

University of Arizona

College of Humanities

Humanities Seminars Program

Language and Identity

Instructor: Prof. Grace E. Fielder (gfielder@email.arizona.edu)

All lectures and discussions are conducted in English.

Seminar Description

This course will explore the relationship between language and identity, that is, how individual and group identities interact with directly observable language use in people's lives. Language can be used to indicate belonging/not belonging to a particular community, and this “self vs. other” distinction is both produced by speakers and interpreted by listeners. How do specific “ways of speaking” become associated with particular groups of people? How are these “ways of speaking” deployed not only to construct the speaker’s own identity but also to project identity on others? On a more global level the importance of language as an identity marker of the nation-state, for example, can be observed in the existence of official bodies, such as an Academy of Science, which are responsible for the promotion and protection of the national language in public discourse and education. Language has been critical part of the process of 19th century nation-building in which a “people” can be identified and assigned to a specific geographic territory, and in the 20th and 21st centuries the disintegration of empires has resulted in new nations and “new” languages. On more local levels the language and identity link is manifested in the day-to-day interaction between individuals and reflects belonging on personal as well as local and regional levels. A sociolinguistic approach takes into account the shifting nature of interactional contexts and how it affects the language and identity relationship. Topics to be discussed include (but are not limited to) language ideology, the symbolic value of alphabets and orthography, regional and national identity, gender and sexuality, ethnicity and race, age and social status, language policing, performance and style.

Sample Readings (subject to change). All readings will be available on BOX.

- Buck, Carl Darling. 1916. "Language and the Sentiment of Nationality." *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (Feb., 1916), pp. 44-69.
- Milroy, James. 2001. "Language ideologies and the consequences of standardization." *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 5/4:530-555.
- Karakasidou, A. 1997. "Women of the Family, Women of the Nation: National Enculturation among Slav-Speakers in North-West Greece." In *Ourselves and Others: The Development of a Greek Macedonian Cultural Identity Since 1912*, eds. P. Mackridge and E. Yannakakis, pp. 91-109.
- Sebba, M. 2006. "Ideology and Alphabets in the Former Soviet Union." *Language Problems & Language Planning* 30.2: 99-125.
- Adams, J. & R. Harré. 2001. "Gender Positioning: A Sixteenth/Seventeenth Century Example." *Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior* 31:3, pp. 331-338.
- Ochs, E. 1992. "Indexing Gender." In Duranti, A & C. Goodwin (eds.) *Rethinking Context: Language as an Interactive Phenomenon*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge U Press, 1992, pp 335-358.
- Kiesling, S. 2007. "Men, Masculinities, and Language." *Language and Linguistics Compass* 1.6: 653-673.
- Bucholtz, M. & Lopez, Q. 2011. "Performing blackness, forming whiteness: Linguistic minstrelsy in Hollywood film." *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 15.5: 680-706.
- Hill, J. 1995. "Junk Spanish, Covert Racism, and the (Leaky) Boundary between Public and Private Spheres." *Pragmatics* 5.1: 197-212.
- Bell, A. 2011. "Falling in love again and again: Marlene Dietrich and the iconization of modern English." *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 15/5, 2011: 627-656.

Dr. Grace E. Fielder is Professor of Russian and Slavic Studies and Second Language Acquisition and Teaching. Prior to coming to UA in 1992, Prof. Fielder was Associate Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures and Linguistics at the University of Virginia. Her research interests and courses deal with language and identity, discourse and pragmatics and all things Balkan. Contact info: gfielder@email.arizona.edu, 520-621-7981, 305 Learning Services Building (1512 E. First Street).