

LANGUAGE STANDARDIZATION AND SOCIAL INEQUALITY

SPAN 80100 / LING 79600 / ANTH 87700

(HYBRID)

SPRING 2022

TUESDAYS
11:45-1:45

José del Valle
jdelvalle@gc.cuny.edu

DESCRIPTION

In this seminar, using Ayres-Bennett and Bellamy's recent handbook (2021) as a reference for the state-of-the-art in language standardization (LS) studies, we will discuss the currency of various theories developed over several decades. We will approach these theories with a view to understanding LS's implication in the construction of different forms of social inequality and its potential to support emancipatory efforts. First, we will focus on the analysis of the classic paradigm as represented by Einar Haugen (1972), and will examine its connections to the historical emergence of the public sphere (Habermas 1962) and the nation-state (Anderson 1983, Gellner 1983, Hobsbawm 1990). We will identify the ideal representations of citizen and community explicitly or implicitly invoked in this model. Secondly, we will focus on critical approaches to LS, as a site of power struggles (Joseph 1987), as an ideological process (Milroy and Milroy 1985/2012), as a colonial undertaking (Parakrama 1995), and as an expression of social anxiety (Cameron 1995/2012). We will consider the extent to which these critical approaches offer a better understanding of LS as a potentially emancipatory strategy. And we will conclude by assessing the degree to which current research has furthered (or not) the research and views of classic and decades-old work.

TOPICS AND READINGS BY WEEK

- February 1** Language Standardization (LS) as a Sociolinguistic Object
(or **The Disciplined Gaze**)
Deumert and Vandebussche's "Standard languages..." and "Research directions..."
Ayres-Bennett and Bellamy's "Introduction" and Ayres-Bennett's Chapter 1
- February 8** Haugen's Theory of LS and the Scandinavian Experiences
(or **History and Theory in LS**)
Haugen's Ecology Chapters 2, 6, 9, 10 and 13
- February 15** Haugen's Theory of LS as a Socio-Historical Process
(or **LS and the Politics of Modernity**)
Haugen's Ecology Chapters 1, 3, 7, 11 and 12
- February 22** Haugen's Theory of LS as a Socio-Historical Process
(or **How Public Is a Standardized Language?**)
Habermas 1962 and Gellner 1983
- March 1** The Status of LS within Linguistics
(or **Leave Your Language Alone!**)
Haugen's Ecology Chapters 8, 14 and 17
- March 8** Contemporary Models of LS
(or **Has It All Gotten Old?**)
Ayres-Bennett and Bellamy Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6
- March 15** The Ideology of Standardization
(or **Imagined Languages**)
Milroy and Milroy 1985/2012, Anderson 1983 and Hobsbawm 1992
- March 22** The Ideology of Standard English
(or **The Question Is Who's To Be Master?**)
Joseph 1987, Crowley 1989 and Bourdieu 1991
- March 29** The Ideology of Standard English
(or **Webster's Third As Educational Heresy**)
Bex and Watts' Standard English... "Introduction" and Chapters 1, 2, 5 and 8
- April 5** Deconstructing Standard English
(or **Anything Goes? The Cole Porter Approach to Language Standards**)
Parakrama 1995, Pennycook 1994 and Canagarajah 2013
- April 12** Deconstructing Standard English
(or **Donald Trump: "I have the best words"**)
Ayres-Bennett and Bellamy (25, 26, 27 and 28)
- April 26** LS, Globalization and Translanguaging
(or **The Starbucks-ization of LS** or **School Is Cool** or both)
Pennycook 2007, Blommaert 2010 and García and Wei
- May 3 and 10** Presentation of final projects

READINGS

- Benedict Anderson. 1991 (1983). *Imagined Communities: Reflections of the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.
- Wendy Ayres-Bennett and John Bellamy (eds.). 2021. *The Cambridge Handbook of Language Standardization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tony Bex and Richard J. Watts (eds.). *Standard English: The Widening Debate*. London: Routledge.
- Jan Blommaert. 2010. *The Sociolinguistics of Globalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pierre Bourdieu. 1991. *Language and Symbolic Power*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Suresh Canagarajah. 2013. *Translingual Practice: Global English and Cosmopolitical Relations*. London: Routledge.
- Tony Crowley. 1989. *Standard English and the Politics of Language*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Ana Deumert and Wim Vandenbussche (eds.). 2003. *Germanic Standardizations: Past to Present*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Ofelia García and Li Wei. 2014. *Translanguaging: Language, Bilingualism and Education*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Ernest Gellner. 1983. *Nations and Nationalism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Jürgen Habermas. 1991 (1962). *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Einar Haugen. 1972. *The Ecology of Language*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- E. J. Hobsbawm. 1992 (1990). *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- John Earl Joseph. 1987. *Eloquence and Power: The Rise of Language Standards and Standard Languages*. New York: Basil Blackwell.
- James Milroy and Lesley Milroy. 2012 (1985). *Authority in Language: Investigating Standard English*. London: Routledge.
- Arjuna Parakrama. 1995. *De-Hegemonizing Language Standards: Learning from (Post)Colonial Englishes about 'English.'* London: Macmillan Press.
- Alastair Pennycook. 1994. *The Cultural Politics of English as an International Language*. Harlow: Pearson.
- Alastair Pennycook. 2007. *Global Englishes and Transcultural Flow*. New York: Routledge.

EVALUATION

Students will be evaluated on the basis of a final project. They will have two options:

A conventional academic paper of approximately 7000 words (15 pages, single-spaced, in Times New Roman 12) focusing on a topic previously approved by me. The must be closely related to the issues discussed in the seminar and incorporate at least part of the conceptual landscape laid out throughout the semester for the analysis of glottopolitical problems in late capitalism. The paper must consist of the definition of an object of study, presentation of the archival and/or field work that should be conducted in order to properly identify the object, and discussion of the possible theoretical relevance of the research.

A written proposal of approximately 7000 words (15 pages, single-spaced, in Times New Roman 12) for a public-facing project previously approved by me. The proposal must be closely related to the issues discussed in the seminar and incorporate at least part of the conceptual landscape laid out throughout the semester for the analysis of glottopolitical problems in late capitalism. The proposal must consist of a clear definition of the topic, a outline of the publics it would be addressing, and a detailed description of the activities and outcomes associated with the project.