

DOCTORAL PROGRAMME

2 December 2015, Institute of Multilingualism

Multilingualism: Acquisition, Education, and Society

University of Fribourg | Institute of Multilingualism

PhD Workshop LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL THEORY: MAKING SENSE OF THE HERE AND NOW

Prof. Dr. Joan Pujolar, Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, Barcelona (Spain)

Chair: Prof. Dr. Alexandre Duchêne, University of Fribourg (Switzerland)

Abstract

In this workshop, we will critically explore the inscription of linguistics into the social sciences. The point of departure of this discussion is a discomfort with the academic tradition that treats “society” and “language” as entirely distinct objects that are to be studied through separate disciplines. Even as the social sciences and the humanities were taking the so-called “linguistic turn” in the early 20th century, and maybe because of this, a group of linguists made a successful claim to language as their exclusive object of study. This has not prevented social scientists to develop various strands of thought in which language is central, such as analytic philosophy, ethnomethodology, symbolic interactionism or Foucaultian discourse studies. It has not prevented either some linguists to push for the “interdiscipline” called “sociolinguistics”, including some American linguists who chose to stay within anthropology.

However, it seems that this institutional separation largely prevents us all from addressing the core issue that social life is eminently linguistically constituted, even as meaning is not the outcome of a grammatical arithmetic but primarily of a social process inscribed in place and history. The boundary between the disciplines renders invisible what should constitute their core common principle, i.e. that the social and the linguistic are not static structures but structures in the making. The consequences of this can be found in the still highly formalistic studies of language; and also in the strong sociolinguistic tradition that can only conceive of language as a “variable”. A corresponding trend in the social sciences can be found in the grand sociological narratives in which language is rendered invisible: Harvey’s concept of “time-space compression”, Gidden’s structuration, Urry’s new “sociologies”, Bauman’s “liquid modernity”, Castells’ information society.

About the guest speaker

Joan Pujolar, Llic. Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, MA and PhD Lancaster University.

He is associate professor of the Department of Arts and Humanities at the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, where he is responsible for courses on Sociolinguistics and Discourse Analysis. His research focuses on how language use is mobilized in the construction of identities and its implications for access to symbolic and economic resources. He has conducted research on the use of Catalan amongst young people, immigrants and in the economic sector, as well as on multilingualism and gender. He now runs a research project on “new speakers” and the experience of people who ordinarily speak a language that is not their native one and is vice-chair of COST Action IS1306 New Speakers in a Multilingual Europe - Opportunities and Challenges.

Schedule of the seminar

- ➔ Lecture & Discussion 10:00 – 12:15
- ➔ Lunch 12:15 – 14:00
- ➔ Discussion with PhD's 14:00 – 16:30

Registration and Deadline

To register for this workshop contact

- ➔ Sebastian Muth at sebastian.muth@unifr.ch by Friday, 20 November 2015 the latest.

In this workshop, we will discuss how we can disentangle the various threads of the social sciences (mainly signed by Goffman, Foucault and Bourdieu) in which language and linguistics are productively integrated; and also how language could be more productively integrated within these more recent sociological narratives.

We also intend to reflect on the principle of “situatedness” applied to semiosis and interpretation as a central element of our research that has not only epistemological implications but also methodological ones: it only makes sense in relation to each person’s research agenda.

PhD programme on Multilingualism

The workshop is part of the doctoral programme Multilingualism: Acquisition, Education, and Society (module B, sociolinguistics). It is organized by the Institute of Multilingualism and the study domain Multilingualism and foreign languages, at the University of Fribourg and carried out in close collaboration with the Center for the Study of Language and Society of the University of Bern and with professors from the Universities of Geneva and Lausanne.

PhD Discussion guidelines

Students and Postdoc researchers can opt for different ways of participating in the discussion section of the seminar:

- 1) By preparing a presentation based on their own projects on ways in which they have brought social theory into their sociolinguistic research.
- 2) By exploring one prominent social science opus and explaining how linguistic and discursive issues feature in that work. They should not necessarily read whole books but identify the relevant sections of them. Here’s an open list of suggestions. Students can also use one of their own choice:

Social Science Perspective

Appadurai, Arjun. 1996. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Bauman, Zygmunt. 2000. *Liquid Modernity*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell.

Bourdieu, Pierre, and Jean Loïc Wacquant. 1992. *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. University of Chicago Press.

<https://scholar.google.es/scholar?hl=ca&q=Wacquant+reflexive+sociology&btnG=#0>.

Castells, Manuel. 1997. *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture. Volume II: The Power of Identity*. Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell.

Foucault, Michel. 1991. “Governmentality.” In *The {Foucault} Effect: Studies in Governmentality*. With Two Lectures by and an Interview with Michel Foucault, 87–104. Hertfordshire: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Giddens, A. 1986. *The Constitution of Society: Outline of Theory of Structuration*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Goffman, Erving. 1974. *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*. Harvard: Harvard University Press.

<http://psycnet.apa.org/index.cfm?fa=search.displayRecord&uid=1975-09476-000>.

Harvey, David. 1989. *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Urry, John. 2000. *Sociology beyond Societies: Mobilities for the Twenty-First Century*. Routledge. <http://books.google.es/books?id=psMxhVbNuBAC>.

Voloshinov, V. N. 1986. *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. Harvard University Press. <https://books.google.com/books?id=fIPuRyFvDKIC&pgis=1>

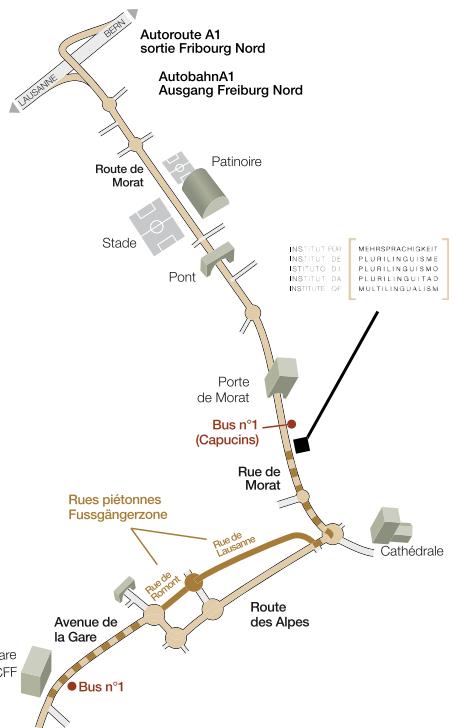
Perspectives on language

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1991. *Language and Symbolic Power*. Edited by J. B. Thompson. Cambridge, Mass.: Polity Press.

Williams, Glyn. 1992. *Sociolinguistics: A Sociological Critique*. London: Routledge.

———. 2010. *The Knowledge Economy, Language and Culture*. <http://books.google.pl/books?id=9QhY-z9WGkgC>.

Access to the Institute of Multilingualism



From the train station: 15 min by foot or by bus (bus N° 1 to Saint-Léonard/Portes de Fribourg, code N° 10 to buy a ticket), get off at „Capucins“ (third stop after the station), go back about 50 meters.

► www.institute-multilingualism.ch