems 1995). Focusing on greetings between migrants and non-migrants, the paper demonstrates that both digital and epistolary mediation work to produce familial belonging that transcends separation, drawing on and reproducing forms of personhood oriented towards the asymmetrical reciprocity of kin ties. The analysis thus highlights the temporality of familial imaginaries in migration discourse, tracing their durativity across different technologies of mediation.

Briana Nichols
University of Pennsylvania

Title: “Sara is a 15-year old girl from El Salvador who loves seafood”: Mediatization and migrant personhood in legal advocacy

This paper examines the mechanisms by which pre-supposed forms of personhood are deployed as part of a reflexive social process (Agha 2003, 2011) by immigrant advocacy groups to attract pro-bono representation for unaccompanied immigrant youth facing deportation. Within the current legal system, immigration cases are considered civil infractions, immigrants facing orders of removal are not guaranteed access to an attorney. When immigration officials apprehend unaccompanied minors, they are given a classification as Unaccompanied Alien Children, and processed through the immigration system separately from adults. Despite their special status, they are still not provided with court appointed attorneys to help adjudicate their claims to immigration enforcement relief. To fill this gap in representation, a network of non-profit organizations attempts to connect unaccompanied children with pro-bono legal representation. They do so by “advertising” available cases via email blasts, each crafted to simultaneously present the child in need of representation as appropriately deserving and legally compelling. Descriptions of individual cases then rely heavily on mediatized migration discourses, notions of migrant victimhood and on legal pragmatism—is the case “good”? Interesting? Winnable? What materializes are carefully crafted texts eschewing the conflation of unauthorized migration and criminality (Coutin 2005) while relying on other highly mediatized representations of immigrant youth as vulnerable, innocent and victimized. This analysis focuses on the tensions in this process as pre-existing models of personhood and migration discourses are selectively drawn on to produce new mediated representations of migrant youth within the arena of legal advocacy.

Xochitl Marsilli-Vargas
Emory University
Title: Mediation, Translation, and Referential Meaning: The Constitution of Asylum Petition Narratives

This presentation explores several instances of the emergence of mediatized fragments (Agha 2011) in the context of asylum interviews between minors coming from Latin America, and United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) officers. It focuses on the intersection of various communicative events: the translator, a virtual translator, the use of cellphones when minors need to corroborate information, the digital network used by the USCIS officer to write the translated asylum seeker’s testimony, and the quiet presence of the asylum seeker’s lawyer monitoring her client’s case. The intersection of these digital spaces and different participant roles construct mediated narratives that ultimately would determine whether the asylum petition is accepted or denied. As a result of the production of artifacts through media(tiza)tion (Agha 2011) that emerge during these exchanges, the story the minors create is in fact a complex co-creation with too many layers in which often their voices get suspended. During the translation of the asylum interview, the pressure to provide a speedy delivery leads interpreters to opt for the shortest possible renditions rather than pragmatically adequate versions of source utterances. The constant monitoring of the denotational accuracy of the translation adds to the emergence of a narrative that does not necessarily have a clear producer. Legal translation as a textual activity is, to a large extent, a reconstruction of the constitutive discourses of the law across culturally bound national legal systems. How these discourses contrast with the minor’s story through the mediatized nature of these exchanges is the main focus of this presentation.

Alex Chavez
University of Notre Dame

Title: Mediat(iz)ed Discourses of Migration and Mobility - Your Story, Your Way: Chicago Migrant Youth Radio and the Aural Public Sphere

This paper examines the work of a migrant youth radio project in Chicago with particular emphasis on the social and political mandates that shape their programming content within the context of intensified attacks on undocumented youth (i.e. the rescinding of DACA and the precarious state of sanctuary cities). The youth in question produce audio narrative pieces available online, host on-air discussions on their live radio program, and organize public multi-media forums that exhibit “their stories their way.” These various media and audio production tools and platforms, I argue, embody new communication technologies that are shaped by existing themes in migration discourse, while also providing vehicles for emergent ?practices that participate in the public constructions of migrant youth personhood. I ask: ?What exactly are these themes? How are they shaped by contemporary ?mediatized practices of dissemination? What politics of visibility and incorrigibility do they attain given their highly visible/aural nature? As emergent communicative modalities, how do localized radio and social media engage with competing/dominant/national representations of migrant personhood? With these
questions in mind, this paper contributes to recent discussions that attend to how processes of mediatization mitigate political economies of discourse and communication among undocumented migrants.

**New Ways of Being, Speaking, Knowing, Teaching, Sharing Maya**
Rm 330

Panel Organizer: Catherine Rhodes
Discussant: Michael Hesson

**Session Abstract:**

Traditional/modern dichotomies are not new. They find their origins long before the first documented use of the term in the late 1800s (Baudelaire 1864[1964]), and modern thinking came to largely define the 20th-century. Much scholarship in anthropology writes against these distinctions and shows the social inequality created through their mobilizations, in particular, for peoples not found on the modern-end of these divides, such as indigenous peoples. While we do not favor modernizing discourses, we find that there can be both destructive and productive utility in their formulations. The papers in this panel explore how long-standing discourses about modern subjects and their traditional counterparts can be mobilized to new and unexpected ends as indigenous peoples engage in practices in which they have not historically engaged. For instance, we explore how engagement with new registers of Maya (via radio broadcasts), new epistemological frameworks (via disciplinary linguistics), new pedagogical practices (via Maya language learning), and combinations of these (e.g., via engagement in higher education) provide opportunities for challenging discourses of traditionality and modernity. Interestingly, we find that the new formulations we describe are largely grounded in longstanding, modernizing realities, models, discourses, registers, and ideologies. In large part, what is new is not the form itself (e.g., the use of the jach maaya register, the x-prefix, disciplinary linguistics theory, or ideas about Maya ethnicity) but what its mobilization in new contexts (including with new social actors) makes possible. Our panel addresses these issues in the Yucatec Maya-speaking region of Mexico. We focus on this region, instead of on comparative perspectives across the Maya-speaking world, because of the lack of legibility of much work conducted by Yucatec Maya speakers within the larger pan-Maya context. The Yucatec Maya do not make claims to political autonomy nor are they in a position to pass ethnically into the mainstream through their engagement in modernizing activities—two defining characteristics of the pan-Maya movement—as is the case in Guatemala and other parts of the Maya-speaking world (Warren 1998). Thus, the Yucatec Maya largely articulate new claims to Mayaness within existing modern frameworks. As the papers included herein seek to show, this holds both opportunities and challenges for Maya social actors. The papers in this panel explore these tensions and the implications they hold for contemporary Yucatec Maya people in their everyday
lives. Some of them also suggest the possibility of stepping outside of the traditional/modern divide upon which they are founded.

Irma Pomol Cahum
Universidad de Oriente

Title: Toward the Teaching of the Contemporary Yucatec Maya Language

In this paper I conduct a critical review of materials designed for the teaching and learning of the Yucatec Maya language. First, I cover the theoretical frameworks that inform the different pedagogical approaches utilized in Yucatec Maya language teaching. I follow this with a brief discussion of how linguistic variation, language ideologies, and linguistic purism factor into these pedagogical efforts. I then analyze and discuss the various texts (including web-based audio-visual materials) available in Maya. I find that the majority of the materials designed for teaching-learning Maya were designed following a grammatical translation method and contain limited “Maya” content. This is to say, they do not include elements considered to “interrupt” the Maya language—that is, elements from the dominant language, Spanish, or from broader Yucatecan/Mexican (read: non-Maya) culture. Another key point of interest is the material’s choice of register, jach maaya ‘pure Maya’. Through this analysis, I observe how language ideologies about what is considered to be “Maya” come before the communicative and linguistic needs of the populations interested in these language-learning materials. The findings from this research suggest the need for critical reflection before creating language-learning materials in Maya, making transparent the linguistic ideologies and preferences of their authors, of the intended population of end-users of these materials, and making explicit the objective(s) of these materials, above all because the materials analyzed purport to have as an end the preservation and strengthening of the Yucatec Maya language.

Christopher Bloechl
University of Chicago

Title: Indigenist Radio and the Mediation of Maya Voices in Yucatán, Mexico

Paper abstract: At "The Voice of the Mayas," a popular (Yucatec) Maya radio station in southern Yucatán, politics of language and identity intercede considerably in the formulation of broadcast messages. The station's work of informing and entertaining listeners is mediated by a project of linguistic purification. Announcers use an emerging standard register of Maya, which employs neologisms and archaisms in place of the Spanish loans that the station's listeners commonly use. Accordingly, socially significant problems and possibilities attend this use of a prestige variety of language for mass communication. And just as the radio announcers' use of language diverges partly from local communicative conventions, their promotion of Maya ethnolinguistic identity
challenges enduring local conceptions of Maya personhood as *úuchben* 'ancient' and existing today only in a diminished state or at idealized peripheries. In light of these basic tensions, this paper examines the semiotic labor by which radio announcers formulate and inhabit emphatically Mayan voices for public circulation. I show how radio announcers negotiate contrasting images of Maya personhood, both in day-to-day productions of radio talk and in their collective institutional role as mediators for a Maya public within larger sociopolitical orders. Radio listeners' conceptions of language and identity are an obstacle and a resource for the announcers, who as native speakers of Maya find themselves caught between competing norms of linguistic usage and regimes of identity. Norms and genres of popular mediatized discourse substantially shape the radio station's engagement with Maya language preservation and identity promotion.

**Catherine Rhodes**  
University of New Mexico

**Title: Making Maya Linguists: Between Indigenous and Modern**

Notions about Maya people and their practices are longstanding and widely circulating in Yucatan. These notions are based on modernizing discourses and often interpreted within an ethnic hierarchy that positions people identified as ‘Maya’ at the bottom. While these ideas about Mayaness are longstanding, they are not fixed. Instead, I argue, they are negotiated through one’s varying degrees of association with widely circulating emblems of Mayaness. For example, in a contemporary, higher education context, I observe how emblems of Mayaness become mobilized in new ways as Maya speakers seek to strengthen their associations with widely circulating emblems of Mayaness. For instance, historically *máasewáal* was a derogatory term used to describe peasant agriculturists (‘Indian, inferior’ (Bricker et al. 1998)), and today it is “still occasionally used today to refer to Maya-speaking peasants” (Hanks 2010:382). However, native-Maya speaking university students are using it to replace the term ‘Maya’ when referring to themselves and others. I argue that this act serves to link these “modern” students to “traditional” ideas of Mayaness and, thus, serves as an authenticating factor (given stereotypic notions of Mayaness) in a process of re-Mayanization. That is, being associated with peasant agriculture lends authenticity to Mayaness vis-à-vis widely circulating stereotypes. Since students’ Mayaness is often questioned (by Mayas and non-Mayas) through their engagement in activities not widely associated with Mayaness, they seek to strengthen their claims to Mayaness in recognizable ways. It is precisely new engagement with (modern) higher education that is leading students to define themselves in new ways.

**Michal Brody**

**Title: The Meaning of –x: Semantic and Pragmatic Expansion of a Yucatec Maya Gender Marker**
From the earliest colonial grammars to more contemporary sources, the Yucatec Maya prefix x- (~ix) has been described as simply a non-obligatory gender marker applied to women, girls, and female animals, despite its frequent use with the names of many plants and animals (irrespective of biological sex), as well as toponyms. Examples include: ix chalchee 'sage,' ix mech 'lizard' (Calepino de Motul 1577), xkakaltuun 'wild basil,' xt’uut’ ‘parrot’ (Diccionario Popular Maya 2003); all of these examples alternate with their prefix-less forms. Bricker (1998) identified the use of the prefix in noun compounding and instrumental nouns. To date, the prefix has not been systematically examined. This paper explores two additional innovative applications that are in increasingly common use in the eastern region of the state of Yucatán. First, the prefix is applied to the names of ordinary inanimate objects (concrete and abstract) on words of Maya origin as well as Spanish loan words (e.g., x-ka’ ‘grinding stone,’ x-kloro ‘bleach,’ x-aalsa ‘price increase’). In addition, the prefix may be applied as a non-pejorative affectual marker on men’s names in contexts of high confidence (e.g., X-Naas ‘Narciso’).

My data are drawn from participant observation, informal conversations with speakers, and structured interviews with sixteen native Maya-speaking men across a spectrum of age, occupation, and place of residence. I will provide a brief historical context of the documented usages of the prefix, followed by an examination of the current innovative applications that demonstrate the vitality of the language as well as raise questions about the conceptual boundaries of gender and gender marking.

Miguel Óscar Chan Dzul  
Universidad de Oriente

Title: Training Yucatec Maya-Language Interpreters

In this paper, I take a critical look at the achievements and challenges in the teaching of interpretation practices to students in an undergraduate program in Maya Linguistics and Culture at a university in Yucatan, Mexico. I first offer a brief overview of theories of interpretation in general and with respect to indigenous languages and then discuss the achievements and challenges of a specific group of university students. Among the challenges are a lack of an interpretation lab; a limited number of curricular hours dedicated to interpretation coursework; a lack of curricular materials for the teaching, learning, and practice of interpretation between Maya and Spanish and vice versa; different levels of mastery of the Maya and Spanish languages on behalf of the students; and varying ideologies vis-à-vis dialectical variation in the Maya language. Among the achievements are institutional recognition of the importance of interpretation; the development of basic materials for the practice of Maya-Spanish and Spanish-Maya interpretation; and a basic understanding and recognition of a general theory of translation and interpretation based in disciplinary linguistic theory, which serve as a foundation for interpretation in this program. This paper discusses both the opportunities this new career path and educational program provide for Maya speakers as well as the challenges these speakers face in light of the entrenchment of
longstanding ideologies and discourses about the “correct” usage of the Maya language. In large part, students and instructors are caught in a paradox between disciplinary recognizability and contemporary practice.

Poster and Installation
Posters

Kathleen Riley & Anna Ghimenton
Rutgers University & University of Lyon

Title: Emotional positionality and the semiotic emergence of research knowledge
Abstract:
Anthropology has a long history of probing what has come to be called the positionality of the researcher – i.e., the question of how one’s identity (perceived and performed) influences one’s capacity to engage and understand those one studies. However, what has been less explicitly queried since the rise of semiotics within linguistic anthropology is the various ways in which positionality, indexicality, and emotionality are intertwined in the research endeavor. Based on data collected and analyzed by two researchers in four multilingual settings (Veneto, Italy; Paris, France; Montreal, Canada; and French Polynesia), this presentation explores how the researcher’s embodied practices, affective stances, and prior connections, influence the production of research-based “knowledge”. In particular, we examine the impact of a) our evolving communicative competencies in each context, b) our use of verbal and non-verbal cues to index our variable roles and identities (from family member to foreign expert) in these research settings, and c) our emotionally performed and received status as “insider” or “outsider” in a variety of social situations. In each case, these interactively co-constructed factors have clearly (if sometimes paradoxically) influenced our opportunities to interact “naturally” and thus record “natural” interactions as well as our abilities to achieve “perspective” and “understanding” in the analysis of what was recorded. A granular analysis of how our identities as “insider”/”outsider” researchers emerged out of emotionally charged engagements in several specific instances sheds light on how cultural and sociolinguistic knowledge is experientially mediated and semiotically achieved in the dialogic space collaboratively defined by observers and those they observe.

Mackenzie Manns
University of Alabama
Title: Terrorism Discourse
Abstract:
Terrorism, or who is a terrorist, has come to be defined by the actor deploying the word rather than the act of violence being described. Scholars have studied the various ways in which particular social groups deploy the word terrorism. Phillip Jenkins looks at the
way the mass media describes terrorism, Adam Hodges discusses the discourse by state actors around the term terrorism, and Noam Chomsky explores the hypocrisy of American categorization of terrorism while excluding themselves from the narrative. I am further exploring way that the term terrorism is being engaged with, by investigating how counterterrorism and terrorism studies programs are constructing affect with the word terrorism. I use Perspectives on Terrorism, an academic journal co-sponsored by UMass Lowell and the Terrorism Research Initiative, as my data set representing scholarship. I chose this journal because it claims to be widely read by academics studying terrorism. I look at Edward Said’s Orientalism as well as Covering Islam, Phillip Jenkins’ Images of Terror, Adam Hodges’ War and Terror Discourse as well as his chapter in the forthcoming book Pragmatics which discusses discursive underpinnings of war and terrorism, Ron Kuzar’s essay “Split Word, Split Subject, Split Society”, and articles by Noam Chomsky to aid me in my analysis of the uses and definitions of the word terrorism in articles published in the journal. I found, that taken together, the articles in the journal present a discourse that relates terrorism to Islam, Muslims, and/or the Middle East. The articles published use examples of Muslim terrorists more than any other group, discuss only jihadi radicalization, or concern themselves with ways to better analyze terrorism with an underlying theme that such a term creates affect connected with Islam and/or the Middle East more than anything else. The results and conclusion of this study are not to suggest the inherent intent of the journal but open the door for discussion, that it may be more than governments and the media who attempt to define terrorism in a certain way, in regards to the US.

Makayla Whitney & Benjamin Maceda
Humboldt State University

Title: Text, Comment, Message: An analysis of support

Abstract:

While much research has focused upon how anonymity provides space for aggressive gestures like “trolling,” especially visible in internet commentary, less work has been done on the supportive social gestures characteristic of anonymity. If it is presumed that social self-consciousness can inhibit demonstrative expressions that face to face contact might suppress, this may be true for supportive expressions as well as antagonistic ones. From the public restroom to Web sites devoted to anonymous confession, anonymity can and does enable gestures of support. Anonymous support is offered as encouragement to an individual (even a troll) to feel as though they belong in a larger, supportive community. This research develops analysis of various types of messaging from social media platforms, public commentary and physical space graffiti to explore anonymous social gestures of support. Our research aimed to explore the ways in which "support" is offered, whether it be reinforcement or relatability to circumstances, in different mediums, along with how support is taken up, for the purpose of analyzing what support may mean more generally to participants and observers. This poster starts from a position of geographically limited messages, including physical graffiti, local news commentary, geographically demarcated social media platforms such as Yik Yak and
Whisper, and extends to broader platforms that may not be limited by place, but are still circumscribed by time and temporally shaped trends such as #notokay and #metoo. The balance will contribute to recent work on authenticity, self-presentation and social interaction in new media.

**John DuBois**  
University of California, Santa Barbara  
Title: Memes Trump Media: Sociopolitical affordance and agency in digital culture  
Abstract:  
While anxieties abound about the role of social media in the political arena, new affordances for action are rapidly emerging, as new classes of participants in globalizing digital cultures (Horst & Miller 2012) exploit unprecedented opportunities for political action via remix culture. With recombination comes the potential for new forms of agency, social action, and political transformation. For many, the internet meme has come to play a pivotal role, serving as focus of affordances for sociopolitical change. While earlier anthropological critiques remain relevant (Boyd & Richerson 2000, Deacon 2004), the meme concept has begun to shed associations with earlier gene-centric theorizing (Dawkins 1976, Blackmore 1999, Oyama 2001), as internet memes become critical in new theorizations of digital culture (Bonilla and Rosa 2015, Shifman 2014, Milner 2016, Horst & Miller 2012), with links to the rapid emergence of social media as a key arena for political action (Milner 2016).  
Based on a corpus of internet memes reacting to the recent American presidential election and its aftermath, this paper examines their role in creating affordances for sociocultural and political action. Tapping into the human capacity to recognize traces of intertextual inheritance in memory (Rubin 1995, Levitin 2008), meme makers reimagine discourses in ways that transform the meanings of political positionings and reposition symbols within new histories, transforming their meanings even as recognizable links to dialogic origins remain active (Voloshinov 1929, Bakhtin 1934, Du Bois 2014).

**Crystal Sheedy**  
University at Albany (SUNY)  
Title: Home as a Symbolic Space: Examples from Yucatec Maya Women’s Oral Literature  
Abstract: Yucatec-speaking Maya women from the village of Xocén located in the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico are at a crossroads as they raise their children in the modern era. Older generations of women were raised within a predominantly subsistence agricultural economy, and their gender roles resided mostly within the home. However, as the economy becomes more heavily reliant upon a monetary income, parents want their children to pursue an education. In most cases, younger generations of women are pursuing work outside of the home. Nevertheless, mothers still stress the importance of teaching past gender roles to their daughters. Through this instruction, women utilize a discourse genre referred as *u t’i’an nukuch màak* (UTNM), or ‘sayings,’ in order to enculturate younger generations into their worldview. UTNMs are quite complex and expansive; covering a range of topics found in
daily life. They do not occur in a structured space. Each saying is encoded with symbols that signify the various layers of indexical meanings found within each one. These meanings connect to past cultural beliefs. Some UTNM extend back to pre-Columbian times. Because this is such a diverse discourse genre, this study only concentrates on one social and symbolic space for women, the home. Peeling back the layers of indexical meaning within each UTNM, I will attempt to reveal my female participants' unique ways of viewing the world and how they hope to preserve their cultural knowledge in the face of modernization.

Christina Lu  
University of Alabama  
Title: Little Children in My Heart: Examining the Many Meanings of Personal “Growth” in Beijing, China  
Abstract: This poster focuses on the ways in which individuals who are active in contemporary psychotherapeutic workshops at a Beijing “mind-body-spirit center” come to understand the meaning of personal “growth” (chengzhang). This center exists as part of the burgeoning psychological industry in contemporary China (Kleinman et al. 2011, Huang 2014, Kuan 2015) and includes workshops on developing one’s “inner child” (Pritzker 2016), resolving long-standing energetic blockages in the inherited family system (Duncan In Press; Pritzker and Duncan In Progress), or connecting with one’s “higher self.” Based on participant observation, interviews, and focused qualitative analysis collected over three years, the poster examines how individuals variably draw upon the term chengzhang to describe both their experience in the community as well as their goals with regards to continued participation. Generally speaking, individuals who attend the workshops are seeking deeper meaning in life, more extensive self-understanding, increased financial success, and/or improved relationships with children, spouses, and friends—all of which are seen to be evidence of personal development or maturity (chengzhang). When they speak about growth, participants thus refer consistently to themes of spirituality, self-acceptance or confidence, parenting, romance, family relationships, and emotion management. After a brief background section, this poster provides direct quotes related to these themes, derived from participant interviews and introductory remarks shared at various workshops. We then discuss the ways in which the examples demonstrate two main things: (1) the diversity and multiplicity in ways of defining chengzhang for various individuals, and (2) The ways in which chengzhang comes to mean very different things for people depending on where they are in their individual “journey” in the personal growth community. Together, these results suggest the importance of a close ethnographic inquiry into the meaning-making efforts of individual participants when seeking to understand a “cultural idiom” (Nichter 2010) such as chengzhang.

Sharon Jacobs  
University of Pennsylvania
Title: 'How We Came to Chicago': The participants, media, and message of refugee journey narratives

Abstract:
This paper begins with a narrative told by Amal, a middle-aged mother who in spring 2016 had recently been resettled in the U.S. as an Iraqi refugee. While preparing to speak at a fundraiser for an Islamic charity, Amal rehearsed with me her presentation, which told the story of her journey from Iraq to Chicago's Far North Side. While a harrowing and proprietary reflection on her family's experiences, Amal's narrative bears certain similarities with mediatized accounts of Middle Eastern refugee journeys to the U.S., which are often publicly disseminated as human interest stories in newspapers (Steimel 2010) and as profiles on refugee aid organization websites. Taking up Goffman's (1979) notions of production format and participation framework, this paper juxtaposes Amal's narrative with some of the mediatized accounts circulating in Chicago from fall 2015 to spring 2016, when Amal was preparing her speech. I will consider how different categories commonly glossed as "speaker" and "hearer" become invested in a message that retains its major themes and plot points across contexts and mediums. Who is responsible for the message cultivated in these refugee journey narratives, and toward whom is that message geared? What sort of social work do such narratives do for different producers and participants? Ultimately this paper will argue that refugee journey narratives—even as their motivations and effects vary across contexts and mediums—tend to reinforce a particular mode of American belonging for their migrant protagonists, one founded in positive personal qualities and post-relocation successes.

Howard Boutelle
SUNY Oswego
Poster Title: Where Have all the Junkies Gone?: Racializing Discourses of US Drug Epidemics from the 1980s to Present

Abstract:
In the United States, drug poisoning is the leading cause of injury-related deaths (New York State Department of Health 2015). In 2014, 47,055 deaths were attributed to drug poisoning/overdose. About 61 percent of drug poisoning deaths were attributed to opioids, such as heroin and prescription opioid analgesics which include oxycodone and hydrocodone. The level of harm brought on by these substances has led to massive public health campaigns to assist those with addictions. This poster presents the findings of a comparative discourse analysis of two key US drug epidemics: the crack epidemic of the 1980s and the current opioid crisis. Analyzing government reports and policies from New York State, the poster reveals the ways in which each ‘epidemic’ takes on a decidedly different form. Specifically, the predominant response to crack was criminalization. The racialized and racializing nature of crack discourse produced a ‘crackhead’ subject shaped who was seen as unworthy of state forms of care. By contrast, opioid users (seldom referred to any longer by derogatory labels such as junkie) are positioned as victims of a struggling economy and as white men with precarious access to older forms of discursively producing masculinity. The response, in policy and practice, has been to extend forms of state care and concern. By attending closely to the
ways in which meanings of two diverse drug epidemics are made, I show how racialized hierarchies of care take from in the United States

Mia Fasanella
SUNY Oswego

Title: “I don’t know if being skinny is what’s going to make me happy but it’s worth a try, at least I’m getting somewhere” : The Making and Meaning of ‘Health’ and ‘Self’ in Campus-based Diabetes Prevention Programs
Abstract:
Over 30 million Americans have diabetes. Type 2 diabetes rates have dramatically increased within the last fifty years. Currently, from a biomedical perspective, the most effective ways to manage type 2 diabetes is through prevention and behavior change among ‘at risk’ populations. As a result, public institutions have increasingly become involved in what Greenhalgh (2015) calls America’s “war on fat”. This poster shares the results of a linguistic anthropological study of a diabetes prevention program on a public university campus. In public health circle’s, the school is known as New York State’s “fattest campus” and obese bodies thus “serve as a billboard advert for impending sickness and death” (Berlant, 2010: 26). The paper draws on observations of a ten week peer coaching program intended to help those at risk for diabetes initiate behavior changes that result in weight loss. The majority of student participants do not lose weight and frustrate their student coaches who understand participant shortcomings as a “lack of motivation”. While “fat talk” and its damaging consequences has been studied by anthropologists (Greenhalgh 2015, Nichter 2001), this poster focuses in on negotiated, improvised and emergent meanings of “health”, “self” and “the good life” that take form in diabetes prevention coaching sessions. I suggest that participation in “health” provides an anchor of attachment that grounds participants ability to “save face” (Goffman 1956) in a discursive climate that is increasingly inhospitable to their embodiment.

Amani Alageel
The University of Arizona

Title: Intertextuality and the Indexical Meanings of ‘Online’ Gulf Pidgin Arabic
Abstract:
In the last few decades, with the massive increase of jobs following the oil boom in the Gulf and consequent government’s developmental programs, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf Arab countries have hosted thousands of immigrant workers from South and South-East Asian countries (Avram, 2014) to help in industrial and domestic business. As a result of contact between these linguistically different groups, a Gulf Pidgin Arabic variety (GPA) has developed. Due to cultural, educational and class differentiation, immigrant workers, especially those in the low-paid sectors, have been subject to social discrimination and racism in the hosted countries (Chakaravallti & Dhillon, 2015). This
has included a cluster of negative stereotypes of Asian workers, such as, being foreign, reckless, and foolish. Adopting linguistic anthropological perspectives, I examined the circulation on social media of tropes from GPA as evidence of the enregisterment (Agha, 2003; 2007) of GPA with a foreign worker persona, and how, as they circulate on the Internet, these tropes have acquired higher indexical meanings (Silverstien, 2003, Ochs, 1990) that are directly or indirectly built upon negative stereotypes of foreign Asian workers and shaped by the affordances and constraints of the cyberspace. Specifically, I examined the entextualization (Briggs & Bauman, 1992; Hanks, 1986) of the GPA phrase, fakar ana khoof (you think I am afraid), using Google and media searches (Hill, 2005), collecting the first 100 occurrences, and coding them based on changes in form, function, and meaning. In addition to the enregisterment of GPA as indexing a stereotyped naive, reckless, foreign worker persona, the analysis of intertextuality shows that while circulated GPA tropes presuppose racist stereotypes, they have also provide the online community with meaning-making resources with which to resist power or perform online persona.

Rebecca Dinkel
University at Albany, SUNY

Title: Metaphor and Media in Mayan Hieroglyphic Texts
Abstract:
Pre-Columbian Mesoamerica was only the second place in the world to have an independent invention of writing, which reached its height with Classic period Mayan societies. The advent of writing brought radical changes in communication, but also political organization and understandings of social identities. Elites could control the messages of the state with more permanence, mediate interactions with non-elites and provide a mechanism to compete with other elites. Content of these texts highlighted elite power and actions, such as warfare and rituals, elite lineages, and cosmologies. Language became material for the first time through the ability to record it, but also because Classic Mayan writing system had fused imagery in it where others had not. This research thus examines how media and genre have shaped meaning in Classic Period Mayan hieroglyphic texts, how these meanings changed over time and to what degree they vary or are co-constituted across Mayan polities. Specifically, this research examines metaphors utilizing the semantic domain of TREES, te’, which are used to structure understandings of elite lineages and spatial cosmologies. A corpus linguistics approach is utilized, as well is engaging deeper questions of metaphor theory. Questions for metaphor theory include the nature of the relationship between semantic domains in a metaphor, whether the nature of metaphor differs in visual media and language, and how grammatical and discourse processes can affect the interpretation and identification of metaphors.

Kathryn Kubinski
SUNY Oswego
Title: “How Do I Word This So He Doesn’t Think I’m Crazy?”: Collaborative Attempts at Initiating Romantic Relationships via Computer Mediated Communication

Abstract:
A recent study found that people under the age of 25 spend an average of five hours a day on their phones — roughly one-third of their total waking hours. Interactions via text based computer mediated communication (CMC) platforms on smartphones make up a substantial part of young people’s communication with one another. While popular accounts worry that CMC has reduced human sociability and connection, this poster shows how the specific case of attempting to initiate romantic relationships among undergraduate students has been generative of collaborative forms of producing and decoding potentially romantic messages. Drawing on interviews and participant observation with 40 heterosexual undergraduate students (male and female) at a State University, this poster explores gendered media ideologies (Gershon 2010) and the ways in which romantic partnering is being transformed (or not) by new communicative technologies.

Installation

Jennifer Reynolds
University of South Carolina
Title: A New Twist on a Multivocal Method Modeling Cross-Cultural Research in Multilingual Educational Settings in a Transborder Migratory Circuit

Abstract:
In accordance with the Society for Linguistic Anthropology’s inaugural theme “New: Media, Messages, Meanings and E-motions” this multimedia installation showcases a new twist on ethnographic film techniques for generating data of use to linguistic anthropological approaches. It also offers preliminary findings and future possibilities for engaging in basic and applied research which can foster intercultural dialogue between parents, teachers, administrators, and bilingual early childhood educators and specialists positioned in school districts that serve the same population of students at different ends of a transborder migratory stream. The installation will specifically model, using multimedia displays, how I have adapted and implemented the video-cued multivocal approach, originally developed by Tobin et al. (1989), to address how 5K-primary schools in rural school districts contend with the linguistic and cultural diversity of a mobile student population that connects western highland indigenous communities in Guatemala to a multi-ethnic rural community in the southeastern, US. The method facilitates cross-cultural comparisons of educational systems and involves the selection of case study societies and schools. After having conducted a short period of participant observation at each school, video-recordings of a “typical day” are made. The footage from each is edited into a ethnographic video shortcut showcasing routines as well as key and provocative issues in early childhood education. The researcher uses the footage to interview the teachers and staff at the school as well as specialists in that
area of education around the country and finally, educators in other countries in the study. Tobin and colleagues have also used this method to compare how both rural and urban preschool schools from across the US were coping with the challenges of transnational migration and adapting to the needs of new immigrant families. Findings from that study employed content analysis to reveal key battleground issues characterizing preschool education, namely language of instruction, academics in the curriculum, multiculturalism and parental involvement (Tobin et al. 2013). Those studies, however, unlike this project, did not connect sending and receiving school districts. Their analytic approach to coding, moreover offered only a limited use of Bakhtinian concepts, namely dialogism and heteroglossia. The installation therefore seeks to display how the method can be fine tuned to better foreground, for instance, how forms of “translanguaging” in schools are made manifest in formal and informal ways as well as the language ideological positioning that emerges in respondents interviews to the concrete and richly contextualized audio-visual cues evident in the video shortcuts.

Sonia Das & Sherina Feliciano Santos
New York University & University of South Carolina
Title: Capturing Conflict on Camera: A Multimedia Installation of DUI Police-Suspect Interactions in the U.S. South
Abstract:
In the U.S. few issues have received more media and scholarly attention lately than cases of police brutality against African Americans, Latinx, Asian Americans, and other ethnoracial minorities. Police departments have responded by recruiting ethnoracially and linguistically diverse police forces and requiring dashcams and bodycams to monitor and provide evidence of interactions with suspects. Police also pre-emptively charge suspects with breach of peace, public disorderly conduct, and resisting arrest if they are perceived as displaying aggressive, non-cooperative, or hateful communicative behavior. Given the latest studies that suggest that surveillance technology has had little impact on reducing violent encounters, one might ask the following questions: What does the escalation or de-escalation of violence look and sound like as an interactional achievement? Why do some verbal or gestural practices count as evidence of the “intent” to incite harm and not others? Can video recordings capture these linguistic “triggers” of conflict on camera?

Drawing on a previously undisclosed archive of 900+ dashcam and bodycam recordings of Driving Under the Influence (DUI) police arrests in Richland County, South Carolina provided by the Public Defender’s office of Douglas Strickler, Esq., this multimedia installation highlights the different communicative means through which affective stances and emotional states such as fear, anxiety, and rage intensify and thus “scale” (Carr and Lempert 2016; Das 2016) as violence through face-to-face interaction. It also explores how conflict is “enregistered” in and through verbal and gestural signs and across police-suspect encounters (Agha 2005). It advocates for interdisciplinary techniques to account for the depth and breadth of emergent patterns and to characterize the layered interactional orders and institutional contexts involved in the escalation of conflict. Discourse Analysis demonstrates how features such as poetics,
genre, style, gaze, prosody, and referential content function as real-time evidence to inform unfolding interactions between officers and suspects (Streeck et al. 2011; Wortham and Reyes 2015). Grounded Theory codes line-by-line transcripts of police-suspect encounters to identify rigorous patterns in themes and categories (Charmaz 2014). We argue that in order to understand the relationship between case outcomes and the race, ethnicity, gender, class, language use, age, and criminal records of suspects and officers, one must merge the capacity of sociological approaches to work with large amounts of data and anthropological approaches to analyze complexities in and across specific encounters.

This installation will be shown on a projector screen and a laptop computer and will require headphones. Viewers are invited to first view a 5-7 minute edited compilation of representative cases of dashcam and bodycam videos of DUI police-suspect interactions on a large screen. Afterward they will be guided through a Prezi presentation demonstrating the application of Grounded Theory and Discourse Analysis to three transcripts culled from this edited media. The cases will identify raciolinguistic ideologies (Alim et al. 2016; Flores and Rosa 2015) about non-standard English and ESL speakers, and their verbal and gestural comportments, to analyze how these impact legal outcomes of public disorderly conduct, breach of peace, and resisting arrest.

Judith Pine
Western Washington University

Title: We Are Lahu: Performing 21st Century Identities
Abstract:
The performative nature of identity is nowhere more evident than in media explicitly promoting a particular ethnic group. Lahu language pop music videos in circulation in a global mediascape via YouTube include a genre which promotes Lahu identity in various ways. With titles such as "Beautiful/Good Ethnic Group", "Happy Lahu People", or "Lahu Girl", "I Am Lahu", and "Lahu Face", these songs and the videos that accompany them engage the affordances of 21st century media to circulate polyvalent tokens which simultaneously index both authentic and modern Lahu identities, proposing cosmopolitan possibilities in messages sent out to local, regional, and global audiences. Through the construction of multimodal semiotic objects which bring images, lyrics, and musical styles into relationship with one another, these performances are, I argue, locations in which voice and register intersect as producers of a performed Lahu-ness argue for a distinctive identity while aligning their performance variously with concepts of authenticity and indigeneity, laying implicit claims to modernity.

The entextualization of ethnicity and of modernity is inflected by the civilizing projects (Harrell 1995) with which Lahu people have longstanding relationships. While Lahu are an officially recognized minority nationality in the Peoples Republic of China (PRC), in Southeast Asia they find themselves in the category "hilltribes". The potential for participation in the civic body of the state has been shaped by these different classifications, alongside the influence of Protestant Christianity. Each civilizing project has an influence on the way in which both authenticity and modernity may be evoked,
an influence reflected in Lahu language pop music videos. The proposed installation juxtaposes Lahu language music videos produced in the Peoples Republic of China and music videos in the same genre produced in mainland SE Asia, exploring the enregisterment of "Lahu" and "modern", and considering the inflection of the cosmopolitan evident in each political context. In all cases, the lyrics of these songs explicitly promote Lahu identity, often in conjunction with Lahu language and custom, drawing on essentialized understandings of identity. In contrast, the imagery which accompanies the music lays claim to localized versions of Lahuness.

Logistics of the presentation: I intend to provide four small screens along with headsets, permitting visitors to the installation an opportunity to view and listen to four songs within the genre, two from the PRC and two from mainland SE Asia. A viewing guide with translation of the lyrics of the song and highlights of visual elements of that video will be available at each viewing station, while a traditional-style poster will offer some comparisons and work to entextualize the materials for viewers.

March 10 Session 1

Scaling Chronotopes in Digital Discursive Practices
Rm 345

Panel Organizer: Sabina Perrino
Discussant: Kathryn Woolard

Session Abstract:
“We will give the name chronotope (literally ‘time space’) to the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature,” wrote Bakhtin in 1937 (1981, 84–85). Originally created as a way to analyze the entwined temporal and spatial dimensions of novelistic discourse, the notion of chronotope has been recently used by linguistic anthropologists and sociolinguists to study the complexity of spatiotemporal relationships in a vast array of discursive practices and sociocultural settings. While the chronotope is thus a “special type of scale,” as Woolard (2012) argues, too often its temporal and spatial scales have been explored as separate dimensions without emphasizing their complex and frequent intersections. This panel aims at filling this gap by looking at spatiotemporal configurations as they emerge in digital discursive practices. Recently, both emergent and established web platforms, such as blogs, Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, YouTube, 4chan, among others, have brought a multiplicity of theoretical and methodological innovations to linguistic anthropology and sociolinguistics. Since its inception in 2005, for example, YouTube, as a video-sharing and social networking site, has introduced a culturally significant mode of sharing information and experiences, thus providing participants with digital spatiotemporal dimensions in which individual and collective identities emerge and solidify in virtual communities of practice. Even participants who are separated by spatiotemporal distance and language may engage in digital conversations in which past
and present are flattened in realtime discursive practices. In this digital space, “chronotopic identities” (Blommaert & De Fina 2017) can be (re)constituted and negotiated in interaction in complex, unexplored, ways. Virtual participants can align or disalign with certain topics or between each other, for example, and they can do so through unimaginable spatiotemporal configurations in which chronotopic stances emerge. This panel aims at answering these, and other, questions by exploring the complex and intertwined chronotopic configurations across different digital platforms: How are virtual collective identities (co)constructed and solidified among YouTube and Facebook commenters around recontextualized viral spatiotemporal videos or images? Can digital chronotopes become platforms for the contestation of colonial histories? Can chronotopes foster racialized stances across anonymous digital platforms at a faster speed? How does the traditional chronotope change through online narrative practices around the recent European migration crisis or other emergency situations in which an over-calibration of spatiotemporal scales happens? Are chronotopic manipulations able to measure the erasure of traditional spatiotemporal configurations as the virtual “wordless” realities of online games? By examining these and other issues, panel participants will propose new theories and methods to explore these complex chronotopic relations in the digital realm.

Sabina Perrino
Binghamton University (SUNY)

Title: Chronotopic Stances in Racialized Narratives on YouTube

Originally applied to novelistic discourse by Bakhtin, the notion of chronotope has been recently studied by linguistic anthropologists and sociolinguists to unveil the complexity of spatiotemporal configurations in a vast array of discursive practices and sociocultural settings. In this paper, I apply the chronotope to recent linguistic anthropological research on scales by exploring how Italian racialized narratives travel across time and space, and thus are variously recontextualized and rescaled, in the digital realm. In this environment, virtual participants who are separated by spatiotemporal distance and language may engage in controversial digital conversations in which their anonymous, yet collective, identities emerge. More specifically, I examine how a Northern Italian politician’s racialized remark is precipitously recontextualized in digital narratives as they are co-constructed by YouTube commenters through their multiple chronotopic racialized stances. I show how YouTube participants negotiate and reframe the racialized aspects of online discourse and its sociocultural meanings through their numerous comments, and embedded replies to comments, and across different spatiotemporal configurations in which their “chronotopic identities” (Blommaert & De Fina 2017) emerge and solidify in unexpected ways. By exploring YouTube participants’ chronotopic stances in Italian racialized stories, this paper unveils the unpredictable nature of virtual participants’ online anonymous identities which are constantly (re)negotiated through spatiotemporal scales not only across Italy, but among Italians residing abroad as well. Besides investigating the chronotopic pragmatics of narrative
interaction in the digital realm, this paper speaks to methodological challenges that
surround the study of scales in online racialized narrative practices.

Jonathan Rosa
Stanford University

Title: “We cannot keep FEMA…in P.R. forever!”: Digital Chronotopes of Abandonment
and Contestations thereof in Puerto Rico’s Colonial Disaster

On September 20, 2017, Hurricane Maria made landfall in Puerto Rico, with the eye of the
Category 4 storm cutting across the US territory. The hurricane killed dozens, leveled homes,
and left the territory’s nearly 3.5 million residents with precarious access to potable water,
food, and electricity for more than a month following the storm. From some vantage points,
Hurricane Maria was an isolated natural disaster whose destruction was amplified by the
territory’s nearly decade-long economic crisis. This crisis led to the implementation of stark
austerity measures, leaving the territory’s population and infrastructure vulnerable to the
humanitarian crisis that emerged in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria. President Donald
Trump turned to social media following the storm, tweeting: “Texas & Florida are doing
great but Puerto Rico, which was already suffering from broken infrastructure & massive
debt, is in deep trouble.”; “...It’s old electrical grid, which was in terrible shape, was
devastated. Much of the Island was destroyed, with billions of dollars...”;
“owed to Wall
Street and the banks which, sadly, must be dealt with. Food, water and medical are top
priorities – and doing well. #FEMA.” In his references to the Federal Emergency
Management Agency, Trump claimed that the US government was doing an outstanding job
in its response to the storm. In contrast, others have turned to social media to frame
Hurricane Maria’s impact on Puerto Rico as a social disaster rather than a natural disaster,
with its roots in longstanding colonial histories of domination, exploitation, and neglect.
Using hashtags such as #PRontheMap, #PRSyllabus, and #PRSeLevanta (Puerto Rico Stand
Up), Puerto Rican activists, scholars, and commentators across the diaspora have used
social media to challenge the US government’s response to the storm and propose
alternative perspectives from which Hurricane Maria can be understood as one among
many colonial disasters experienced in Puerto Rico since the moment of European contact.

In this presentation, I explore the ways that contemporary digital discourses—particularly
digital social media—become communicative platforms for the contestation of colonial
histories pertaining to contexts such as Puerto Rico. I frame these discourses as digital
chronotopes. Recent scholarship in linguistic anthropology and related fields has
reinvigorated the Bakhtinian notion of “chronotopé” (e.g., Agha 2007; Bakhtin 1981; Perrino
2007; Silverstein 2005), or what some have called the “semiotics of temporality”
(Parmentier 2007). Literally “time-space,” the concept of chronotopé has inspired
researchers to investigate event configurations between the “present” and the “past” that
propel imagined figures of modern presents and colonial pasts into circulation (e.g., Bauman
and Briggs 2003; Inoue 2006; Lo and Kim 2011; Wirtz 2011; Woolard 2012). Digital
chronotopes that emerged in response to Hurricane Maria alternately erased and
foregrounded Puerto Rico’s colonial status through the celebration of the US governmental
responses on the one hand, and the moment-by-moment tracking of precarity on the other. I argue that through digital chronotopic spacetime expansions and contractions, the contested “eventness” of Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico can be understood in relation to possible pasts, presents, and futures.

**Michele Koven**
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Title: C Sa kse Bon!!! Viral Slogans and Displays of Old-fashioned and Youthful chonotopic images of Portugueseness in France

Although ethnic communities have no official status in contemporary France, second and third generation Franco-Portuguese youth have recently been producing new displays of "Portuguese culture" across a variety of new and old media. However, performing “Portugueseness” is fraught, with tensions about potential uptake by ingroup audiences versus for mainstream audiences. How to perform Portugueseness as connected to the following spatiotemporal images: to urban, French hipness, and also to contested, images of Portugueseness, recognizable to ingroup and to mainstream French audiences? Regardless, such performances often evoke figures, likened to first generation Portuguese immigrants, presented as simultaneously beloved, honorable, laughable, and representative of an image of a rural past. The tensions among these layered framings of these figures manifest in heteroglossic blends of oldfashioned” and “youthful” semiotic forms (Koven and Marques 2015).

Across a set of interdiscursively linked events and media, we analyze the lamination and uptake of these layered chronotopes in a particular viral, mock-language slogan C sa kse bon, "that's what's good." The slogan is a stylization of how a Portuguese immigrant might speak French. However, although many treat it as an utterance emanating directly from a Portuguese migrant, both beloved and stigmatized, they re-entextualize it orthographically in “youthful” French texting language. This incorporates and dominates the fraught immigrant voice with a young French voice. We examine how interlinked re-entextualizations of C sa kse bon reflect and construct complexly interwoven, sometimes contested spatiotemporal images of what it means to be visibly and audibly Portuguese in France.

**Paul Manning**
Trent University

Title: Worldness

Massively Multiple Online Games (MMOs) like Ryzom present autonomous “virtual worlds” that have served as prototypical digital “field sites” for virtual ethnographies, partially because these “worlds” seemed to be emblematic of the properties of
“cyberspace” as a whole. Online games remediate many of the literary chronotopes described by Bakhtin (1936): games of the MMO variety involve a kind of “spatial storytelling”, their picaresque narrative emplotment is heavily dependent on their “settings”, usually fantasy, science fiction “narrative worlds”. The setting involves both fictional genre or franchise they remediate which gives the players their core set of expectations, as well as the core expectation that this setting will take the form of a named “world.” Most MMOs are fantasy games set in fantasy worlds (Everquest-Norrath, World of Warcraft-Azeroth, Eve Online – the worlds of New Eden). The idea of a “game world” as an autonomous imaginary world is something inherited from fantasy and sci-fi genres: Ryzom’s world of Atys is a world in the same way that Middle Earth is a world. MMOs remediate this literary chronotope of “other world” and laminate it with the chronotope of the internet as an otherworldly space. Here the chronotopes of imaginary world and the internet as autonomous world become mutually reinforcing, affording escapist fantasy chronotopes of “cyberian apartness” radically separated from offline life in “meatspace”. In MMO research, the term “worldness” denotes a complex media object having a sense of autonomous reality, in which the various layers of the media world, the richly animated 3D pictorial spectacle, the interactive world of mobile nonplayer characters, as well as the digital community of other players, all hang together. Designers see themselves as creators of worlds, not just games. In this context I explore various chronotopes of one such online “world” (Ryzom’s Atys), a paradoxical “living, breathing world” that also seems always to be on the verge of dying, a kind of Lazarus world, showing how player communities frame their communities by a shared experience of the worldness of Atys as “life on a dying world”. The continued “life” of Atys as a world, its worldness, has been an object of concern since the inception. As a corporate property in the real world, Ryzom has always led a precarious existence: The server shut down of 2007 was the first of a series of shut-downs, each of which turned the world from an experienceable living umwelt into an object of mourning and yearning. But where some said farewell or sought to recreate their lost world in “game diasporas”, others sought to revive Atys. After the first shut down in 2007, the project of re-animating Ryzom was undertaken by the “Free Ryzom Campaign” which sought to, in effect, free an MMO world, to liberate Atys as an experienceable world and as a software object Ryzom and to re-animate it as a truly free world, and in the process, reveal the hybrid chronotopes of fantasy world and digital world laminated together in the chronotope of “Virtual World”

Dillon Ludemann
Binghamton University (SUNY)

Title: International Bantz: Chronotopes, identity, and the European migration crisis in the context of 4chan

4chan, a website whose impacts on digital discourse and culture have been far-reaching, operates within a unique space when we consider it from a chronotopic perspective. Indeed, disconnection, reconstitution, and redistribution across digital time, space, and
scales are prevalent in many everyday conversations within 4chan. Authority, hierarchy, and power are simultaneously reinforced through non-virtual political discourses, as well as subverted through the inherently anonymous banter, teasing, and discursive negotiations latent within 4chan. We see fractured space and time, tension between cultural ideologies; which is being reconfigured through an anonymous lens that encourages “politically incorrect” discourse. In my paper, I discuss this disconnection from the traditional concept of chronotope through the examples of discussions and narratives surrounding the European migration crisis, as is visible on 4chan. I provide textual examples of these anonymous users, marked only by small flags denoting their country (or VPN proxy) of origin as they actively collapse and reify temporal and spatial scales, cultural and political discourse, and power through this digital landscape. These examples demonstrate that users often occupy spaces fluidly occupy and shift in two differing and profound ways. First, as individuals with on a “local” scale. Second, as the countries that their flags -- no longer a single person, but the entire country they appear to inhabit. Thus, these users may fluidly move through these spatiotemporal configurations, requiring a new interrogation into chronotopic analysis; one that considers how both anonymity and widespread digital connectivity influence the construction, use, and current understanding of the Bakhtinian chronotope.

Alaina Lemon
University of Michigan

Title: Static or survival?: Chronotopic textures and scales

What year are you stuck in today? Is it 1967 again? 1917? For whom are which pasts always present? Which timespaces easily swallow the chronotopes (and whose chronotopes can swallow the timespaces) of those sitting in the ER or waiting to be deployed? A narrative chronotope always has to hit real timespaces. Differently textured wheels produce different "rolls" on different contact surfaces: rubber on concrete, wood on wood: similarly, differently textured chronotopes hit different spacetime conditions to different possible effects. If ritual spaceties can calibrate chronotopic fictions by fitting indexes for familiar narratives into a liturgy or a performanace, something less tidy happens in most timespaces, wherein chronotopes are but one among many scale-making machines and where people carry multiple chronotopes, in memory, in words, through devices for calls or searches, through media for making contact with other timespaces. In order to understand chronotopic multiplicities as social resources and conditions, we need to work beyond labeling them, and to explore the textures that make for smooth or rough fits. To create and mix differing chronotopes in a story, as Bakhtin described them, is a risky enough narrative technique. To draw attention even to baseline divergences in chronotopes in some spacetimes can be even riskier. The serving, laboring, and soldiering classes are rarely blind to these risks. Calling them out -- merely to reveal metapragmatic awareness of them -- troubles scales whose measures make sense of social hierarchies. Such efforts are often dismissed as garbage meaning, likened to static. This paper theorizes
chronotopic manipulations as pragmatic encompassments and evasions, especially focussing on those for surviving the over-calibrated timespaces of school, jail, army, work, ER.

Phytocommunicability and Plant-human Messaging
Rm 328

Panel Organizer: Becky Schulthies

Session Abstract:
Plants have been a part of anthropological research for much of the last century: as a medium and metaphor for analyzing human sociality and ways of being (Mintz 1985, Kapchan and Strong 1999); as key domain in ethnoscience classification systems and human cognitive processes (Berlin, Breedlove and Raven 1974), central to ethnobotany and medical discoveries (Stevenson 1915, Ellen 1996) and as communicative intermediaries between humans and non-humans (Allen 1981, Hallowell 1926). This panel will theorize phytocommunicability, reflexive models of knowledge about plant-human sociality and interaction that have motivated, and continue to motivate, all kinds of research, consumption, and conservation messaging projects. Communicability can include assumptions about interactions, participant roles, statuses, semiotic processes, channels, and ways of being that shape moment-to-moment contact and public discourses (Briggs and Hallin 2016).

Rather than mapping a phytocommunicability model to a specific group, contributors trace the multiple, partial, and overlapping models that emerge in specific plant-human messaging practices. Panel participants explore ideologies that shape discourses about the dangers and/or benefits of plants as complex mediums for marked kinds of communication and sociality. Papers also address the representational semiotics of transnationally circulating plant property discourses by paying attention to phytocommunicability across geographic and social status boundaries: the production and consumption of breadfruit (*Artocarpus altilis*) discourses in Polynesia and beyond; Oaxacan shaman, U.S. consumer, and pharmaceutical researcher interactions and representations of *Salvia divinorum*; Brazilian activists, U.S. laboratory assistants, herbaria archivists, and student phytocommunicability models surrounding Ayahuasca and *Arabidopsis thaliana*; U.S. and European allopath, herbalist, and witch medical practitioner boundary marking through positions toward plant poisons/poisoning acts and medicine; Salafi prophetic medical practitioners and herbalists preferred modality of *Zizyphus lotus* and *Peganum harmala* as communicability mediums in Morocco. Plants in these papers are situated as interlocutors, channels, and signs and thus paying attention to phytocommunicability models helps situate their part in messaging processes.
Paja Faudree  
Brown University

Title: Magic Mint and Cyberindigeneity: semiotic stripping and indexical collapse in the global salvia trade

This talk will discuss the dynamics of representation and interaction surrounding the global salvia trade. One of the world’s newest “drugs,” *Salvia divinorum* is a psychedelic variety of mint endemic worldwide only to Mexico’s Oaxaca state. There, indigenous people -- speakers of the language Mazatec -- have used the plant for centuries, often alongside the region’s better-known “magic mushrooms,” target of ethnic tourism since the 1960s. In recent years, however, salvia has been marketed globally as a legal alternative to marijuana and has become the site of pharmaceutical research. Thus a wide array of people now competes to determine the plant’s cultural and economic value. These include different groups of indigenous people (ritual specialists, their clients, growers, vendors, local leaders, and cultural middlemen) and also biomedical researchers, politicians seeking to ban the plant, mestizo suppliers, online retailers, and users in U.S., Mexico, and beyond. I discuss conflicting meanings people bring to their engagement with salvia, particularly those promoted on the one hand by indigenous people linked to the plant’s traditional homeland, and on the other by pharmaceutical researchers. I argue that one interactive pattern involves practices of strategically embedding the plants in social worlds – including those deploying online media – while another relies on opposing processes through which the plant is stripped of its ties to histories and social contexts. I close with a discussion of this case’s numerous implications for how the politics of representation and interaction undergirds the logic of global trade.

Charis Boke  
Cornell University

Title: Poisons and Flying Ointments: Communication at the Boundaries in North American Herbalism

In this paper I draw on fieldwork with western herbalists in North America to explore “poison” as a potentiator for boundary-making and marking among communities of medical practice. First, I examine the ways that practitioners across the spectrum of medicine level accusations of “poisoning” against each other. Herbalists decry some of allopathy’s remedies as “poison that passes for medicine,” from chemotherapeutic drugs to antibiotics. Allopaths accuse herbalists of playing fast and loose with “dangerous” plant material that, if poorly understood (which they suspect it often is) “might poison people.” Next, I dwell the “flying ointment” used by a contemporary herbalist-witch to induce a mild hallucinogenic states. Flying ointments have a long history in the legend of witchcraft across Europe and North America. Belladona, datura, henbane and mandrake root, powerful plant “poisons” all, emerge as agents
I argue that decrying poisons helps herbalists to stake claims about what makes a good medicine. Though dose, as the old adage goes, plays a part, it is not the only factor in making medicine. Wielding the word poison against both physical practices and also against *materia medica* (the materials of the medicine) helps practitioners to declaim boundaries, demarcating an “inside” of proper, nonpoisonous medicine, and an outside, where poisons and poisonous acts run rampant. Witches, on the other hand, mobilizing both the material and the act of poisoning, upset those social and political boundary-making projects, playing a key counterpoint to my consideration.

Emily Donaldson  
Saint Michael's College

Multiple Authors: Kathleen C. Riley  
Rutgers University

Title: Speaking Breadfruit: Phyto-communicability in the Marquesas Islands

Breadfruit (*Artocarpus altilis*, or *mei* to Marquesans) is a starchy fruit originating in southeast Asia and now tended in multiple varieties throughout the tropical world. Its potential on the global market was tested by Captain Bligh’s ill-fated attempt to take Tahitian plants aboard *The Bounty* to feed Caribbean slave plantations, and again more recently in efforts to market breadfruit flour online. This study explores this productive phyto-human relationship by focusing on breadfruit’s ontological role in the Marquesas of French Polynesia, where it acts as both staple and multivocalic sign. The plants, which cannot be planted from seed, were brought by Marquesans when they settled this Pacific archipelago over a thousand years ago. Islanders continue to talk a lot about breadfruit, from origin myths and church iconography to tourist menus and fermentation recipes. They also talk around it via conversational comments – e.g., having been born beneath that tree or obtaining the right tools to peel and pound the fruit. Based on the authors’ long-term ethnographic work in the Marquesas, this presentation looks at how breadfruit communicates through our interlocutors as they speak about and around it. We draw on data from interviews, everyday discourse, and archival materials to identify this plant’s indexical qualia and iconic resonance for Marquesans. We examine how, despite the prominence of rice and baguettes in today’s Marquesan diet due to globalization, the communicability developed around breadfruit has allowed it to thrive both materially and symbolically.

Ruth Goldstein  
Harvard University
Title: The Philosopher’s Plant and the Scientist’s Specimen: Communicating Human-Botanical (Un)Becomings

This paper engages phytocommunicability as the fodder to cultivate a theoretical grafting of Ayahuasca (*Banisteria caapi*) and the “rat-plant” (*Arabidopsis thaliana*) to examine the bodily and political stakes for what it means (for all life forms) to take away “plant-hood” through an experiential “intellectual herbarium” (Marder 2014). Both plants represent “type specimens” (Daston 2004) for different kinds of knowledge production. Ayahuasca represents a kind of philosopher’s plant par excellence. It is a medicinal psychedelic, accomplishing the alchemy of plants - transforming light and carbon into cellular growth and function while also interacting with human chemistry in enlightening, if not also purgative ways. It is fundamental to Amerindian healing practices and linked to indigenous claims for political sovereignty (Sanabria 2017). The *Arabidopsis thaliana*, also known as the “rat plant” for its wide use as an “experimental organism” in plants labs, serves an essential role as an experimental botanical organism against which Western scientists test “folk medicinal” claims and plant-communication. These plants also are among the botanical cadre tested for electric signals, messaging through pheromone networks and through root systems of fungi that researchers often talk about on par with sentience. Engaging the notions of a “planthropology” (Myers 2016) and Rudolf Steiner’s “anthroposophy” (1973) this article proposes “co-semination” in the form of a “planthroposophy,” to analyze the ways in which, from the rainforest to the laboratory, these two plants in particular embody different ways of communicating, knowing, being and destroying in the world in human-plant becomings/unbecomings.

Theresa Miller
The Field Museum of Natural History

Title: Plant Kin, Friends, and Lovers: Indigenous Sensory Communications with Plants

For the Indigenous Canela of Brazil, plants are active participants in the multispecies life-world. They are children to human gardeners, friends and lovers to shamanic interlocutors, and kin to community members as a whole. Canela women and men seek out and develop caring, affectionate relationships with plants throughout their lives through sensory perceptual engagements. This paper explores the myriad ways that Canela people communicate with and come to know plants, with a particular focus on people-plant multi-sensory encounters. It explores the sensory abilities of plants as experienced by Canela community members, through processes of gardening, seed saving, ritual, and shamanic activities. Indigenous Canela relationships with plants, the paper maintains, are not metaphorical but rather embodied, lived experiences grounded in paying attention to coming to know plants as interlocutors, communicators, and even kin. As studies of plant communication deepen our awareness of plant sensory
capacities, this paper argues that Indigenous ontological positionings and epistemological understandings of plants should be taken into account.

Becky Schulthies
Rutgers University

Title: Situating Phytocommunicability: Plant Channels and Parasites in Morocco

While anthropologists have explored the social lives of many plants that open communication between human and nonhuman interlocutors (coca, ayahuasca, tobacco, sage, cedar, sweetgrass, mushrooms), less attention has been paid to channel modality (plant smoke, breath across plants, ingested forms). Modality becomes an issue in communicability when interlocutors orient to other elements attached to the channel, potential parasites with problematic messaging effects. In this paper, I explore debates surrounding the proper modality of plant parts that prophetic medicine practitioners and herbalists prescribe in medical treatments for communicative disorders associated with the ill-intentions of others (human and nonhuman). These practitioners evoke multiple phytocommunicability models, even as they promote a specific plant medium modality to disambiguate their approach from the troublesome parasites in other modalities. In particular, I explore the practices and channel modality ideologies related to wild jujube (*sidra*), *Ziziphus lotus* and Syrian rue (*harmal*), *Peganum harmala* in Fez Morocco; the ways in which smoke from harmal seed incense and *sidra* leaf tea block evil communication from spirits and ill-intentioned others based on other channel indexes.

Old Media/New Media
Rm 329

Panel Organizer: Miranda Weinberg
Discussant: E. Mara Green

In a review of “Language and the newness of media,” Gershon (2017) argues that there is nothing inherently “new” about the set of social practices often labelled “new media.” Instead, “the newness of new media lies in forms of coordination that can be addressed with rigor by linguistic anthropologists and their intellectual interlocutors” (p. 16). The papers in this panel take up Gershon’s call to address the newness (or oldness) of media in a variety of ethnographic contexts. In particular, we focus on media as it interacts with standardization and its margins.

The media and modalities that we examine may not on their face appear “new” to everyone, but are instead new in different ways: to a particular social group, to an individual in their lifespan, or a new medium for a specific linguistic code. We examine the ways that these new media call into being new publics; create space for new
practices; or inspire new techniques of standardization. At the same time, we refrain from fetishizing the newness of media or communicative practices, considering the ways that a new medium may reproduce the existing social order, perhaps even masking stability behind the shiny face of a new medium.

Gareth Smail
University of Pennsylvania

Title: Teaching Standard Arabic? Old conflicts and new media in Algerian education

This paper is a part of the panel “Old New Media/New Old Media.” On the first day of school in September 2016, an Algerian teacher posted to Facebook a selfie video that, proverbially speaking, broke the Internet. In it, she led her first year primary students in call and response activity celebrating classroom values and extolling the virtues of the language of instruction, Standard Arabic (al-fu??). But when the video was flippantly criticized by the country’s Minister of Education, Nouria Benghabrit, expressions of solidarity with the teacher overwhelmed Algerian social media.

This episode is illuminating for how discourses of language and citizenship are intertwined in Algeria. This issue is typically approached with an eye to how different linguistic groups compete for power within the domain of language policy. However, this controversy turns on differing interpretations of what it means to speak, embody, and teach al-fu?? in Algerian classrooms, and not on whether it should be taught. Through a discourse analysis focused on narrative positioning across events (Wortham and Reyes, 2015), I take the video and examples of subsequent commentary to show how individuals strategically employ circulating political discourses about Arabic teaching to invoke different configurations of belonging to and exclusion from the Algerian national community.

Jennifer Phuong
University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education

Title: Flipping the Question: Classroom Communicative Practices and Standardized Testing

Standardized testing is part of the fabric of the institution of American education. Many scholars have explored the implications of standardized testing on schooling and marginalization; Annamma, Boelé, Klingner, and Moore (2013) argue that standardized testing becomes a way for schools to sort students by ability, language, race, and other markers of difference. For example, Menken’s (2008) study of standardized testing as language policy ultimately discriminates against English learners, instead privileging individuals positioned as English speakers.
Federal education law mandates standardized testing beginning in third grade, where students first explicitly socialize into schooling practices pertaining to these assessments. Standardized testing mediates new participant structures, new identities, and new ways of understanding so-called old practices in the classroom, ranging from learning how to complete bubble sheets to learning specific structures in responding to questions. This is especially true in bilingual schooling contexts that are inherently linguistically complex, especially for teachers and students in navigating the monolingual and English dominant bias that standardized testing perpetuates, as highlighted in previous ethnographies and discourse analytic studies in bilingual schools. To explore the impact of standardized testing in a bilingual school setting, this presentation draws from an ongoing longitudinal ethnographic study at Dual Language Charter School (DLCS), a bilingual, Spanish-English charter school in a large Northeastern city in a predominantly Latinx neighborhood. In examining classroom interactions and institutional contexts of DLCS, I describe how the institution of standardized testing mediates the creation and negotiation of new communicative practices in a bilingual school.

Mark Lewis
University of Pennsylvania

Title: Media and Representations of Language in Elementary Teacher Planning

Many educational practices depend on representations of distinct types of language. In elementary classrooms, students are expected to distinguish between recognized storytelling genres (e.g. fable, folktale, fairy tale), exhibit behaviors of a “good reader” (e.g., inferencing, identifying author’s purpose), and in an institutionally bilingual setting, to distinguish between named languages of instruction. Teachers source representations of these and other types from state and local curricula, their in-school planning processes, their own pre-service preparation, and resources they individually locate. Such representations are practically necessary but the specific forms they take can stymie pedagogical goals when too narrow or inaccessible. Bilingual educators in particular have struggled with the recognition that while languages may be separated in order to organize assessment and instruction, many of the actual language practices on the ground ignore this separation (García, 2009).

This study of a bilingual second grade teachers’ planning reveals how representations of language are refreshed and contested within events at school, both official and unofficial. I describe the many texts, events, and interactions that contribute to planning at Dual Language Charter School. In particular, I discuss how official “old media” sources like published curricula intersect in use with “new media” sources such as Pinterest and peer-to-peer lesson plan sharing websites. In the context of eroding teacher autonomy and widespread marginalization of bilingualism in the United States, examining multiple pathways by which representations of language are recontextualized shows how bilingual pedagogy is still nurtured and negotiated by teachers.
Miranda Weinberg  
University of Pennsylvania

Title: Textbooks as new media in a language revitalization project in Nepal

What happens when a language is allowed into school for the first time? How are communicative practices reshaped when they are recontextualized and entextualized for new purposes? National policies in Nepal grant each of the country’s more than 100 linguistic communities the right to provide basic education in their own language, a dramatic departure from earlier Nepali-only approaches. Among the consequences of this policy has been the deployment of linguistic codes in contexts where they were previously banned, and the creation of textbooks in languages without robust written traditions.

While the book is not a new medium globally, for Dhimal, a Tibeto-Burman language spoken in the southeastern plains of Nepal, the entextualization of the language in textbooks and subsequent use of those textbooks does represent a new medium. In this paper, I examine interactions around this newly mediated form of Dhimal in the language classroom. Classroom discourse demonstrates that the existence of a book in Dhimal language enabled a new form of objectification of Dhimal as a language of the same kind as English or Nepali. At the same time, Dhimal was not used as a communicative code in the classes but rather as an object to be studied, in a frame of English and Nepali used for communicative practices. The employment of Dhimal in the mediated form of a book, therefore, enabled its inclusion in a school space but also the code’s continued marginalization in the context where it was an object of study.

Nicholas Limerick  
Teachers College, Columbia University

Title: Translating Ecuador’s Organic Law of Intercultural Education to Quechua

In Ecuador, directors, administrators, and teachers of intercultural bilingual education, a national Indigenous school system, have been tasked with translating the recent Organic Law of Intercultural Education into Quechua. As in other parts of the world, when minoritized languages are named as “official” in constitutions, state documents are increasingly written in them. Translating the Law, a legally binding text, to Spanish brings up questions of whether an emergent version, and those doing the translating, will create new or different possibilities for claims as they write in a different language. The process provokes questions like: Will the Spanish-language version still be the ultimate authority? Can Indigenous translators re-write the law in the process? And what does the creation of laws in translation show about state power?
This paper draws on ethnography from the conference for the translation of the law, as well as more than two years of research with employees and activists of intercultural bilingual education. I look at two disagreements from the conference, including the creation of new words in Kichwa and the presuppositions about Indigeneity that they entail, as well as the politics of using dictionaries to decide which words are appropriate for the text. I show double-binds that emerge for translators in making their language fit state legal documents.

Beyond the Message: Mobilizing and Mediating Language Ideologies
Rm 330

Panel Organizer: Nese Kaya Ozkan
Discussant: Barbra Meek

Session Abstract:
Beyond the Message: Mobilizing and Mediating Language Ideologies in Minority Language Contexts

The study of language ideologies that drive the processes of both minoritizing languages and revitalization attempts have long been a focus in the fields of linguistic anthropology, linguistics and sociolinguistics (Jaffe 1999, Kroskrity, P.V. & Field M. C. 2009, Meek 2010, Patrick 2010, Woolard, 2016). This panel specifically examines the role of the media in circulating language ideologies in minority language contexts. Several scholars in linguistic anthropology have noted how ideologies about “languages” as bounded, representational entities contradict the diverse and socially meaningful ways that people employ linguistic signs in multilingual situations (Agha 2009, Silverstein 1998, Gal 1998, Kroskrity, 2010). In line with this view, we question whether or not the media as an institution can be seen as a space not only functioning as homogenizing “centripetal forces” (Bakhtin 1981:271) and circulating ideologies of “language anonymity” (Woolard 2016) but also as a site where and through which multiple, different and counter-hegemonic meanings are created. In what ways can the media serve as both a “reservoir and reference point” (Spitulnik, 1996) for the circulation of both hegemonic and counter-hegemonic discourses? How are different representations, identities, and belongings created and negotiated through complex engagements with media? What role does the media play in the social movements organizing linguistic, cultural and political activities for ethnic recognition and language revitalization? Can media be considered a potential site where linguistic and ethnic “others” create and negotiate new meanings and alternative linguistic markets, thereby increasing the value of their languages? The papers in this panel seek to understand the multiple and complex relations between media, language ideologies and language revitalization. The analysis of a televised parody on Black Sea people in Turkey in relation to interviews with the Hemshin people of the Black Sea region interrogates the role of mass media on both the reproduction of linguistic anonymity and the negotiation of linguistic authority drawing on Woolard (2016), Irvine and Gal (2000) and Bakhtin’s concept
of chronotope (Bakhtin 1981). The comparison of a 1990’s Gaelic soap opera in Scotland to a current popular drama sheds light on the effects of media on perceptions and ideologies regarding language development and revitalization, creating a potential for media to become both a site of changing ideologies and a vehicle for language change itself. The efforts of members of the Syrian Orthodox diaspora community to use media to reinvigorate their heritage language spark debate about the relationship between purity and vernacularity (Fishman 2006), tradition and innovation, the importance of place as a locus for language, and the potential for the locus of “authentic” language transmission to be transferred from geographical boundaries to media interface. The mediation of Basque ideophones as semiotic features of linguistic landscapes, semiotically “branding” Basque in particular ways of speaking Euskara and being Euskaldun (being Basque), plays a vital role in linguistically distinguishing Basque from Spanish via “aesthetic acts of resistance” (Barrett 2014). Each of the examples on this panel probes notions of the representation of linguistic authenticity through both phonological and visual semiotic cues specifically facilitated by media.

Nese Kaya Ozkan

Title: We speak to make jokes: Hemshin Language and Ideologies of Linguistic Authority in Turkey

Homshetsnak is a language spoken by Hemshin people living predominantly in the north-east of Turkey. This paper examines the role of mass media in the reproduction of historically contingent language ideologies in Turkey. The paper aims to shed light on the semiotic processes through which these ideologies are constructed and naturalized perpetuating the authority of Turkish and the marginalization of “ethnic others” in Turkey such as Hemshins in ways that never seem to be explicit exclusion. The ways in which the linguistic authority of Turkish is constructed and Homshetsnak receives its status as a “backward language to tell funny stories” are accounted for with the ideologies of “authentication” and “anonymity” (Woolard, 2016). The analysis of these ideologies explains how Hemshin people have been constructed as belonging to the “universal” Turkish identity, while at the same excluded from this membership. It shows that Hemshin people are otherized and represented as “backward” through the construction of a chronotope (Bakhtin 1981) moving them to an imagined space in the past in addition to the semiotic processes of “erasure”, “iconization”, and “fractal recursivity” (Irvine and Gal, 2000). The results shed lights on the processes through which Hemshin language has become an “among us” language to tell jokes or funny stories in the eyes of Hemshin speakers themselves. The data for this study mostly come from the ethnographic fieldwork I conducted since 2012 about Hemshin people as well as from written texts on Hemshin language and from media sources such as published TV serials in Turkey.

Maya Rachel Klein
Title: Machair and Bannan: Language Ideologies in Scottish Gaelic Soap Operas

This paper compares two Scottish Gaelic dramas to consider the role of the media in diffusing changing language ideologies within the context of Gaelic revitalization in Scotland. I draw on Woolard's (2016) work on linguistic authority to explain the differences between the two shows. Machair was the first Gaelic soap opera, and was broadcasted in the 1990s. This show reinforces hegemonic language ideologies of English as the anonymous language and Gaelic as the authentic language by presenting situations in which it is only appropriate to speak English, and conversely, where it is inappropriate for outsiders to speak Gaelic. In this show, speakers switch to English frequently; code choice and competence in Gaelic elicits metapragmatic commentary. Bannan is a current soap opera first broadcasted in 2014. Unlike Machair, Bannan aims to reverse hegemonic ideologies by presenting Gaelic as the anonymous language, yet representing conflicting stances regarding Gaelic as the language of authenticity. This show presents an idealized Gaelic speaking reality where all characters have the same competence in Gaelic, and the choice to use Gaelic does not elicit metapragmatic commentary. I argue that these shows exemplify how Gaelic media reflects and widely distributes language ideologies within the Gaelic revitalization context. Therefore, the differences between the shows can be examined as a reflection of changing ideologies within this context. These dramas show that mass media can serve as a “reservoir and reference point” (Spitulnik, 1996) for circulating both hegemonic and counter-hegemonic ideologies.

Keri Miller

Title: The Preservation of Place Through Language: Mediated Transmission of Aramaic Among the Syrian Orthodox

The Syrian Orthodox community is anchored to existence by religious ritual founded on the Aramaic language, and by monasteries and churches that serve as worship sites. The dispersal of the community from homelands in Turkey and Syria over the past centuries due to extended religious persecution has lead to the peril of language loss. Based on ethnographic research carried out in both Turkey and Germany from 2015-2017, this study examines the perceptions of Suryoye from a wide range of ages and backgrounds regarding the importance of Aramaic in their continued ethnic identity. I argue that debates via the media surrounding proposed linguistic standards open a window to the processes indexing language and place to community identity. Community members (Suryoye) are working to create projects to ensure those in all reaches of the diaspora have an opportunity to learn their language via television, internet and social media. These efforts evoke tensions surrounding contrasting values regarding the form and use of the language, especially purity and vernacularity (Fishman 2006), tradition and innovation, authenticity and anonymity (Woolard 2016). Furthermore, the question arises as to the importance of place. To what levels can the transmission of authentic language (Coupland 2014, Eckert 2003) be transferred from a geographically delineated
boundary such as the Mor Gabriel monastery, to media interface (Androutsopoulos 2014, Spitulnik 1996)? To what extent for the Suryoye does time meet with space (Bakhtin 1981) in the place (Basso 1996) created by mediated connections (Agha 2007), and how does this differ from geographical place?

Kelsie Gillig

Title: Ideophones as Indexical Brands: mediating ideologies of “Basqueness” in public spaces

In this study, I analyze the widespread use of ideophones within the Basque Autonomous Community of Spain (henceforth, BAC) in public spaces through the lens of Peircean semiotics (1998). In analyzing the ways ideophones function as semiotic features of linguistic landscapes (Blommaert 2013, Gorter and Cenoz 2015) of the BAC, I argue ideophonic usage in public spaces comes to index particular brandings of and imaginings of “Basqueness” that are taken up in different ways by different individuals. That is, ideophones in public signage semiotically “brand” Basque in particular ways of speaking Euskara and being Euskaldun (being Basque) that defy standard language ideologies, which typically relegate verbal art to the periphery of “artistic and poetic” language use.

I provide examples of Basque ideophones in public spaces, highlighting (1) how these culturally salient linguistic features become indexes of social groups (Irvine and Gal 2000, Childs 2001, Webster 2010) and (2) how these ideophones are phonologically iconic representations of the depictive, imagistic, and affective experiences they evoke within a local and regional Basque identity (Childs 2001; Dingemanse 2012). I argue that ideophones serve as “aesthetic acts of resistance” to linguistically distinguish Basque from Spanish. Their symbolic, visibly different forms in public spaces mediate the experiences they represent as well as indexical relations to the social group they represent (Webster 2017, 2009, Barrett 2014). I conclude in reflection of the ways that sound and sense are interwoven in cultural and language specific indexical meanings.

Session 2

The Battle of the Genres II: Framing Authority in Political Discourse
Rm 345

Panel Organizer: Leila Monaghan
Northern Arizona University

Session Abstract:
This panel focuses on a central arena of culture wars—the shifting ethnopragmatics of political discourse past and present in relation to the construction and destabilization of conceptualizations of truth, authenticity, and authority.

As political actors and their publics in the US and elsewhere proclaim, promote, and pursue conflicting metapragmatic values and interpretive frames for political discourse genres from full-blown political oratory and court cases, to comedy and tweets and memes, we can see generic boundaries being shifted and contested as part of the contestation of fields of power and authority. The elements of generic ambiguity and dynamism (Briggs and Bauman 1992) involved in the classification and ordering of discourse can be seen as a center of metapragmatic wars over authority.

By looking at past and present examples from a 19th congressional hearing on the Sand Creek massacre, to the language of Ronald Reagan and current political tweets, this panels examines the construction of discursive authority and authenticity. Topics will include the fluidity of genre-framing cues that mark discourse as interpretable as “literal but not serious” and its known variations; an examination of issues of truth and turn-taking (Duranti, 2015) in negotiation of authority across different media; responsibility and evidence in discourse (Hill and Irvine, 1993); and the formal resources that enable and foster the generic fluidity of discourse.

Leila Monaghan
Northern Arizona University

Title: Framing the Sand Creek Massacre: Genre Manipulation as an Exercise in Power

On the cold, clear morning of November 29, 1864, United States military troops led by Col. John Chivington attacked the Cheyenne and Arapaho village of Chief Black Kettle at Sand Creek. The majority of deaths that day were women and children. Numerous congressional hearings were held afterwards, including one led by Lt. Col. Samuel Tappen, protégé of one of Chivington’s “best kind of haters.”

This paper will explore how Chivington, Tappen and others draw upon the generic expectations of “the recognized rules of civilized warfare,” traditional court proceedings, and the code of gentlemen’s honor to avoid or assign blame for the killing of over a hundred women and children. The paper examines the 288 pages of published records of 1865 Tappen Inquiry which includes direct transcription of court testimony. The records provide evidence of the minutiae of the contestation of generic boundaries. For example, in order to avoid being questioned about his actions, Chivington argued, I would most respectfully request the commission to delay their organization until I can prepare objections to their organization of the court as a commission, and to object to one of the members, on the grounds of prejudice open and avowed.
Elise Kramer  
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign  

Title: “There You Go Again with 'There You Go Again'”: Making Your Opponent Beat a Dead Horse

In the “age of Message” (Lempert & Silverstein 2012), consistency is key for any politician who wants to avoid the dreaded label of “flip-flopper.” Yet at the same time, the politician who is too consistent — too “on message” — opens him or herself up to another strain of criticism: too predictable; too practiced; beating a dead horse.

In one of the 1980 Presidential debates, Ronald Reagan responded to one of Jimmy Carter’s attacks with the now-famous line, “There you go again.” He repeated the line in 1984 against Walter Mondale, and many other politicians have repeated it since, simultaneously drawing on the line’s historical residue and making use of its in-the-moment dismissiveness.

In this talk, I consider the political and metapragmatic ideologies that make “going there again” a risky political move — or, rather, make framing one’s opponent as “going there again” a fruitful one. When is predictability good, and when is it bad? Under what conditions can one effectively frame one’s opponent as a broken record or a nag? I analyze successful and not-so-successful attempts at the dismissive offense: from Reagan’s classic line, to Al Gore’s theatrical sighing during the 2000 debates, to the themed “bingo cards” that circulate online today (populated with the supposed most common arguments made by a given political “type”). In the process, I explore the conflicting underpinnings of authority in the contemporary American political sphere, where the same attribute, depending on framing, can render someone trustworthy or worthy of suspicion.

Colleen Cotter  
Queen Mary University of London  

Title: Tweets, trends, and tradition: Public discourse in the time of transition

In this paper (part of the panel “The Battle of the Genres II: Framing Authority in Political Discourse”), I tie together ethnopragmatic and linguistic insights about discourse, interaction, mediatization and language style – which demonstrates the complex interaction between language, media, and culture that underpins news and political discourse (Briggs 2011, Peterson 2010, Cotter 2010) – to industry research on news consumption patterns to determine what the evolving social media environment facilitates, and how news as discourse and its attendant genre forms are changing because of it (Pew 2015). Parallel to changes on the consumption face – we get our news through Tweets and social media feeds – are changes to its production and the process behind it: among other alterations, Twitter is replacing sourced news stories as authoritative public discourse.
These changes are happening at the same time as politicians and others are redefining or co-opting “fake news” to mean something they disagree with, as my examples show, or a perfectly reasonable assemblage of “alternative facts” (e.g., Conway on Meet the Press). Almost as quickly commentators and educators are trying to inform the public on the “perils” of ‘fake news’” (e.g., Stelter on CNN).

Thus, awareness of genre forms, story-types, and discourse conventions and how they have changed and are changing is essential. That political discourse by its nature is partisan and aims to persuade is not news. But investigating what has changed and revisiting how beliefs proliferate (Sperber 1996) within new discourse contexts is critical in a time of transition.

Jennifer Delfino
CUNY-Borough of Manhattan Community College

Title: "Dear White People" Callout Culture in Political Discourse on Social Media

This paper will be given as part of the panel, “The Battle of the Genres II: Framing Authority in Political Discourse.” It examines the form and function of callouts among young liberals on Facebook, focusing on how callouts help participants negotiate the meaning and praxis of “white allyship” in the Trump post-election period. Callouts are a type of speech act wherein activists verbally target the problematic assumptions in the anti-racist, anti-xenophobic, or anti-sexist strategies of fellow activists (Lee 2017). Though originating in activism, callouts are increasingly becoming popular in online liberal news sources. HuffPost, Vox, Slate, Teen Vogue, and others commonly use callouts in their headlines, such as, “Dear White People: Your Safety Pins Are Embarrassing” (HuffPost 2016), and authors often explain to young whites how to examine their privilege in the article. Linguistically, callouts typically use explicit terms and phrases to characterize the target as complicit with white racism/white fragility, or with sexism, transphobia, etc. The paper will use discourse analysis of posts and interactions on Facebook, focusing on how young White elites recruit particular types of knowledge about “selves” and “O/others” to negotiate their own racialized roles and responsibilities as white allies and to implicate fellow social justice crusaders in right or wrong ways of talking about politics and engaging in political activity. It will connect these online interactions to metapragmatic assumptions about what it means to participate in social change or action using social media and reflect on Facebook’s affordances and limitations as a social justice platform.

The Labor of Mediation Under Neoliberal Conditions
Rm 328

Panel Organizer: Ilana Gershon
Session Abstract:

This panel explores how the labor of mediation, and in particular the labor of speaking for others—often voicing others’ words—is performed under neoliberal conditions, that is to say, in contexts in which to be a mediator is to be a paradoxical figure. How does one engage in the labor of mediation under neoliberal conditions when mediation is both essential to accomplish certain social tasks and a problem for neoliberal subjectivity?

The panel takes neoliberalism to originate as a socioeconomic philosophy developed by Hayek, Friedman and others of the Mont Pelerin Circle as a historically specific perspective on how best to enact capitalism, a perspective that currently dominates most capitalist practices worldwide. In implementing a Hayekian vision, practitioners on the ground had to develop a vision of the neoliberal subject, commonly described as an entrepreneurial self, conceived of as a bundle of skills, assets, qualities, experiences and relationships that must be constantly managed as one might manage a business, and thus continuously enhanced. Social relations, from this perspective, are contractual relationships in which risk and responsibility are ideally equitably balanced among actors who act according to their market-defined interests. For the purposes of this panel, there are a number of aspects to note in this description of neoliberalism. Selves are supposed to act in their own self-interest. Because contracts require this, selves are supposed to be stable entities with visible, knowable qualities that allow others to view these selves as predictable. And all social relationships hinge on a form of contract between stable and knowable entities in which the primary focus is balancing risk and responsibility equitably.

Neoliberal logics are supported by language ideologies that assume that a person’s voice unproblematically represents a unified ‘self’. Such language ideologies assume that even when someone is communicating on another’s behalf, the process is both transparent and direct, thereby erasing the labor of mediation. As a result, certain roles, under this neoliberal perspective, exhibit the “wrong” kind of agency, however essential they might actually be for social interaction. These include mediators of many kinds, such as those who seem to act in others’ interests and those whose work entails voicing or facilitating the words of others. This panel explores how different types of mediators through their communicative labor negotiate the paradoxical conditions of interacting in ways both in line with and counter to neoliberal expectations of agency. We are particularly interested in the strategies of voicing employed by those in a diverse set of mediating positions. We turn to translator-interpreters, Indian playback singers, and job recruiters to explore how these actors navigate the contradictory requirements of being both transparent vehicles for others’ words and visible, knowable subjects negotiating for their own interests (how, whether, and when they make these choices). Through ethnographic attention to the production and representation of voices in these contexts, we seek to understand how effects of transparency, immediacy, and authenticity are
produced, and the kinds of affect, forms of agency, and social roles and relations that are generated through these mediating roles.

Ilana Gershon  
Indiana University

Title: Recruiting 9-5: What a Way to Make a Living

Unlike the mediators discussed in many of the other papers on this panel, U.S. recruiters embody what it means to be successful as a neoliberal mediator, revealing that in some instances, a neoliberal system not only requires structural roles that mediate, it can valorize being a mediator. What are the conditions under which neoliberal logics might welcome mediators so enthusiastically? First, it is often precisely the ways in which an alliance between a recruiter and a company is also always a gap between the recruiter and a company that enables this acceptance. For example, companies often want to hire employees from their competitors or even their customers, but at the same time they don’t want to antagonize the other company. This is a moment in which they might turn to a staffing agency or hire a recruiter on a short-term contract as cover to allow them to hire whomever they want without consequences. As long as the recruiter is technically independent (that is, not speaking for anyone else), the company can always use the recruiter as a scapegoat. Second, companies use recruiters to conceal their business strategies or vulnerabilities. Job ads might indicate gaps in a company’s workforce that needs to be filled, but the company doesn’t want to signal to their competitors that they don’t have people with the essential skills working for them. In these instances, recruiters stand in for job ads, and in the process use their networks to forge new alliances for others. Third, employers in a company may contract with recruiters in an attempt to avoid structural tensions with HR. Recruiters are valued precisely because of the ways that they are viewed as independent actors when there is already a structural conflict in place between how those on a team want the hiring process to go, and how HR does. This paper will address how, in all these instances, recruiters manage the communicative labor of functioning as a mediator smoothly in contexts shaped by neoliberal understandings of sociality that might otherwise suggest that being a mediator is a fraught position.

Amanda Weidman  
Bryn Mawr College

Title: Voicing Strategies and Participant Roles in Indian Playback Singing

Playback singing in Indian popular cinema is based on a division of labor between the singer, whose voice is recorded in the studio, and the onscreen actor/actress who moves and lip-syncs as this pre-recorded voice is “played back” on the set during the shooting of the film. As “delegated voices,” playback singers participate in the
separation of voice from both authorial agency and appearance, serving as the singing voice of the onscreen actor while remaining offscreen themselves, and as the medium for the realization of songs whose words and melodies have been authored by others.

In the 1950s and 60s, playback singing afforded new opportunities for women to participate in the film industry without appearing on screen in a context where actresses were considered to lack respectability. Since the 1990s, however, the older understanding of playback singers’ role as non-emotive and non-authorial has come into tension with new assumptions and demands—that the singer’s performance reflects her creativity/individuality; that the singer has an emotional and biographical connection to what she sings; that the singer’s appearance and voice must match—that are part of a distinctly neoliberal understanding of voice—one that is particularly problematic for female singers in the context of a gendered economy of public presence where appearing and/or having one’s voice be heard in public/on screen continues to carry certain risks. This paper will analyze the strategies of voicing undertaken by singers and how the participant roles and structure of the performance event change in this new context.

Matthew Hale
Indiana University, Bloomington

Title: Leisure, Labor, and Subjectivity™ as Brand©: The Mediation of Selves in the Digital Economy®

Drawing on eighteen months of ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Atlanta, Georgia, I take participatory culture as a productive site through which to investigate how American youth use social media and popular culture to make sense of and cope with the socioeconomic precarity of the twenty-first century. I argue that emerging forms of always-on, on-demand communication technologies propelled by neoliberal socioeconomic policies have dismantled traditional labor structures and profoundly changed how American youth think about and spend their free time.

Many young entrepreneurial Americans have come to view popular culture and social media as critical tools for attaining a new kind of American dream. Mass culture and new social technologies allow them to monetize their leisure activities, build small businesses, manage multiple income streams, and transform their personal identities into a brand—in short, to build a better more fulfilling life for themselves within the structures of neoliberalism. They use social media, popular culture, and their social networks as a stepping stone on the path to success, wealth, fame, and influence. Within the emerging digital economy, leisure ceases to be what one does when not at work and instead becomes something that can or even ought to be monetized. In this paper, I critically investigate how young Americans mediate between their public selves as business/brand and their personal lives within both digital and physical spaces and
chart the emotional impact that these emerging labor structures and have on their everyday lives and sense of self.

Erika Alpert
Nazarbayev University

Title: Matchmaking and the Value of Marriage in Neoliberal Japan

This paper explores the work of professional matchmakers in Japan. Professional matchmakers make interpersonal mediation their job. As part of introducing eligible single men and women to each other, they give advice to their clients on self-presentation and communication, mediate clients’ desires directly in communications with other matchmakers, and help them negotiate complicated interactions such as breakups or marriage proposals. However, because these matchmakers perform their mediating services for money, they are also neoliberal subjects whose self-interest sometimes aligns with the clients whose desires they voice, and sometimes pulls them in competing directions. Matchmakers presume that it is in clients’ best interests to marry. For contemporary Japanese matchmakers, marriage can provide both personal satisfaction and social insurance against the calamities of so long life. However, clients’ marriages also cement matchmakers’ professional reputations as successful businesspeople, which helps them recruit future clients.

In this paper, I look at data derived from past and ongoing fieldwork with professional matchmakers in the Osaka Metropolitan area of Japan. Specifically, I focus on a training session conducted in June 2017, where matchmakers roleplayed as clients for their peers to give them “advice.” The “clients” who were uncertain about their partners were advised to take their time, to consult with their partners, and to wait on consultation with their partner’s matchmakers, but almost never to end their relationships. Although it may not serve the clients well, the presumption that marriage is valuable in and of itself definitely serves the matchmaker’s professional and financial interests.

Rachel Howard
University of Chicago

Title: Legal Voicing and Empowering Others

Online platforms are spaces where virtual participants continuously (co)construct and negotiate their identities across several sociocultural phenomena such as recent political events. They thus constitute important sites to examine the incessant recontextualization of political discourse across time and space. In this paper, we explore the (re)circulation of political digital discourse starting from two contexts: Northern Italy and the Philippines. More specifically, we examine the ongoing popularity of the Lega Nord (‘Northern League’) political party in Italy and the recent rise of
President Rodrigo Duterte in the Philippines to demonstrate how virtual participants (co)construct politicized chronotopic networks across time and space. In so doing, we show the limits of network and scalar approaches in representing the digital, chronotopic, and politicized nature of online sites. While network and scalar approaches have recently emphasized the fluidity of spatiotemporal boundaries, they do not acknowledge the chronotopic nature of digital sites, where virtual participants take interactional stances vis-a-vis each other across vast geographical distances and unseizable temporal dimensions. Therefore, we examine how virtual participants’ political identities emerge from complex spatiotemporal configurations where time and space intertwine in unexplored ways. Besides investigating the politicization of discursive practices in the digital realm, this paper speaks to methodological challenges surrounding scales and networks and proposes new ways to conduct such investigations.

**Making New People: Materializing and Mediating Personhood**

Rm 329

Panel Organizer: Julia Kowalski

Session Abstract:

Linguistic anthropologists have long shown that semiotic activity relies upon and reproduces culturally recognizable models of personhood (Goffman 1956). Yet political, economic, and technological forces are radically transforming the material media these models rely on. In response, scholars across the social sciences have turned to a focus on the “vibrant” capacities of materiality itself (Bennett 2010). As linguistic anthropologists, how might we integrate interactive and material approaches to personhood? Our panel pursues this question by exploring how transformations in material and affective resources shape personhood. As doctors face stubbornly autonomous patients, how do they remake patient selves to shore up an ethics of intervention? As real estate workers confront an economy that denies them material success, how do they rely on interactive resources to enact business expertise? Our papers draw on semiotic accounts of person making to examine moments when taken-for-granted models of personhood are called into question by shifting terrains of materials, meanings, and media. We explore how speakers use language to mobilize materials, bodies, and affect in resisting and remaking personhood across multiple scales. Family counselors in Jaipur turn legal documents into tools of therapeutic interaction, producing new models of interdependent personhood. In China, gossip over women’s reproductive choices turns mothers into new kinds of citizens. Migrant construction workers narrate the onslaught of new materials they encounter to fashion capable worker selves. Collectively, our papers demonstrate the ways in which linguistic practices elaborate, perform, and regiment material transformations in models of personhood.
Adam Sargent
The University of Chicago

Title: Managing Materials, Making Selves: Becoming a Construction Worker in Delhi

When asked directly, workers on construction sites in India are often loath to speak of their work as part of their identity, claiming that “there is nothing special in it.” Yet across different trades and types of construction work there is a robust discourse on the pains and pleasures involved in encountering the materials of one’s trade. These discourses frame labor as causing a transformation of workers’ bodies in ways that attune their capacities and proclivities, making them into particular types of laboring selves. Workers understand this as a process of making ‘habit’ (adat) as when stone masons claim to have become used to the stone dust that they breathe in or welders say that they no longer suffer from the intense light of the welding torch. Based on fieldwork conducted on construction projects in the greater Delhi region, this paper focuses on the ways in which worker commentaries discursively frame the material effects of particular forms of work. This framing is crucial in shaping the socially transformative effects of work, in creating particular worker selves (e.g. bar-benders, stonemasons or welders). Putting materialist and interactional accounts of personhood into conversation, I argue that material exposure does not have unmediated effects on worker selves. Rather, new worker selves emerge out of the very process of discursively regimenting the effects of different materials on the laboring body.

Colin Halverson
Vanderbilt University

Title: Police Powers of the Clinic

When an adult patient comes to the clinic, she submits her material body to surveillance, manipulation, and penetration from her clinicians. She supposedly has legal and ethical protections against any such incursions without her consent. She may claim a right to information about the risks, benefits, and alternatives to a proposed intervention, and ultimately, the right to reject said intervention. However, this autonomy is limited in the case that she opts for something against medical advice. The patient’s autonomy is contingent on her ability to perform her rationality successfully for her clinicians in interaction. As such, both consent and the performance of rationality are semiotic accomplishments in the construction of personhood. When clinicians determine that patients are making affect-laden or otherwise irrational decisions and working against their best interests, they may decide to intervene against the patient’s expressed wishes. Clinicians often provide anecdotes from their own practice of when going against a patient’s expressed wishes ended up saving their patient’s life. In my talk I explain the discursive construction of patients as (ir)rational and clinicians’ strategic deployment of this rhetoric in influencing or determining the patient’s healthcare. I analyze the model of ‘rational’ personhood in biomedical discourse, with its power to silence or give voice
to patients while in the clinic (or trying to leave it). I dissect the different interactional strategies used to undermine the ascription of rational personhood in individual cases in order to deny these patients so-called autonomous choice in the name of their “best interest.”

Llerena Searle
University of Rochester

Title: Market-stance: Self-fashioning during a market downturn

This paper contributes to our understanding of the relationship between personhood, media, and materiality by exploring the ways in which people uphold face when it is tied up in business performance. I consider the case of people whose corporate position is central to their self-presentation: the employees or owners of real estate-related firms who spoke with me about the Indian real estate industry at their offices in 2014. I argue that the material circumstances of market failures threaten the line that my interviewees have taken up as successful business people and necessitates various strategies for maintaining face. These strategies comprise an interactional dance vis-à-vis the market: various ways of distancing oneself from signs of market failure (and from other market media and participants) while claiming economic (and other) values as signs of success. After examining three such strategies, I speculate on the nature of markets and persons. Goffman argues that one’s face is “diffusely located in the flow of events in the encounter” (1967, 7). This data suggests that the same is true of the “market”: both “face” and “market” emerge in the ongoing flow of interactions.

Britta Ingebretson
University of Chicago

Title: “She has two sons:” Reproduction, Meaning, and Moral Personhood in Rural China

The One-Child Policy has transformed family structure across China, particularly in rural areas where large families were once the norm. Yet in addition to altering family size, I argue that the One-Child Policy has reconfigured the meaning of social categories of motherhood in rural China, where the number and gender of children are seen as a sign of a woman’s moral character. In this talk, I examine how the circulation of gossip over women’s reproductive choices discursively produces particular types of mothers and, by extension, particular types of persons with particular orientations to the Chinese state. The models of personhood that emerge, such as the ‘peasant,’ the ‘rural rich’ and the ‘high-quality citizen,’ are defined by their varying degrees of distance from a State-sanctioned ‘model citizen.’ In gossip and casual conversation, women take up and appropriate the authority of State slogans in order to give state-sanctioned moral weight to personal judgments, as well as to perform themselves as certain types of persons and certain types of citizens. Through a linguistic analysis of women’s informal
conversation, I show how the state continues to mediate women’s lives in rural China by providing a moral and discursive framework through which women discursively construct themselves and others as types of persons and by extension, types of citizens in the contemporary PRC.

Julia Kowalski
North Dakota State University

Title: Paper Therapeutics in Indian Family Counseling: Producing Medico-Legal Personhood

In South Asia, as across the globe, “violence against women” (VAW) has become the primary category through which development policies address gendered inequality. As a label, VAW brings together legal discourses about rights with medical discourses about harm, projecting gendered, injured persons as sites for both legal and therapeutic interventions. Because policies that address VAW are often enacted in settings of constrained institutional resources, the same practitioners often offer both legal and interpersonal guidance to clients. In this paper, I examine the affordances of paperwork for both legal and therapeutic work within one anti-VAW practice, family counseling, in Jaipur, India. While other scholars have critically engaged the dilemmas that arise when legally legible personhood relies upon narratives of trauma, I instead ask about the role of material artifacts in counseling interactions. I argue that the presence of large volumes of paperwork in counseling offices, brought about by legalistic elements of counselors’ work, play a crucial therapeutic role in disciplining clients to the distinctive interactive practices required by counseling. The materiality of paperwork produces counselor and client alike as clinically appropriate persons. Through a close analysis of how clients and counselors negotiated the role of documents within counseling, I attend to how India’s distinctive history of disciplining legal personhood through documentation intersects with transnational discourses that invoke injured persons through medico-legal discourse. As counselors and clients move documents between legal and therapeutic registers they produce novel articulations of injury, rights, and personhood.

Networks and the Communicative Imaginary
Rm 330

Panel Organizer: Courtney Handman
Susan Gal, Discussant

Session Abstract: N/A

Courtney Handman
University of Texas at Austin
Multiple Authors:
James Slotta
University of Texas at Austin

Title: Networked communication: creating and overcoming colonial malaise

Network models of communication have been used in proclaiming both ideological failures and technological feats. As something to descry, networked communication supposedly reveals a lack of identitarian unity, an unstable and haphazard assortment of people tied together without an overarching orientation. As something to be celebrated, networked communication emphasizes the rapid transfer of information across vast distances. In both negative and positive modalities, communication networks highlight the spaces that sit between linking nodes. These paired modalities of networked communication were often brought together with particular pathos in colonial spaces, where Europeans intervened in areas that they considered remote and unintelligible.

In colonial New Guinea two media highlight the imaginaries of communicative networks. The Melanesian Pidgin English later known as Tok Pisin was spread by men returning from indentured labor to other men headed out for the same. Limited labor contracts seemed to colonizers to produce only a deficient means to a limited set of communicative ends, excluding the kinds of national, modernist, or religious identities that were at least the stated goals of paternalistic imperialism. In contrast, the 20th century creation of the person-to-person two-way radio established a kind of communicative network that could leap across the vast distances between two colonial agents, allowing the “isolation” of the colonial islands to melt away for the same colonizers bemoaning Pidgin's deficient communicative networks. Like the mobile phones that would come later, networks made and unmade (dis)connection.

Francis Cody
University of Toronto

Title: Return to the Region of Rumor: Notes on Network in India

In an influential study of the communicability of language in the social production of hate, Veena Das examines what she terms “the region of rumor.” This domain of language proliferated as a correlate and counterpoint to the official public sphere of state-controlled media in 1980s India, often leading to deadly consequences. We now live in a radically altered world: if economic liberalization has allowed for rapid increase in officially recognized media producers, the rise of globally networked digital media have given otherwise ordinary utterances and images the power to spread and influence political events on a scale previously inconceivable. Rumor appears as important as ever, but its manner of circulation and the ease with which it penetrates more mainstream media have changed. This presentation explores the perlocutionary force
of SMS and WhatsApp-enabled circulations of rumors about social others defined by caste and religious community in southern India. I do so in a bid to better understand turbulences that have emerged between networked social media and older modalities of circulation. My operating premise is that existing modes of mediating political community are not replaced overnight, but they can nevertheless be made anew through changes in media environments.

Rachelle Jereza  
Binghamton University (SUNY)

Multiple Authors:  
Sabina Perrino, Binghamton University (SUNY)

Title: Chronotopic Networks and Scales in Digital Political Discourse

Online platforms are spaces where virtual participants continuously (co)construct and negotiate their identities across several sociocultural phenomena such as recent political events. They thus constitute important sites to examine the incessant recontextualization of political discourse across time and space. In this paper, we explore the (re)circulation of political digital discourse starting from two contexts: Northern Italy and the Philippines. More specifically, we examine the ongoing popularity of the Lega Nord (‘Northern League’) political party in Italy and the recent rise of President Rodrigo Duterte in the Philippines to demonstrate how virtual participants (co)construct politicized chronotopic networks across time and space. In so doing, we show the limits of network and scalar approaches in representing the digital, chronotopic, and politicized nature of online sites. While network and scalar approaches have recently emphasized the fluidity of spatiotemporal boundaries, they do not acknowledge the chronotopic nature of digital sites, where virtual participants take interactional stances vis-a-vis each other across vast geographical distances and unseizable temporal dimensions. Therefore, we examine how virtual participants’ political identities emerge from complex spatiotemporal configurations where time and space intertwine in unexplored ways. Besides investigating the politicization of discursive practices in the digital realm, this paper speaks to methodological challenges surrounding scales and networks and proposes new ways to conduct such investigations.

Robert Moore  
University of Pennsylvania

Title: Translanguaging, indexicality, political economy

In a recent synthetic article, Li Wei (2017) surveys the now vast literature in applied linguistics on translanguaging, proposing Translanguaging as “a practical theory of language” (p. 2) that focuses on the “dynamic and functionally integrated use of different languages and language varieties” and “takes us beyond the linguistics of systems and speakers to a linguistics of participation” (p. 7)—a proposal that many
linguistic anthropologists might welcome. His central research questions (“How is the thinking process affected by the simultaneous use of multiple languages?” p. 8), however, place mental processes at the center of the discussion, in effect bypassing a large body of relevant earlier work on very similar practices of language mixing (e.g., Gal 1978, 1979, Hill & Hill 1986, Moore 1993, Rampton 1995, Woolard 1998). These researchers were able to show first that multiple and distinct patterns of language mixing could be observed within single speech communities or regions. Further, this work showed that these different (enregistered) patterns of translanguaging served indexically to locate speakers and interlocutors in distinct but overlapping social networks, networks with different and unequal access to forms of value, prestige, and power. I argue that the concept of indexicality—absent from Li’s account and from much of the literature he surveys—is essential to understanding how the mixture of multiple languages, registers, and styles can evoke (or effect) the location of talk in material systems of political economy.

Session 3

To Give Up On Words Online: Mediated Silences
Rm 345

Panel Organizer: Rachel Flamenbaum
Session Abstract:

We aim to grapple with such questions as: how is silence produced, experienced, and understood in mediated spaces? How are gaps felt and managed in digital, real-time interaction? When is non-participation in online circulating discourses made relevant as silence? Building on the SLA Social Justice Task Force’s 2015 blog post reflecting on the problematics of online (non)responses to social injustice, how are the various possible political and personal meanings of silence—suppression, complicity, power, judgement, avoidance, comfort, and so on—reconfigured in mediated interaction?

In carrying the classic work of scholars of silence-in-language into screen-based settings, our panelists address the relevance of non-participation vis-à-vis viral hashtags on social media; the place of silence in autocratic language; the role of new media editors in silencing or amplifying voices; ideological framings of silence across facebook-based and
face-to-face talk; and the pragmatics of managing silence in real-time digitally-mediated interaction.

Kathryn Graber
Indiana University

Title: “Silence in the Language of Autocracy”

What makes language "authoritarian" or "autocratic"? Scholars of rhetoric, drawing on classical tradition as far back as Herodotus, have distinguished between autocratic and democratic ways of speaking. In contemporary business communication, authoritarian language figures as the antithesis of good management practice; specialists in child development similarly tell us to avoid it. What onlookers (or overhearers) generally characterize as "authoritarian" or "autocratic" language are communicative practices that seek to silence alternative points of view and limit spaces for verbal disagreement and dissent, particularly in mass media. Yet it may also be more broadly considered communication that reinforces the notion that power is rightly embodied in the person of the leader, which might not require silencing citizens per se, and might not require that the leader speak. It may even involve the reverse. Vladimir Putin, for instance, spends a good deal of his time on Russian television silently listening, not speaking, to project a sense of control. This paper briefly examines absences, gaps, and silences in Russian political communication that audiences interpret as evidence of authoritarian or autocratic speech—as well as some they do not. I examine in particular how commentaries about silence intersect with Soviet and Russian Orthodox ideas about the materiality of words, free speech, and the relationship between language and power, concluding with some observations about the extent to which these are peculiarly Russian language ideologies or more universal.

Hyejin Nah
University of California Riverside

Title: “Not “liking” on Facebook as Mapuche activism: Silence as participation” (20 min)

Silence can be the absence of many things: sound, voice, response, timely turn taking, recognition of interactional cues, action, participation or even circulation. This paper, however, examines how urban Mapuche construct silence as a means of affirming their presence, and the presence of their activism on social media, specifically on Facebook. Mapuche are Facebook-savvy and keen on using the platform as a space and place for constructing and disseminating Mapuche activism. Since Mapuche constantly attempt to decolonize existing dominant normativities, they creatively explore how many boundaries of face-to-face contexts can be challenged on Facebook, oftentimes with different degrees of metalinguistic and metapragmatic awareness. Here, I first inquire what is silence on Facebook, and how silence is exploited or deployed by members on
Facebook. Then, I examine how Mapuche explore, probe and enjoy silence’s different meanings and functions on Facebook, focusing on how Mapuche engage with silence from the blurred boundaries between synchronous and asynchronous communication; speaking and writing; public and private; or individual and collective voices on Facebook. How do unsettled and unsettling norms of silence on Facebook help Mapuche mark their stance, tackle code choices between Spanish and Mapudungun or conduct facework? How do Mapuche Mapuchecize silence through various communication acts on Facebook? How do they Mapuchecize Facebook via various practices of silence? To this end, I examine both Mapuche interactions on Facebook, as well as meta-Facebook talks in face-to-face settings in Santiago, Chile.

Nooshin Sadegh Samimi
University of Pennsylvania

Title: Louder than Words: non-semantic expressive performativity in multimodal media projects

For the past thirty years, ethnographers have paid rigorous attention to the ethics of interview practice, reflexivity and the politics of representation. The ways in which researchers position themselves, their interlocutors, and the narratives that they co-produce both during the ethnographic encounter and in publications have become essential to research practice and representations of it. In this vein, anthropologists who adopt decolonizing methodologies in multimodal ethnographic media projects aspire toward editorial practices that do not perpetuate the inequalities that already exist in the representation of diverse voices. Such practices often times focus on raising awareness around inadvertently silencing the voices of underrepresented communities, especially those of people of color. Even as scholars grapple with questions of rights, authority, and the power to control whose voices are heard and how, current thinking on editorial practices pays little attention to silence and its power and its meaningfulness as a performative speech act. Drawing on Bakhtin’s dialogic concept of addressivity, I argue that the non-semantic vocal properties such as intonation, timbre, pitch, and cadence are key in enacting “the immediate interface between said and unsaid” and are, therefore, powerful means in creating presence without resorting to word. Drawing on examples from my experiences as a producer and editor of the podcast Anthropological Airwaves, I show that in a given discursive situation, the consolidation of social scenarios relies as much on non-semantic expressive performativity as it does on semantic scripting.

Dr. Rachel George
Whitman College

Title: #Silence? Interpreting non-participation in viral political hashtags (20 min)
This paper asks when and how non-participation in online political discourses might be oriented to as silence. Drawing from analysis of recent prominent hashtags such as #metoo (attached to posts in which women share personal stories of sexual harassment) and #takeaknee (referencing NFL football players who kneel during the National Anthem to protest police brutality), the paper examines posts that: implicitly or explicitly frame the use of a hashtag as a request for others to participate, making relevant a response from readers and opening the possibility of ‘silence’ in response; comment on the perceived silence of others around a given hashtag; or account for one’s own decision not to participate in a given hashtag. The analysis raises a number of questions about the study of silence in online spaces, including: 1) Does the sense of shared time created by hashtags (Bonilla and Rosa 2014) heighten a sense of accountability for silence? 2) How does the dispersed, multiscalar (Blommaert and Rampton 2011) nature of online groups, in which one’s audience is often “overimagined and underdetermined” (Varis and Blommaert 2015), complicate any notion of next-speaker selection (Sacks 1967) in hashtags framed as requests?; and 3) How do locally-specific attitudes and norms about online political participation affect how silence around hashtags is produced, experienced, and managed? The paper is both a theoretical and a methodological exploration of online silence, as it considers the possibilities and limitations of an interactional approach to hashtags.

Rachel Flamenbaum
California State University Sacramento

Title:Digitally-mediated silence-in-interaction: or, When is a pause a problem? (20 min)

Silence has long been a concern amongst scholars of language. Researchers have examined interactional silence as the locus of turn-taking, topic management, and assessment (Sacks et al 1974, Jefferson 1989, Levinson 1983, Hoey 2017); silencing as a tangible interactional outcome of gendered imbalances in everyday talk (West & Zimmerman 1975, Sattel 1983, Gal 1991); and silences as polysemous, culturally-situated forms of action (c.f. Basso 1972, Bauman 1983, Tannen & Saville-Troike 1985, Haviland 2010, Schröter, M. 2013). While scholars have long recognized that the constraints and affordances of digitally-mediated interaction force participants to organize interaction differently than in face to face contexts with respect to, for instance, quotatives (Jones & Schieffelin 2009) and closings (Spilioti 2011), there has not been a significant engagement with the basic question: how do participants orient to and manage silences in digitally-mediated interaction? That is, when and how do participants in digitally-mediated conversation orient to silences as meaningful, rather than a normative feature of the medium? How are such silences managed by participants within the temporal expectations of “ambient virtual co-presence” (Ito et al 2005, Ito et al 2009) that prevail in everyday screen-based talk, wherein extended suspensions and resumption of conversation are taken for granted? This paper presents preliminary data analyses in that direction, examining screen-based conversations among North American college-aged students from within a conversation analysis
framework, and proposing directions for future examinations of silence in mediated contexts.

**Technosemiotic Transduction**
Rm 328)

Panel Organizer: Miyako Inoue
Discussant: Susan Gal

Session Abstract:
A host of recent linguistic anthropological work on “transduction” (Gal 2015, Keane 2003, Silverstein 2003) collectively reminds us of the materiality of language by spotlighting semiotic processes that link the matter of language with other matter. In particular, transduction orients us toward mediational arrangements that span heterogeneous modalities and materials resulting in asymmetrical semiotic conversion, as with energy that changes form as it crosses from one medium to another, such as sound to a receiver. In so doing, transduction can establish commensurability between systems that are otherwise incognizant of each other and generate new values, meanings, social relationships, and objects. And, as Gal aptly points out, such transductive conversion is inherently ideological. This panel considers transduction specifically in the transductive relationship between language and technologies, from sound recorders to typewriters to Powerpoint slides. We cannot take for granted the often delicate and laborious work of indexical-iconic calibration, without which no successful transduction across media will occur. Indeed, as Stefan Helmreich observed from his experience aboard a submersible, the immediacy of the submarine soundscape depended on laborious transduction, which “produces a sense of seamless presence, presence we should not take for granted but rather should inquire into as itself a technical artifact.” In crossing linguistic and semiotic anthropology with science and technology studies, we take special care to scrutinize the material and semiotic labor by which transductional arrangements are brought into being and sustained, apprehended as well as problematized.

Danilyn Rutherford
Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research

Title: Becoming an Operating System: Text, Technology, and the Other Side of Signs

In my contribution to the panel, “Technosemiotic Transduction,” I describe a remarkable experiment in communication called PODD, which is designed to give “all the words” to people considered incapable of language. Most speech therapists require their severely disabled clients to demonstrate skills using a limited set of symbols before they qualify for a communication device. By contrast, nonverbal people are supposed to learn PODD the same way babies learn language: through immersion. PODD books are binders of laminated sheets of icons, arranged according to the pragmatic functions of
language. Caregivers carry the books on straps across their backs and use them to engage in conversation. As they do so, they act as “operating systems,” listing directions as they navigate between icons, then animating the selected utterance in an enthusiastic tone. The hope is that new users will learn to produce their own utterances through sounds or gestures that indicate which pathway to take through the book.

PODD plays on the fantasy of all assistive and augmentative communication systems, which are designed to liberate a speaking subject trapped by the limitations of their bodies and minds. But PODD confronts its users with the other side of signs: the textual and technical infrastructure on which sign use always rests and the uncertainties that dog it at every turn. Drawing on interviews and participant observation with my nonverbal daughter, I show how caregivers struggle to inhabit a community of sign use in which referential meaning is both longed for and beside the point.

Michael Prentice
Harvard University

Title: Calibrating Teamwork and Inducing Performance: PowerPoint and Participation in the office

Teamwork has become a participatory ideal for democratic, non-hierarchical office work around the world. This idiom is imagined in participatory genres such as open meetings or open offices. Yet much of the actual knowledge work done within such events and spaces focuses on the textual production of PowerPoint documents as conveyers of team-authored knowledge. This paper looks at PowerPoint as a mediator of teamwork and participation. Where media critics have focused on the software as a cultural problem (via the devolution of text; Tufte 2003) or a capitalist problem (via the expansion of expert performance; Knoblauch 2012), I situate PowerPoint in the context of what Chris Kelty (2015) has recently identified as a paradox of participation. Participation celebrates the idea of belonging and immersion in a collective while also recognizing it distinct, individual voices. Using ethnographic data from a Korean workplace, I first show how PowerPoint transduces teamwork-as-belonging through its affordances as a digital textual production technology. PowerPoint leaves faint indexical traces of individual work and allows for differentiated roles (producer, evaluator, decider) to emerge across stages of collective production. I then show how this comes into conflict with the logic of teamwork-as-individuals via annual performance reviews. Annual performance induces signs of labor not from PowerPoints but from other technosemiotic modalities such as evaluations, calculations, and performance indicators. This paper argues for a view of office work as a site of multiple, overlapping, and, at times, contradicting technologies that transduce labor as both collective and individual.

Michael Lempert
University of Michigan
When face-to-face interaction became a distinct object of empirical science in postwar and early Cold War America, many became convinced that knowing it required “microscopic” methods consisting of mechanical recording, accurate transcription, and fine-grained analysis. These assumptions coalesced, slowly and fitfully, through an intimate dialogue between psychiatry and communication science that began in the mid-1920s and crested in midcentury America. Returning to talk therapy research of the early 1930s, when wax-cylinder dictation machines were used to record and transcribe psychoanalytic sessions, I expose a shift in the techno-semiotic mediation of knowledge about interaction. Whereas transcripts of clinical speech were originally “verbatim” records that sought to preserve denotational-textual “content,” researchers came to seek tacit, indexical, symptomological signs. And whereas recording was introduced only to avoid an observer effect—any third-party observation was believed to disrupt transference—recording later came to be seen as necessary to ensure transcriptional accuracy and preserve indexical traces for close analysis. Transcription, recording, and analysis all underwent dicentization, and painstaking efforts were made to bring these linked phases of investigation into indexical-iconic alignment such that one could glimpse the pervasive indexicality of human interaction through an equally indexically saturated transcript. This case illustrates how such recording technologies are not intrinsically “indexical media,” as some media theorists continue to suggest—not unless practices of dicentization succeed in drawing out and transducing their indexical affordances. Chronicled here is the manner in which the indexical affordances of recording technologies and media became an object of epistemological aspiration and longing.

Miyako Inoue
Stanford University

Title: Writing at the speed of thinking: the kana-typewriter and the rehabilitation of the male hand

The invention of the Japanese syllabic (kana) typewriter in the beginning of the 20th century was a modular articulation between the Japanese syllabary and the engineered metal body of the English typewriter by keys and type bars for Japanese syllabaries neatly conjoined with it, promising Japan’s industrial efficiency and productivity of repetitive inscription labor. While the kana-typewriter was originally used in business and government offices to streamline the production of invoices, order forms, utility bills, and so on, the eventual availability of its portable models attracted allies for personal use among male intellectuals, industrialists, scientists, and colonial officers, for whom the kana typewriter meant “the liberation from Chinese characters,” or Japan’s break from “Asia” (and its return as a colonizer), and a renewed connection with
Western industrial modernity. Friedrich Kittler argues that the western typewriter led to the de-sexualization of writing, liberating (hand)writing from its organic and exclusive ties with the male hand and allowing women to enter the white-collar workplace as typists. The historical process of transducing Japanese writing from brush handwriting to the mechanical writing apparatus, however, demonstrates otherwise. For the Japanese male kana-(type)writers, the typewriter led to the re-sexualization of writing as a masculine enterprise and to the reunion of the man’s hand with authentic Japanese language, as its portability allowed elite Japanese (type)writers in international scientific communities, in colonial administrations and associated overseas business communities to synchronize writing and thinking and to re-enact the western subject-position of auto-affect in writing.

Matthew Hull
University of Michigan

Title: Representation and Self-representation: Paper and Electronic Records in Indian Police Procedure and Corporate Customer Service

An original provision of the Indian Code of Criminal Procedure, maintained since 1861, requires that oral testimony of complainants must be “reduced to writing” by an authorized official. This requirement has been strained by the integration of corporate call center customer service practices into the Indian police procedures. Audio recordings and database text records of complaints have only some of the features of writing and are not produced by a government official. Nevertheless, the composite records generated by the call takers through corporate customer service software form the basis of quasi-official police proceedings. The legal tension between these forms of human and technological mediation is at the same time a tension between conceptualizations of a political subject, as requiring representation by another person or able to present him or herself.

Eitan Wilf
Hebrew University

Title: Understanding Transduction through Its Failure

Linguistic and semiotic anthropologists have recently appropriated the notion of transduction to theorize the functions that the capacity to transform content from one semiotic modality to another might perform in social life, and the techno-scientific infrastructure that might enable such a transformation. One specific goal of this strand of research has been to highlight the ways in which transduction is used in different ethnographic contexts to produce a sense of immersion, immediacy, and presence for strategic purposes, and to elucidate the work that is responsible for producing this sense.
In this paper I argue that one way to reach an understanding of transduction as a semiotic process is to focus on transductive processes that fail by design, i.e. processes in which the transformation of content from one semiotic modality to another is deliberately distorted for culturally-specific reasons. My ethnographic focus is a specific genre of videos made by amateur jazz musicians in which animated robots appear as jazz musicians who discuss jazz training and the aesthetics of jazz performance. I argue that the poor transductive conversion evidenced in these videos is not an unintended bug but rather a feature that provides their producers with the means to offer a cultural commentary on the state of contemporary jazz in the United States.

The Battle of the Genres: Puffery and Authority in Political Discourse I

Panel Organizer: Janina Fenigsen
Discussant: Michael Silverstein

Session Abstract:
“Culture wars” that have been identified as a major factor in transformations of politics around the world, are routinely linked with conflicts over social, religious, and political values. This panel, however, focuses on another central arena for such wars—that of rapidly shifting ethnopragmatics of political discourse in relation to destabilized conceptualizations of truth, authenticity, and authority.

As liberal-progressives and populists in the US and elsewhere proclaim, promote, and pursue conflicting metapragmatic values and interpretive frames for political discourse genres from full-blown political oratory to comedy and tweets and memes, the generic boundaries are being shifted and so are the fields of power and authority. The distinctions between “puffery” and “misrepresentation,” between the “fanciful” and “descriptive,” long at the heart of judiciary regimentation of commercial speech (Parmentier, 1994), are now at the center of metapragmatic wars over authority, wars that entail a sense of mutual alienation among the “citizen subjects” (Balibar, 2017).

The attribution of authority and authenticity to discourse framed as unabashedly outspoken and emotional invites us to revisit ancient Greek philosophers’ concerns over parrhesia — a “free/frank speech”—and its dangers to democracy as recounted by Foucault (2001), as well as Foucault’s warnings over the “aristocratic” nature of these concerns.

It also invites us to identify the fluidity of genre-framing cues that mark discourse as interpretable as “literal but not serious” and its known variations; to examine issues of truth and turn-taking (Duranti, 2015) in negotiation of authority across different media; to consider responsibility and evidence in discourse (Hill and Irvine, 1993).
In his paper, “A Parrhesiac in the Hedgehog’s Den: Speaking Truth in the 2016-2017 US Republican Presidential Debates,” Jon Beom Chu argues that President Trump’s political language reflects a non-evidential form of truth-logic which, although not frequently used in the national public stage due to its element of personal risk, nonetheless constitutes an integral and powerful component of the American political repertoire. In “True Finns, true Poles and Metapragmatics of Making It Right,” Fenigsen and Wilce examine the ways in which discourses of political right in Poland and Finland redefine public discourse genres while skillfully conforming to mainstream normative expectations of political correctness and parrhesia. In his presentation, “From free to fearless speech in Curaçao: rethinking the public sphere through an examination of indirection in Papiamentu political talk radio,” Römer argues that the use of indirection in political talk radio discourse demonstrates speakers' communicative competence in—and allegiance to—Afro-Curaçaoan aesthetic and meta-pragmatic values and a rejection of Dutch political language ideologies. In “Fake News, Information Silos, and Increasing Partisanship: The Internet Takes us Back to the Eighteenth Century,” Alexander King traces the history of vitriolic, vindictive, and partisan political discourse in the US, suggesting that materials on record make the current tweets and counter-tweets look tame by comparison.

Joon Beom Chu
Chonbuk National University

Title: A Parrhesiac in the Hedgehog’s Den: Speaking Truth in the 2016-2017 US Republican Presidential Debates

President Trump’s online messages and public speeches stir considerable public anxiety. Research on President Trump’s discourse have analyzed the “theatrical” qualities of his political rhetoric to suggest that he relies on a fundamentally irrational form of discourse to garner public support. This paper complicates the binary opposition between the referential and theatrical aspects of political discourse by adding a third layer of “speaking the truth.” It argues that President Trump’s political language reflects a non-evidential form of truth-logic which, although not frequently used in the national public stage, nonetheless constitutes an integral and powerful component of the American political repertoire. Using Michel Foucault’s discussion of parrhesia or “frank speech,” this paper analyzes two forms of truth discourse deployed by the two main candidates during the 2016-2017 Republican Party presidential debates, Ted Cruz and Donald Trump. On the one hand, candidate Cruz relies on an evidential notion of “truth,” whereby he cites objective forms of knowledge to shape an ideologically unified and coherent conservative agenda. Candidate Trump, on the other hand, anchors his "truth" to opinions that are deeply personal and remain fragmented. Although the opinions are nominally his, candidate Trump uses double-voicing strategies to overlay his grammatical subject with multiple voices that reflect various marginalized subject positions in contemporary American society. While Trump speaks a subjective form of truth that eschews a unifying ideological core, his many voices proved to be massively
resonant to voters seeking a powerful counter to the perceived detachment of political institutions from lived American predicaments.

**Alexander King**  
Franklin & Marshall College

**Title:** Fake News, Information Silos, and Increasing Partisanship: The Internet Takes us Back to the Eighteenth Century

Walter Cronkite was known as “the most trusted man in America,” and with his colleagues at NBC and ABC was watched by the majority of Americans every evening as a primary news source. Pundits wail the death of the impartial news anchor speaking to all Americans. Cable news and internet media have led to new “information silos” that have driven large wedges between the left and the right in USA politics. As the common complaint goes, this has lead to a new era of partisanship where Americans cannot even agree on the facts; the left and right “just talk past each other” and refuse to compromise. This paper argues that such a position derives from a myopic historical vision of news media in the United States and ignorance of past discourses surrounding Presidential politics. The development of three major TV news networks in the middle of the twentieth century saw a unique period where a few outlets strove to attract an audience from as broad a section of the US as possible. I argue that was a change from the media landscape that held from the dawn of the republic in the eighteenth century until well into the twentieth century. Looking at newspapers at the turn of the nineteenth and again at the turn of the twentieth century shows that political discourse was vitriolic and vindictive. The bare-knuckled op-eds authored by the founding fathers and their supporters against one another makes the current tweets and counter-tweets look tame by comparison.

**Janina Fenigsen**  
Northern Arizona University

**Multiple Authors:**  
James M. Wilce, Northern Arizona University

**Title:** True Finns, true Poles and Metapragmatics of Making It Right

While it is the extreme nazi groups such as NRC in Poland or FRG in Finland that capture the headlines, the battles that are key to political futures are those for minds and votes of the publics that, having abandoned sinking ships of established ideological commitments, may be squeamish about embracing extremist discourses of national branding. The ability of political actors successfully to navigate these emergent discursive fields involves negotiating and, at times, redefining the boundaries of public discourse genres around ethnometapragmatics of truth, authenticity, responsibility, and propriety. By
drawing on Finnish and Polish data we identify two distinct strategies that illustrate ways in which such discursive practices break the rules by situating the breaches within established normative expectations for public discourse: in the Finnish case, the avoidance of explicitly racist statements by slamming anti-racist discourse as PC-puffery; in the Polish case, the right to unmitigated parrhesia anchored in the ethos of trauma (Volkan 2001).

Louis Romer
Vassar College

Title: From free to fearless speech in Curaçao: rethinking the public sphere through an examination of indirection in Papiamentu political talk radio

Directness has long been a cornerstone of a post-Enlightenment liberal political imagination, wherein it figures both as an aspirational metapragmatic ideal and as a necessary condition for the emergence of a liberal-democratic public sphere. Indirectness, on the other hand, figures as a hindrance to the free exchange of ideas, and indexes self-censorship. This paper reexamines these assumptions through an analysis of the use of indirection in Papiamentu political talk radio in the non-sovereign Dutch Caribbean territory of Curaçao. I argue that speakers skillfully employ indirection to express controversial opinions that challenge the boundaries of respectable discourse. I propose employing the concept of fearless speech because it affords the possibility to analyze the use of indirectness in public discourse as a strategic—and risky—political move rather than as a capitulation to a culture of fear. Shifting our attention to fearless speech allows us to reveal racialized and gendered exclusions from participation in the public sphere that are occluded by the framing of ‘directness’ as an index of free expression. Refocusing our analysis of power dynamics in the public sphere around the concept of fearless speech becomes all the more relevant in this current political climate where the turn to indirectness, irony, and sarcasm characterizes the political communication strategies of movements from both the insurgent left and the populist right.

Explorations at the Intersection of Linguistic Anthropology and Visual
Rm 330

Panel Organizer: Gwendolyn Kirk
Discussant: Amanda Weidman

Session Abstract:
Although both are deeply concerned with questions of meaning-making, signification, performativity, and representation, historically linguistic anthropology and the study of visual culture have been seen as deeply and intrinsically separate. In recent decades, some linguistic anthropologists intervened in this separation, but in the past ten years
their numbers have grown significantly. This panel hopes to continue exciting, burgeoning discussions in linguistic anthropology on visual culture, including film, television, photography, and digital media. This perspective foregrounds visual culture as a locus for the interplays between ideologies, materialities, aesthetics, and semiotics, focusing on the emergent, contextualized, and performative qualities of the relationships between the linguistic and the visual. Additionally, we seek to push boundaries in terms of the methodological contributions linguistic anthropology can make to the study of visual culture. Finally, we also wish to consider the ways in which attention to semiotic forms and processes of visual cultural forms might provoke rethinking of linguistic analytical frameworks. Given the explosive circulation of film, television, and digital media within the twinned contexts of global capitalism and linguistic superdiversity, we believe that greater attention to these intersections is more needed than ever. This panel asks how voice, register, and performance intersect with and impact the circulation and consumption of media texts, and how language ideologies, linguistic identities, and their representations inhere and emerge in film, television, and visual popular culture. How can our particular theoretical orientations towards topics such as subjectivity, reflexivity, and indexicality inform new understandings of visual semiotics, and vice versa? We question what methodological possibilities ethnographic, discourse analysis, or other traditional approaches from linguistic anthropology can offer the study of film and visual culture. We also seek to explore potential theoretical and methodological gaps and overlaps that exist between linguistic anthropology and visual anthropology.

Christopher Ball
University of Notre Dame

Title: The Digital is Immanent in the Analogue

Abstract: Discussions of the analogue and the digital in photography tend to oppose them in narratives of time: before versus after, material: wet versus dry, or aesthetics: granularity versus clarity. However the divide is characterized, the digital is often assumed to be divorced from the analogue. As one prominent art critic has put it, digitalization has “thoroughly transform(ed) the ontology of the photograph” (Fried 2009). Yet, from the perspective that all semiosis is embodied in the material reality of analogue channels, the digital is immanent in the analogue. This fact may be trivial, and perhaps overlooked or consequentially underestimated for this reason, but it remains crucial to the ecology of communicative systems in general, including language and other media that utilize digital (e.g. phonological and semantico-grammatical) codes at a higher order. Such a perspective offers a basic material corrective to cognitive or idealist structuralism, allowing for the recognition that langue is immanent in parole. The analogue basis of the digital, of continuous channels for the quantia of messages, unites the linguistic and the visual, or better, utterance and image. While art history and photo theory defend the autonomy of the image from language in refuting claims that images
symbolically or semantically encode meaning, it is more important to see how photography, like language, is ultimately analogue. This paper relates the contrast between the digital and the analogue to semantics and pragmatics, technē and physis, symbolicity and indexical iconicity, the particle and wave properties of photons, and synechism and atomism in the hopes of making productive comparisons between linguistic and visual anthropology.

Meghanne Barker
University of Chicago

Title: Postsocialist Buratino: Reanimating Soviet Children’s Culture in Contemporary Kazakhstan

Abstract: This paper follows animated characters as they move across media and through bodies, from Soviet times to contemporary Kazakhstan. In 2012-2014, when I conducted my fieldwork in Almaty, the government-run puppet theater espoused moving away from its Soviet-era repertoire. Nonetheless, when they started premiering new shows for the first time in decades, many of them were adaptations of beloved Soviet-era stories, plays, or animations. Anthropologists studying animation have used semiotic and interactional theories to consider analyze participant frameworks and processes of characterization that unfold through animated forms; this paper highlights how children come to perform as animated objects reanimating old forms. During my fieldwork, children seemed to understand little about the Soviet Union, but key characters from Soviet animations continued to appear in their lives as soft drink brands, toys, and in reruns of old animations on television. Moreover, children donned costumes and performed as figures of Soviet childhood, such as Buratino, the puppet-come-to-life inspired by Collodi’s Pinocchio but adapted for Soviet audiences by Aleksei Tolstoy (Lev’s grandson). In this paper, I follow the trickster Buratino as he moves across media and into children’s bodies, to consider how contemporary children come to animate figures of Soviet childhood. Such reanimations foster nostalgia for spectating adults. They also carry qualic remnants of Soviet childhood into contemporary Kazakhstan, while allowing old figures to take on new meanings for the children performing them.

Gwendolyn Kirk
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Title: To dance on your grave: Women, loudness, and verbal art in Pakistani Punjabi cinema

Abstract: This paper investigates women’s discourses of loudness, honor, and power that inhere in and around archetypical fight scenes of Pakistani Punjabi films. The Punjabi language, although that of the dominant ethnic group, is marginalized in
Pakistan; it is thought to be a language of joking and insults and above all ‘loud.’ This converges with the discourses around Punjabi cinema, a popular art form heavily denigrated by the cultural elite of the Pakistani state. Scenes of violence and conflict are characterized in this cinema by a verbal art form known as bar?hak, the emblematic linguistic form of these Punjabi films, a shouted verbal duel between enemies that takes place before and during fight scenes. Punjabi cinema viewership in general is working-class, and the themes and narratives glorify a proletarian, often rural identity that in many ways is peripheral to the (Urdu-speaking) cultural and political hegemony of the Pakistani state. Understanding bar?hak as a genre of verbal art helps us reimagine the pleasurable reappropriation of negative stereotypes about the loudness and crudeness of the language itself.

Although it is often conceptualized as a ‘masculine’ genre, women in Punjabi films routinely perform bar?hak. When women perform this genre, their gender identity, social class, and caste identity intersect in ways that align with this discursive reappropriation by siding with indigenous patriarchal socialities against the state (that is women simultaneously support systems that locate kin and caste based honor in the bodies of women) while they also, by carrying out onscreen verbal and physical violence, subvert and challenge hegemonic norms about the behavior and comportment of “respectable” women. This paper explores the ways that complex relationships to the gendered moral sphere emerge in this verbal dueling. Supplemented by ethnographic data from fieldwork in the film industry, this paper explores issues of performativity, intersectional identities, and ambivalent relationships to both the patriarchy and the nation-state, and how these inhere in the twin marginalization of this cinematic and linguistic genre.

Barbra Meek
University of Michigan

Title: Seeing is Believing: Media, Language, and the Transracial Indian

Abstract: In her ethnography, Blood Politics, Circe Sturm stated that “…the legitimacy of racially hybrid Native Americans is questioned more than that of other ethnic groups” (Sturm 2002:3). To identify as Native American is to invite scrutiny and evaluation derived from an enduring imperialist discourse found in ethnoracial logics of citizenship and belonging. This paper examines manifestations of these logics in visual media, analyzing the visual context and the discourse, including scripted speech, of three specific performances of racial hybridity: John Wayne’s Hondo, Viggo Mortensen’s Frank Hopkins in Hidalgo, and current advertisements for discovering one’s ancestry. While the situations of these performances vary, an underlying ideology of blood as an index of relatedness and belonging connects them. This ideology of blood manifests in the visual contrasts and linguistic performances of the actors’ characterizations and by degree of saturation of semiotic features. Furthermore, these three cases illustrate a change in the ethnoracial configuration of Indianness, demonstrating the significance of
the socio-historical context for understanding the semiotics of ethnoracial logics. Finally, the shiftiness of these logics is considered in relation to the concept of transracialization and the legitimacy (and the fakeness) of a “racially hybrid” subject.

Constantine Nakassis
University of Chicago

Title: Image-Texts and Image-Acts of Presence and the Real in Tamil Cinema

Abstract: In this paper, I bring film theorists’ concerns with textual structures of looking (Willemen, Mulvey) into dialogue with linguistic anthropologists’ interests in voicing (Bakhtin) and production formats (Goffman) in literary texts and social interaction, respectively. I do so through a focus on the entextualization of image-texts—multimodal iconic figures (types) that emerge out of and mediate iterable aesthetic (token-)forms—in commercial Tamil film. Detailing the realist cinematographic style of a particular scene from the 2011 Tamil film, Mankatha—a film that was also a star-vehicle for the auratic celebrity-hero Ajith Kumar—I show how at play in this scene are two distinct image-texts of presence and the real: one centered on the realist diegesis and its ability to cultivate the feeling of ‘being there’ (in the fiction), the other centered on the auratic presence of the hero-star in the event of his apperception (in the theater). At issue in this controversial scene (where the hero/star is slapped by another character/actor [Vaibhav Reddy]) are two production formats, and thus two image-acts: one between two characters represented onscreen, orchestrated and marked by the “touch” of its filmmakers as authors (even auteurs); the other between two actors offscreen, marked by their responsibility for their performative acts of animation (viz. one slapping the other). The latter entextualization was particularly infuriating for fans, who were angry at Vaibhav Reddy, the actor for daring to hit their hero, Ajith. Contextualized by ethnographic interviews with the filmmakers and viewers, I show how the (presumed) production format of these distinct image-texts—one that assigns authorship to the directors, the other that holds the image’s animators as principals for their image-act—enables various (and not entirely commensurable, if still dialogically entangled) “voicing” effects that are discernable in these texts; such voicing effects, I show, are central to these texts’ ability to figurate and effectuate image-acts, that is, performative acts carried off in and by such image-texts, be they representational acts expressing a director’s vision or offensive profanations of a senior actor.