Sociolinguistics, Diversity and Action (SODIAC) Symposium

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&
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19-21 June 2019
Venue: Pharmakon Konferencecenter
Milnersvej 42, 3400 Hillerød - DK
Transport directions

To get from the airport in Copenhagen to the venue, you have to take a metro to Nørreport Station. All metro trains leaving from the airport are fine, they all have the direction 'Vanløse' and stop at Nørreport st. At Nørreport st. you have to go to the S-train platforms – go left up the stairs or escalators when you get out of the train and go to platform 3 and 4. The train you have to get on is line A and it leaves from platform 3 with the direction Hillerød. This is the final stop on the line, and your destination station. The trip to Hillerød station will take between 35 to 50 minutes (peak hour trains stop at fewer stations). From Hillerød station you can walk directly to the venue at Milnersvej 42 – it's less than 15 mins (see below). Or you can get on a bus, e.g. the 600S direction 'Hundige', and get off at 'Frederikshorghallen'.

[Map of Copenhagen showing the route from Nørreport Station to Hillerød Station and then to Milnersvej 42]
Programme

19th of June

17.00-17.30: Arrival, welcome and introduction to the network and the focus
Lian Malai Madsen & Jürgen Jaspers

17.30-18.30: Opening hip hop event: talk by Ali Sufi about hip hop activism plus performance

18.30-20.30: Welcome reception

20th of June

9.30-10.15: “Critical hip hop pedagogy and moral ambiguity”
Kristine Ringsager & Lian Malai Madsen

10.15-11.00: “What is sounding White?: Languaging language and personhood in a seventh grade language arts classroom in the USA”
David Bloome

11.00-11.30: break

11.30-12.15: “Language, race,(dis)ability, and personhood”
Michiko Hikida

12.15-13.00: "New speakers: new linguistic subjects”
Joan Pujolar

13.00-14.00: Lunch

14.00-14.45: “Education as a space of linguistic resistance and transformation: Reconceptualizing language and speakerhood”
Luisa Martín Rojo

14.45-15.30: “Sociolinguistic citizenship”
Ben Rampton

15.30-16.00: Break

16.00-16.45: “Citizen sociolinguistics on the street and in our schools: Resisting standardization and social control through everyday conversations about language”
Betsy Rymes

16.45-17.30: Open discussion

19.00-21.00: dinner
21st of June

9.30-10.15: “Critical reflections on the role of the sociolinguist in educational debates”
Julia Snell

10.15-11.00: “What is it like to be bilingual?: Reactions to discursive integration and othering in a Copenhagen school.”
Anne Larsen & Janus Spindler Møller

11.00-11.30: break

11.30-12.15: “Languages as speculative capital”
Beatriz Lorente

12.15-13.00: “More diversity, less variation? Minority language education and the politics of Övdalsk”
David Karlander

13.00-14.00: lunch

14.00-14.45: “Language ideologies and language legitimisation in reception classes in Denmark”
Line Møller Daugaard

14.45-15.30: “Mother-tongue instruction as science–policy interaction: The ushering in of linguistic flexibility in the Swedish education system”
Linus Salö

15.30-16.00: closing remarks (with coffee)
Abstracts (in order of appearance)

DAY 1

Critical hip hop pedagogy and moral ambiguity
Kristine Ringsager (Aalborg University) & Lian Malai Madsen (University of Copenhagen)

Hip hop has become an internationally rather well-described vehicle for educational projects, and critical hip hop (language) pedagogies often invest in transferring semiotic competencies from hip hop culture into more formal, official contexts of school and training. Hip hop pedagogical studies pay particular attention to the critical language awareness involved e.g. in creating rap lyrics. These frameworks often emphasise creative, limitless and counter-hegemonic linguistic practices as a significant part of the educational potentials of hip hop culture and consider political engagement through hip hop music a means of constructive identity building and engagement of youth in society.

In this presentation we build on empirical material collected as part of two different research projects; a linguistic ethnographic study of two school classes in their final three years of an urban public school in Copenhagen carried out from 2009-2011 (Madsen 2016; Madsen et al. 2016), and a music anthropological study of rappers’ engagement in social projects working with rap music production in socio-economically disadvantaged urban areas in Denmark carried out from 2010-2014 (Ringsager 2015a, 2015b, 2017, 2018). We focus on hip hop activists within different organisational structures and look into their approach to hip hop as a cultural form in itself, their cultural assumptions and educational ideologies as well as in their relationship to institutional education, the wider music market and the citizen formation related to the Danish state’s integration projects. Based on this we argue that while hip hop has certainly proven to be a fruitful alternative to traditional educational subjects and practices with appeal to a wide range of pupils, it also involves its own dilemmas and challenges. These comprise a tension between the socio-economic and educational agendas behind the use of rap as a social resource within the projects and the artistic ambitions of the young participants, just as it unveils the often contradictory and morally ambiguous work conducted by rap coaches working within the projects. Furthermore, it raises questions of whether the political framing of the projects runs counter to much of the democratic and liberating aspects within hip hop education ideology.

“What is sounding White?”: Languaging language and personhood in a seventh grade language arts classroom in the USA
David Bloome (The Ohio State University)

An ethnographic and discourse analytic study was conducted of a seventh grade language arts classroom in an urban school in the southern United States in order to theorize the languaging of language variation as it manifests itself in instructional conversations. Attention is focused on the instructional
conversation among the teacher (an African-American woman) and her 28 students (20 of whom were African-American) in their study of Sterling Brown’s poem, “After Winter.” Findings show that the teacher orchestrated the conversation to problematize, deconstruct, and interrogate the language the students employed in discussing the use of African-American language (also known as African-American English) by the poet as well as the students’ implicit assumptions about the relationship of language, race, and personhood. Grounded theoretical constructs derived from the analysis include: (1) the social, interactional construction of a metadiscursive dialectical space in classrooms within which language and languaging can be explored; (2) reconceptualizing reading literature as a prop to explore implicit ‘language ideologies’ and the languaging of language, the worlds in which students live, and personhood; and (3) that dialectical spaces – such as that involving the compression of oppositional educational stances of schools needing to emphasize the learning of a ‘standard’ / dominant language versus schools needing to emphasize students’ use of their own language(s) for academic learning – while not necessarily resolvable nonetheless provide opportunities for students to acquire languaging practices (including reading practices) for navigating social institutions (such as schools) that are filled with ideological contradictions.

**Language, race, (dis)ability, and personhood**

*Michiko Hikida (The Ohio State University)*

In the US, there is a long history of conflating bi/multilingualism and/or race with disability (Artiles, 2013; Sleeter, 2010) in order to arguably maintain segregated classrooms in “integrated” schools buildings. In this presentation, I examine interactional data from one elementary school classroom to consider how ideologies of language, race, and (dis)ability materialize in everyday classroom talk. More specifically, I explore how these ideologies impose particular constructions of personhood that excludes some students (those minoritized) from occupying fully human space. Then, in order to mitigate a tendency to err too far on the side of structural/institutional/cultural reproduction, I examine languaging as orientational and negotiated action to examine how students, in interaction and at times in collaboration, with others contest and negotiate their personhood.

**New speakers: new linguistic subjects**

*Joan Pujolar (Universitat Oberta de Catalunya)*

In this paper, I take up the exercise of analyzing the experience of “new speakers” from the perspective of studies on forms of subjectivity. “New speakers” constitutes a new social category that emerged in the last decades in contexts where regional minority languages were spoken in Europe and Canada. The category designates those speakers of the minority language that have acquired it through formal learning and, therefore, are seen as different from the traditional community of native speakers. I argue that studies on subjectivity are relevant to understand the “new speakers” phenomenon because they provide a critique of the ideologies of modernity that constituted the category of “native speaker” besides the conventional hierarchies of race, gender and sexuality. As
such, the study of speaker identities arguably makes a distinct contribution to intersectionality studies. To develop this argument, I discuss the implications of Thomas Bonfiglio's (2010) history of the native speaker concept and I point at the connections between the emergence of “new speakers” with the debates on “non-native” speakers and varieties in Applied Linguistics. After this, I bring in some data from new speakers of Catalan to show how speaking a given language is phenomenologically treated as a form of durable and exclusive group belonging, which forces new speakers to suppress evidence from alternative belongings in social life. On the basis of these considerations, I argue that speakerhood, or speaker identity, should be critically examined as a specific site in which modern conceptualizations of the individual-in-society are increasingly contested as new profiles of speaker populate our cities and institutions. I also draw from sociolinguistic studies that are incorporating the perspective of studies on subjectivity (Kramsch & Lam 1998; Kramsch 2009; Busch 2017) and argue that sociolinguistics may make a distinct contribution to the debates on how individual and collective agency can inform processes of structuration.


Education as a space of linguistic resistance and transformation:
Reconceptualizing language and speakerhood

Luisa Martín Rojo (Universidad Autonoma de Madrid)

There are two main axes when it comes to producing inequality and a lack of social justice in relation to language, particularly regarding various aspects of multilingualism: (i) the first is that of the unequal distribution of socially-valued linguistic resources, that is, languages and varieties, “accents” and registers; (ii) the second concerns the unequal recognition of some speakers over others: their speaker status, their assessment and their subjectivities. In other words, there are speakers who must reproduce norms and models which, in fact, discriminate against them or present them as speakers who are somehow less competent, or clumsy or uneducated (see Fraser, Duchène, Martín Rojo, Urla). Both of these axes tend to reduce parity participation in society. However, these two axes have not received the same degree of attention in sociolinguistic research. The first axis has been highlighted in sociolinguistic studies based on Bourdieu, showing how the linguistic market confers a different exchange value on languages that are considered to be symbolic capital. In a national context, the market establishes what languages should be required in institutions such as schools in order to ensure full participation. The second axis, on the other hand, has only recently attracted research interest, with the gradual displacement from studying linguistic practices to the study of speakers. This latter approach focuses on linguistic trajectories and on the impact produced by ideologies and knowledge of languages on subjects’ understanding of themselves. In other
words, shaping their subjectivities. My recent work aims to fully introduce recognition into the picture, not to question the significance of distribution.

In fact, I see these axes as convergent: only through an equitable distribution and assessment of linguistic resources and with the creation of inclusive speaker models can speakers fully participate in society. Therefore, as sociolinguists, our work should not be limited to observing and systematizing knowledge; in addition, we must determine the extent to which this knowledge may alleviate inequality and social conflicts, that is, to what extent it could be transformative. By applying participatory action-research (PAR), we can intervene, accompanying speakers in their questioning of current models of speakerhood, and in reversing power techniques such as self-surveillance and the internalisation of negative valuations of their language performance and competences. Ultimately, on the basis of this joint reflection and by acting upon linguistic education we can, at the social level, change institutions and their value-giving measures by spreading new models of speakerhood and ideologies, thus transforming cultural patterns and the ways in which language education takes place.

**Sociolinguistic citizenship**

*Ben Rampton (King’s College London)*

This paper engages with Christopher Stroud’s ‘Linguistic Citizenship’, a concept committed to democratic participation, to voice, to the heterogeneity of linguistic resources and to the political value of sociolinguistic understanding. It first outlines its links with the ethnographic sociolinguistics inspired by Hymes, and then turns to language and language education in England. Although the discourses of language and citizenship currently dominating the UK are very much at odds with Stroud’s conception (and to avoid confusion, prompt us to call LC ‘Sociolinguistic Citizenship’), it is very well suited to the multilingualism of everyday urban life, and it complements a range of relatively small, independently funded educational initiatives promoting similar values. But their efforts are currently constrained by issues of scale and sustainability, and it may be in the collaboration between universities and not-for-profit organisations that Sociolinguistic Citizenship can find its most sustainable support.

**Citizen sociolinguistics on the street and in our schools:**

*Resisting standardization and social control through everyday conversations about language*

*Betsy Rymes (University of Pennsylvania)*

This paper will unravel the tension between the seemingly opposed ideas that ‘students need more standard language’ and ‘the curriculum should allow linguistic flexibility’ by turning our attention to how everyday people talk about language, or citizen sociolinguistics. By drawing attention to everyday discussions about language, this approach reconfigures what counts as language expertise, foregrounding all people who voice their own ideas, stories, and opinions about language. Citizen sociolinguists also invoke the ‘standard’ and other forms of institutionalized authority at times to bolster their arguments, but as part of a longer conversation, with much more widely dispersed and diverse
participation, such ‘standard’ views emerge as only one more context-dependent opinion, another point for deliberation, never the final word. I will illustrate this process of indefinite deliberation over language norms by talking through multiple discussions of the pronunciation of street names in Philadelphia; a viral twitter thread about Chinese use at American Universities; and YouTube comment sections about the use of gender-neutral pronouns. I’ll conclude by illustrating how we can push our students in both primary and secondary school as well as the University to look to everyday conversations about language like these, to talk back to those conversations, and to follow carefully where they go, as a way of learning about language nuance in their communities and how such language controversies connect to broader social concerns. Once we develop habits of mind that reconfigure both ‘expertise’ and ‘standardization’ this way, students’ social networks expand, and new voices enter the conversation—not just as ‘non-standard’ cultural others but as experts.

**DAY 2**

**Critical reflections on the role of the sociolinguist in educational debates**
*Julia Snell (University of Leeds)*

There has been increased focus in the UK media, policy discussions, and popular discourse on the link between local dialect and educational underachievement. Some schools have attempted to ‘ban’ the use of regional dialects in pupils’ speech with the assumption that this will improve literacy rates (e.g. Fricker 2013, Williams 2013), even though it is unclear how (if at all) speaking in a nonstandard dialect affects writing development and educational outcomes. These recent high-profile attempts to police nonstandard speech in schools have reinvigorated UK sociolinguists’ longstanding interest in tackling linguistic prejudice. Since the 1970s, sociolinguists have expressed concern that negative attitudes to nonstandard voices may cause linguistic insecurity and educational alienation for some pupils. In response, they have argued that nonstandard dialects are as systematic, logical and rule-bound as standard varieties (Labov 1969; Trudgill 1975), and more recently, some have advocated for a ‘repertoire’ approach, which foregrounds the social and interactional dynamics that give rise to nonstandard forms (Snell 2013). Nonetheless, negative perceptions of nonstandard dialects persist, and recent work has criticised sociolinguistic research for being ineffectual in bringing about social change (Block 2014; Lewis 2018). In this paper, I reflect critically on the role of the sociolinguist in educational debates and suggest possible avenues for future work, focusing in particular on how sociolinguistic research on language diversity might connect with educational research on talk-intensive pedagogies.

“*What is it like to be bilingual?*”: Reactions to discursive integration and othering in a Copenhagen school.
*Anne Larsen & Janus Spindler Møller (University of Copenhagen)*

In this study, we investigate how a group of young Copenhageners with immigrant background discursively constructs, reproduces and challenges discourses about the nation state and the place of immigrants herein.
Our point of departure is data from a long-term ethnographic study conducted in a Copenhagen school with a heterogeneous student population representing a number of different linguistic backgrounds (Madsen et al. 2016). As part of this project, we have followed a group of 8th-graders. The participants in this group display an awareness of being looked upon as “bilinguals”, “immigrants” and other categories referring to a minority status. This “outside view” may be referred to specific persons or more broadly to “Danes” but have in common that the participants find this type of identity ascriptions uncomfortable and restraining. Through school, politicians and mass media the adolescents meet the idea of the nation state Denmark with one culture and equal rights. They reproduce this idea of the nation state but at the same time they construct a picture of a more heterogeneous and divided country, where living conditions depends on linguistic and ethnic backgrounds as well as of place of residence (eg. Different parts of the city, city or countryside etc.).

In the presentation we focus on situations where the participants question or interview each other. These situations are often invoked by our presence (the presence of the recorders), but can be characterized as especially performative actions where an outsider’s view on the participants is introduced, mocked and challenged in the conversation. These instances give insights into the participants perceptions of discourses about them in society and how they manage experiences of being othered.

We find that they especially refer to two (connected) stereotypic minority identities “the aggressive perker-identity” and “the vulnerable bilingual” which is both treated as problematic and contested by the adolescents. Based in this we argue that teachers’ well-intentioned focus on bilingualism and integration can be seen as part of an alienating othering-process and questions whether the scientists’ focus on linguistic creativity is perceived as part of the very same process.

**Languages as speculative capital**

*Beatriz Lorente (University of Bern)*

This paper aims to show how neoliberal ideologies about the value of learning languages may threaten the potential of educational reforms to empower marginalized groups and local communities. Specifically, it argues that language-in-education policies that frame multilingualism or linguistic diversity as a resource can become complicit with market-driven ideologies and practices when such linguistic and cultural flexibility are treated as a form of "speculative capital" (Tabiola and Lorente, 2017), that is, as non-monetized conjectural (self) investment in language in an effort to enhance human capital. To illustrate this, this paper examines two cases of reforms in the informal and formal education settings in the Philippines which seemingly introduce more linguistic and cultural flexibility for workers and students. In the informal education setting, the Language and Culture Training that the Philippine state requires for migrant Filipino domestic workers as part of its reform package for household service workers in 2007 will be analyzed. While the Language and Culture trainings in Arabic, Hebrew, Italian, Cantonese, Mandarin or English are conducted
ostensibly in order to upgrade the skills of domestic workers, what they actually emphasize is a standardized script that enregisters Filipino domestic workers as passive and docile workers who efficiently perform required tasks and know what is expected of them by their employers, linguistically and otherwise. In the formal education setting, the institutionalization of Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education (MTBMLE) as part of the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 will be examined. In viewing the mother tongues as learning resources, the MTBMLE has - in part - also propagated a view of the mother tongues as pragmatically useful languages in education because they pave the way for the making of English-using but multilingual workers of the world (Tupas, 2018).

More diversity, less variation? Minority language education and the politics of Övdalsk
David Karlander (The University of Hong Kong)

Övdalsk is a variety of Nordic spoken by a few thousand people in Sweden’s Älvdalen municipality. In September 2018, it was introduced as an elective subject in the secondary school of Älvdalen. This revision of the local curriculum was, by and large, an outcome of tenacious advocacy by Övdalsk language activists. For close to 40 years, Övdalsk language advocates have militated against the dominance of standard Swedish – against the exclusion of Övdalsk from education, the lack of LPP provisions granted to Övdalsk, etc. To a varying extent, however, Övdalsk language advocacy has embraced purist visions of a standard language. Övdalsk language advocates have, as a consequence, contended that linguistically minoritised Övdalsk-speaking students are disadvantaged by the dominance of Swedish in the education system. At the same time, activist calls for increased linguistic flexibility in education (i.e. the inclusion of Övdalsk in the curriculum) have stressed the primacy and educational importance of a highly traditionalised, ad hoc standard form of Övdalsk. In this talk, I examine the ways in which this logic has taken shape, notably in relation to concerns and constraints imposed by language political debates and academic linguistics. Drawing on interviews, ethnographic and intellectual-historical analysis, I hope to elucidate some of the challenges that a linguistically non-uniform curriculum may face.

Language ideologies and language legitimisation in reception classes in Denmark
Line Møller Daugaard (VIA University College)

This presentation focuses on language ideologies and language legitimisation in a specific pedagogical context, namely reception classes in Denmark. ‘Reception classes’ are introductory classes targeted at newly arrived refugee and migrant children and youth with the primary aim of building basic Danish language competences before transition to regular classes. The children and youth come to the reception classes from all over the world with complex linguistic repertoires influenced by their life trajectories, current life situation and personal preferences and interests, and the reception classroom thus constitutes a highly and inherently linguistically diverse educational space.
The presentation draws on a multi-sited linguistic ethnography investigating language practices in and around reception classes in three different primary and lower secondary schools in a large city in Denmark. The empirical material includes fieldnotes, photos, audio and video recordings and interviews based on language portraits. The empirical point of departure for this presentation is two specific reception classes located in a so-called ‘production school’ and targeted at 16-20 year old youth, many of them refugees from Syria, Ethiopia and Afghanistan. Drawing on Bonacina-Pugh’s notion of practiced language policy (2012, 2017) and Bloome and Brown’s (2012) comparison of teaching to jazz, the presentation outlines the language ideological work among teachers and students in the reception classroom and describes language legitimisation as a multi-layered and sometimes ambivalent process in which teachers and students seamlessly move between different and seemingly contradictory language ideological positions.


**Mother-tongue instruction as science–policy interaction: The ushering in of linguistic flexibility in the Swedish education system**  
*Linus Salö (Kunliga Tekniska Högskolan)*

In the course of the 20th century, Sweden made an about-turn over its policy on linguistic minority education. Up until the late 1960s, the dominant vision centred on achieving equality, socially and otherwise, through Swedish-only educational provisions; a decade later, equality was contrariwise to be accomplished by providing education in and about multiple languages within the national curriculum. Nowadays, the Swedish educational system offers mother-tongue instruction (MTI) in some 150 languages. It may be argued that this educational policy is based on what the symposium invitation describes as contention 1 and, correspondingly, that ample agreement is in place between policy makers and linguistic researchers: linguistic and cultural flexibility in the curriculum is desirable. This paper delves into the historical conditions that may render this consensual change of opinion and policy understandable. Aligning with the symposium theme, I conceptualize the period’s shift in policy as an attempt to usher in a form of ‘linguistic flexibility 1.0’, where the pluralist policy of MTI manifests a willingness to change a long-upheld linguistic regime of unyielding monism. Drawing on archival data from the government-initiated *Immigrant Commission*, ongoing 1968–1974, I will focus particularly on the active involvement of researchers and intellectuals alike, including the new viewpoints and actionable ideas they brought into the policy-making processes that eventually led up to MTI. Their labour, as well as the institutional possibilities that made their engagement possible, is vital in order to grasp the processes through which certain viewpoints come to be shared by different
groups of agents. Hence, the key argument is that MTI in Sweden is the outcome of science–policy interaction. Rounding off, I will also briefly discuss how newer notions of linguistic flexibility (tentatively: ‘flexibility 2.0’), gel (or not) with the MTI policy currently in place. For example, while little is known about the extent to which translingualism is allowed for or encouraged within each of the provided minority languages, there are reasons to suspect that a number of conflicts among scholars, policy-makers, and practitioners are forthcoming.