

The University of Chicago

Anthropology 27300; Gender Studies 27500; Linguistics 28900; Psychology 27300  
Spring Quarter 2014

Language, Voice, and Gender

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Class meets: Wed, Fri 10.30 - 11.50 AM, Stewart 102

### Syllabus

How do we come to be able to “voice” ourselves as “gendered” persons, not merely as sexed human organisms? How do we treat other people and various objects and situations as well in such a projective framework of normative difference? We will locate *gender*<sub>1</sub> as a cultural category, a criterion of classification at least implicitly assumed by people to be manifest in certain realms of the social world, especially but not limited to the interpersonal. We will see how socio-cultural gender is performed in-and-by the way we engage others in social events of discursive interaction, and how this contrasts with the formal *genders*<sub>2</sub> of grammatical systems that code a portion of encompassing nominal classificatory schemes of great salience in the structure of many languages. In our analyses, we will try to clarify the inherently “dialectical” character of social categories of identity such as gender, which are experienced as facts about the world – even one’s own and others’ essential[ized] individual “nature” – according to the intuitions of normativity we carry around with us about the sociocultural orders in which we participate and in which thereby we learn to place ourselves and others. No prior linguistics, social psychology, or sociocultural anthropology is presupposed, but the course encourages serious attention to conceptual and theoretical issues in the analysis of language in relation to identity more generally, and of gender in particular. We start with a review of some key ideas that have shaped the recent study of language—gender—sexuality, and then we consider several areas of research involving the gendered voice, and we finally turn to several discursively rich ethnographic presentations of gendering in relation to other aspects of identity.

### Readings

The following titles have been ordered for purchase at Seminary Cooperative Bookstore, and will be on 2-hour reserve status at Regenstein Library by the time we come to read them.

Bakhtin, Mikhail M. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981. [ISBN 0-292-71534-x pbk] (PN3331.B161)

- Billings, Sabrina. *Language, Globalization and the Making of a Tanzanian Beauty Queen*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2014. [ISBN: 978-1-78309-7 pbk]
- Coates, Jennifer & Pia Pichler, eds. *Language & Gender: A Reader. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. [ISBN:978-1-4051-9127-2 pbk] (P120.S48 L338 2011)
- Gaudio, Rudolf Pell. *Allah Made Us: Sexual Outlaws in an Islamic African City*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009. [ISBN: 978-1-4051-5252-5 pbk] (HQ73.3.N62 K364 2009)
- Inoue, Miyako. *Vicarious Language: Gender and Linguistic Modernity in Japan*. Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006. [ISBN: 0-520-24585-7 pbk] (PL698.W65 I56 2006 [also: eb])
- Matoesian, Gregory M. *Law and the Language of Identity: Discourse in the William Kennedy Smith rape trial*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001. [ISBN 0-19-512330-1 pbk] (XXKF224.S544 M38 2001[also: eb])

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- Holmes, Janet, and Meyerhoff, Miriam, eds. *The Handbook of Language and Gender*. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishing, Ltd., 2003. [ISBN 0-631-22502-1] (P120.S48 H36 2003) **[REFERENCE WORK]**

Additionally, several chapters and papers from other sources will be made available as pdf files on our course Chalk site, as needed. *Journal articles can be accessed through the library e-journals portal* (as journal editors all request be done).

### Course Requirements

[1] Careful preparation of assigned readings by the date on which they are to be discussed in class. Class discussion will require informed participation on the part of all.

[2] *Beginning in week 2*, submission via e-mail ([m-silverstein@uchicago.edu](mailto:m-silverstein@uchicago.edu) or [ebrummel@uchicago.edu](mailto:ebrummel@uchicago.edu)) **by noon each Monday** of a substantive discussion question on the reading material assigned in the previous week, for potential use in class discussion on Wednesday.

NOTE: A discussion *question*, to stimulate discussion, not to close it off, is concise; it is not just a *declaration of a [= your] position*, though in its formulation you would probably reveal a positioned perspective on issues. A discussion question properly emerges, in reading, from your judgment that there is an issue in the material needing exploration or clarification, perhaps to resolve or at least confront problematic concepts or analyses in it. It can involve as well the concurrent, perhaps contrasting positions on an issue you may see in two of the readings, the nature of that concurrence or contrast

being perhaps what needs to be questioned in some way. A (very!) short quotation or citation (with page reference) is generally useful to orient discussion of the point, since it gives a textual location to the issue. The text of the question as formulated should make clear what ought to be the theme emphasized in the way of responses; avoid such open-ended formats as: “[Quote].’ Discuss.” – and the like.

[3] One take-home essay assignment at mid-quarter, due **2 May**, from a choice of questions calling for a response of ca. 4-5 regulation pp. length due one week after questions have been handed out.

[4a] There are two very relevant stage productions running in Chicago during the Spring Quarter, one, *Cock*, by Mike Bartlett at Profiles Theatre 4139 N. Broadway [a few blocks walk from the Sheridan Rd. Red Line] through 25 May, the other, *Venus in Fur*, by David Ives at the Goodman Theatre 170 N. Dearborn St. [in The Loop between Randolph and Lake] **only through 13 April** (\$10. student ticket information at <http://www.goodmantheatre.org/tickets/special-discounts/>). Both are rich in characterization and conversation that center on gender—sex—sexuality. Attend one (or, if you wish, both) of these productions taking careful note of the discursively focused construction of interpersonal relations and therefore of identities-made-relevant – and relevantly made or fashioned – in what seem to be a key scene or two. Focus on this material in relation to what you understand to be the principal themes of the overall production, and elaborate your points, in ca. 2500-3000 words, framed by the conceptual and analytic approaches of some of our course syllabus authors and our class discussions.

**or**

[4b] A little quarter project of your own design, which involves some engagement with empirical material relevant to the theme of the course. (Look at the *Handbook of Language and Gender* or the *Journal of Gender and Language* [via library portal] for inspiration, if all else fails!) It should have the form of a paper reporting on the project, its conceptualization, its results (if any), of some 10-12 regulation pages [ca. 2500 – 3000 words], or something of equivalent magnitude in another communicative medium. Projects may involve, for example: mini-ethnographic work on language-in-interaction; interview-based exploration of cultural values relevant to language and voice; design and perhaps piloting of an experiment exploring these; an aesthetic work that attempts to incorporate, thematically and/or analytically, concepts and frameworks of readings and class; systematic investigation of gendered register effects in a language of your choosing; etc.

To keep the projects of [4b] moving along, some temporal guidelines:

By conclusion of **Fourth** week: A short proposal for your project; some ideas of what you want to investigate/create/analyze and why; can be e-mailed, yielding response. If necessary, to be followed up by an optional viva voce conference.

By conclusion of **Seventh** week: A progress report – ca. 1-2 pp. PLUS bibliography (or equivalent) of works that will play a role in realizing the project; can be e-mailed.

By **Tenth** week: The project result.

## Target Schedule of Topics and Readings

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Major Topics; Readings</u>
Apr 2 4	<p>Exemplification by way of Introduction of what is “at stake” in identity research:            Doing gender-work – and arguing over its emblems – in the Oval Office: a 1973 moment in the history of gender and of consciousness of it.            Courtroom communicative events as identity-trials anchored in a case.</p> <p><u>Readings [for next week’s class sessions]</u>            Coates &amp; Pichler (eds.): Part X, pp. 569-610.            Hacking, Ian. <i>The social construction of what?</i> (Harvard, 1999). Ch. 1.            Holmes &amp; Meyerhoff (eds.): 19. Cameron, Deborah, “Gender and language ideologies,” pp. 447-467.</p>
Apr 9 11	<p>Categories of identity as inhabitable and emergent in-and-by purposive social interaction; the “dialectical” analysis of gender in terms of normed, interpretable practice.</p> <p><u>Readings</u>            Bakhtin, Mikhail. <i>The dialogic imagination</i> (Texas, 1981): “Discourse in the novel,” 301-66 [optional: 288-300].            Ochs, Elinor. “Indexing gender,” in A. Duranti &amp; C. Goodwin, eds., <i>Rethinking context</i> (Cambridge, 1992), 336-58.            Kiesling, Scott F. “‘Now I gotta watch what I say’: Shifting constructions of masculinity in discourse.” <i>Journal of Linguistic Anthropology</i> 11.250-273 (2001).            Holmes &amp; Meyerhoff (eds.): 22. Kiesling, S. “Prestige, cultural models, and other ways of talking about underlying norms and gender,” pp. 509-527.            Coates &amp; Pichler (eds.): 6. Eckert, Penelope, “Gender and sociolinguistic variation,” pp. 57-66; 24. Holmes, Janet &amp; Schnurr, Stephanie, “‘Doing femininity’ at work: more than just relational practice,” pp. 315-331.</p>
Apr 16 18	<p>Being gendered and voicing “gender:” Bakhtin’s insights on language and identity, and an analytic derived therefrom. From narrated and narrating worlds to meta-indexical and indexical aspects of communication. Verbal and other behavioral alignments to contextualizing norms.</p> <p><u>Readings</u></p>

Silverstein, Michael. "Language and the culture of gender," in E. Mertz & R. Parmentier, eds., *Semiotic mediation: Sociocultural and psychological perspectives* (Academic, 1985), 219-59.

Corbett, Greville G. *Gender* (Cambridge, 1991), Ch. 2, 3.

Holmes & Meyerhoff (eds.): McConnell-Ginet, Sally: "'What's in a name?'" Social labeling and gender practices," pp. 69-97; Anne Pauwels, Anne. "Linguistic sexism and feminist linguistic activism," pp. 550-570.

Barron, Dennis. *Grammar and gender* (Yale, 1986), Ch. 10.

Apr 23            Seeing gender<sub>1</sub> through gender<sub>2</sub>: linguistic categorization in denoting  
25                sex, gender, and other categories of being. Indexing gender<sub>1</sub> as a  
                     component of identity.

Readings:

Coates & Pichler (eds.):

Part VIII, Theoretical debates (2): Difference or dominance? Pp. 483-528.

Part III, Gender, power, and dominance in mixed talk:

12. DeFrancisco, pp. 153-160.

13. Swann, pp. 161-170.

Part VII, Theoretical debates (1): Gender or power?

32. O'Barr & Atkins, pp. 451-60;

34. West, pp. 468-482.

Apr 30            Intuitions of genderedness, social stratification, and "cultural"  
May 2            difference: the role of feminist socio- and psycho-linguistics in recent  
                     American culture of gender

Readings:

Coates & Pichler (eds.):

Part II, Gender and conversational practice:

8. Goodwin, pp. 89-111.

9. Davies, pp. 112-125.

Part IV. Same-sex talk:

16. Coates, pp. 199-223.

19. Cameron, pp. 250-262.

20. Coates, pp. 263-274.

21. Kiesling, pp. 275-285.

May 7            Homosociality and heteronormativity: "same-sex" negotiations of  
9                genderedness in culturally familiar routines.

Readings:

Bucholtz, Mary & Hall, Kira. "Theorizing identity in language and sexuality research." *Language in Society* 33.469-515 (2004).

Holmes & Meyerhoff (eds.): 15. Hall, Kira. "Exceptional speakers: Contested and problematized gender identities," pp. 353-380.  
 Coates & Pichler (eds.): Ch. 28. Hall, Kira, "Boys' talk: Hindi, moustaches and masculinity in New Delhi," pp. 384-400.  
 Gaudio, Rudolf P., *Allah made us*: esp. ch. 1, 3-5, 7.

May 14 Gender, sexuality, and sex culturally aligned: cross-cultural  
 16 problematics.

Readings:

Agha, Asif. "Registers of language," in Alessandro Duranti (ed.), *A companion to linguistic anthropology* (Blackwell, 2004), pp. 23-45.  
 Inoue, Miyako. *Vicarious language*. Introduction; Part I: ch. 2; Part III.  
 Coates & Pichler (eds.): 33. Wetzel, Patricia J., "Are 'powerless' communication strategies the Japanese norm?" pp. 461-467; 27.  
 Abe, Hideo, "Lesbian bar talk in Shinjuku, Tokyo," pp. 375-383;  
 22. Reynolds, Katsue Akiba, "Female speakers of Japanese in transition," pp. 291-299.  
 Sturtz Sreetharan, Cindi. "Students, *sarariiman* (pl.), and seniors: Japanese men's use of 'manly' speech register." *Language in Society* 33.81-107 (2004).  
 Sturtz Sreetharan, Cindi. "'I read the Nikkei, too': Crafting positions of authority and masculinity in a Japanese conversation." *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 16.173-193 (2006).

May 21 The enregisterment of feminine voice? Language, gender, and  
 23 transformations of modernity in a sociolinguistics of explicit "speech levels."

Readings:

Matoesian, Gregory M. *Law and the language of identity*: ch. 1-5, 8.  
 Coates & Pichler (eds.): 26. Ehrlich, Susan, "Trial discourse and judicial decision-making: constraining the boundaries of gendered identities," pp. 356-370.

May 28 In the court of gender: the American rape trial and the spectacular  
 30 discursive-interactive unfolding of ideologies of sexuality and genderedness.

Jun 4 Retrospect and prospect

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Mid-Quarter essay prompts:

Respond to ONE of the following, in a well-organized essay of ca. 5 regulation double-spaced 12-point pages [= ca. 1250-1300 words], making reference not only to the specific data presented but to points raised in our course readings and class sessions. Submit your essay in the form of a MS-Word file e-mailed to [m-silverstein@uchicago.edu](mailto:m-silverstein@uchicago.edu) no later than Friday, 2 May 2014.

1. Consider the two cartoons in Appendix 1, reproduced from a recent issue of *New Yorker* magazine. Think of each of them as a narrative moment presenting a glimpse of a narrated world, in the mode of Bakhtin. Explicate their humorous quality – or, in your opinion, lack of it – in terms of ‘voicing’ and the message they each seem to be communicating to the readership, if not also to you. When they are viewed as “comical realism,” what specific issues in what we might term the cultural politics of gender(ing) in the world of the readership are suggested?

2. The article accompanying in Appendix 2, recently in the *New York Times*, situates a struggle over descriptive epithets used in political campaigns where women are candidates for elective office. What linguistic phenomena are involved here? What are the strategic calculations of the agonists in using/avoiding/reclaiming such epithets for describing another individual vs. oneself, and what social psychological tendencies (for example, in an electorate) do they rely on?