MICHICAGOAN 2022
23RD ANNUAL GRADUATE STUDENT CONFERENCE IN LINGUISTIC ANTHROPOLOGY
(DIS)ENGAGEMENT
MAY 6-7
PRESENTED BY THE GRADUATE STUDENTS & FACULTY IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF ANTHROPOLOGY & LINGUISTICS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN IN ANN ARBOR
You can find out more about the conference and how to register on our website: https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/michicagoan/.

Scan this QR code on your mobile device to get there faster:
DIS/ENGAGEMENT

With a Keynote Address by

MICHEL ANNE-FREDERIC DEGRAFF

Professor of Linguistics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Director of the MIT-HAITI Initiative
PROGRAM AT A GLANCE

ALL TIMES IN EASTERN TIME (EST)

FRIDAY MAY 6

8:30 - 9:25AM  Breakfast & Registration
9:25 - 9:30AM  Opening Remarks
9:30 - 11:20AM Panel 1 (Virtual) p.4

Engaged Positionalities Across Time and Space

Eléonore Rimbault
Jennifer Sierra
Barbara Gigi
Dilara Caliskan

DISCUSSANT: Marisa Casillas

11:20 - 11:35AM Break
11:35AM-1:00PM Panel 2 (Hybrid) p.8

Fieldwork Dilemmas: The Politics of Engagement, Exchange, and Collaboration

Britni Moore (Virtual)
Rafadi Hakim
Kevin Laddapong

DISCUSSANT: Terra Edwards

1:00 - 2:00PM Lunch

2:00 - 3:40PM Panel 3 (Hybrid) p.12

Engaging Contact: Boundary Making, Breaking, and Revitalization

Joy Peltier (Virtual)
Jonathan WuWong
Sophia Eakins
Promise McEntire

DISCUSSANT: Bruce Mannheim

3:40 - 3:55PM Break

3:55 - 5:15PM Panel 4 (In-person) p.18

Negotiating Uptake: Metapragmatic Indexicalities of Engagement

Jiarui Sun
Anna-Marie Sprenger
Yeon-Ju Bae

DISCUSSANT: Erika Hoffmann-Dilloway

5:15 - 5:30PM Break

5:30 - 6:50PM Panel 5 (In-person) p.22

Alignment/Disalignment/Misalignment: Engaging in Science, Government, and Institutions

Eman Elshaikh
Kathryn Berringer
Nikolina Zenovic

DISCUSSANT: Matt Hull

***Please join us for:

7:00PM  Student Dinner at Casa Dominick’s (812 Monroe St) Reservation under “McEntire”

7:30PM  Faculty Dinner at Paesano (3411 Washtenaw Ave) Reservation under “Lempert”
SATURDAY MAY 7

9:00 - 9:50AM Breakfast

9:50 - 11:20AM Panel 6 (Virtual) p.26
Radical Engagement in Political Semiosis
Yukun Zeng
Özge Korkmaz
Eugene Yu Ji
DISCUSSANT: Kate Graber

11:20 - 11:35AM Break

11:35AM-12:55PM Panel 7 (In-person) p.30
A Taste of Authority: Semiotic Engagement in Identity, Voice, and Ownership
Ziqi Chen
Alice Yeh
Ariana Gunderson
DISCUSSANT: Webb Keane

12:55 - 2:00PM Lunch

2:00 - 3:25PM Panel 8 (Hybrid) p.34
Chronotopic Engagement: Contesting Images of Tradition and Newness
Robin Sudanan Turner (Virtual)
James Meador
Dejan Duric
DISCUSSANT: Constantine Nakassis

3:25 - 3:40PM Break

3:40 - 5:40PM Keynote Speech p.38
"Engaging Linguistics Toward Justice and Liberation"
By Michel Anne-Frederic DeGraff

***Please join us for the following receptions:

In-person: 6:00PM at Blue Tractor (207 E Washington St)

Virtual: 6:00PM on Gather Town (https://www.gather.town/)
Friday, MAY 6
9:30 - 11:20 AM
Virtual

PANEL 1

Engaged Positionalities Across Time and Space

DISCUSSANT: Marisa Casillas
Assistant Professor
Department of Comparative Human Development,
University of Chicago
• The Malabari Disappearance of the Indian Circus
  Eléonore Rimbault, PhD Candidate
  Department of Anthropology,
  University of Chicago

• From a Distal Insider to a Remote Outsider: On Being Interpellated as a “Gringa” among Shipibo-Konibos
  Jennifer Sierra, PhD Candidate
  Department of Anthropology,
  University of Michigan

• (Dis)-engaged Sicilian Ethnography
  Barbara Gigi, PhD Candidate
  Institute Interdisciplinaire d’anthropologie du Contemporain (IIAC),
  École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS Paris)

• Kin, Memory, and Language Making Among Trans Sex Worker Women in Istanbul
  Dilara Çalışkan, PhD Candidate
  Department of Anthropology,
  University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
**The Malabari Disappearance of the Indian Circus**

Eléonore Rimbault, PhD Candidate  
*Department of Anthropology, University of Chicago*

Talking with Indian circus professionals established in the Southern Indian region of Malabar elicits many rationalizations of why it is no longer worth associating with the circus in any way, coming from people who still seem deeply invested in the business and the imaginary of the circus. During the fieldwork I conducted with this professional community, discourses on the anticipated disappearance of the Indian circus abounded, supported by multi-scalar comparisons of what the circus used to be and what it is now, in which the present forms was always eclipsed by a vividly invoked, but permanently gone, golden age of the Indian circus. In this paper, I argue that the anticipated disappearance of the circus underpins a dispensation in which the Indian circus (as a medium, a profession, and a career) currently exists, and in which those who actualize this cultural form can make sense of the ways it has shaped their own lives. For former circus professionals, who sometimes must bear the consequences of the stigma of impropriety and vulgarity attached to this performance form, the widespread circulation of circus disappearance narratives does not conjure up the need for an intervention. Instead, it constitutes a subjective space in which one can dwell, remember, and further reflect and argue over what the circus was, or would have been, enabling members of the Malabari circus community to shape local, collective memories as they progressively dissociate from the continuous existence of the circus in India.

**From a Distal Insider to a Remote Outsider: On Being Interpellated as a “Gringa” among Shipibo-Konibos**

Jennifer Sierra, PhD Candidate  
*Department of Anthropology, University of Michigan*

During my first trip to Pucallpa—in the Peruvian Amazon—in 2015, I was consistently asked whether I was from Peru. I moved through Pucallpa and my interactions with Shipibo-Konibos referred to as a Peruvian from Lima. Letting people know I was actually from Colombia’s capital: Bogotá didn’t change Shipibos perception of me as an outsider from a big city in South America. However, as I have continued to visit and work with Shipibo-Konibos in Pucallpa and nearby communities, I have slowly transitioned from being indexed as a city resident in Peru to a “Gringa” (a person who comes from a wealthy country, most commonly a white person). My re-categorization into embodying a "gringa" person in Pucallpa has been more explicit upon returning to my fieldsite this February of 2022. It is now common for me to walk around Shipibo-Konibo spaces and to overhear Shipibos point to me as a "gringa." In this paper, I grapple with the semiotic work involved in the making of the "gringo/a" category among Shipibo-Konibos while I reflect upon my own engagement with Shipibo-Konibos and how this engagement has contributed to my re-categorization into a "gringa" way of being in Pucallpa and among Shipibos.
(Dis)-engaged Sicilian Ethnography

Barbara Gigi, PhD Candidate
Institute Interdisciplinaire d’anthropologie du Contemporain (IIAC),
École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS Paris)

Abstract not shared per author’s request.

Kin, Memory, and Language Making Among Trans Sex Worker Women in Istanbul

Dilara Çalışkan, PhD Candidate
Department of Anthropology,
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Based on 18 months of continuous ethnographic research of mutually formed mother and daughterhoods among trans women who do sex work in Istanbul, this paper takes a historical approach to explore how boundaries of engagement, relatedness and inheritance can be (re)drawn through memory and language. First, I give an introduction on trans forms of mother and daughterhoods. Then, I analyze the role of Lubunca, the secretive queer language— that combines words from Turkish, Greek, Romani, Armenian, and Kurdish— in the everyday life of memory transmission within trans mothers and daughters to contend with the ubiquity of violence. Lastly, building upon the linguistic analysis of Lubunca, I invite you to explore the multi-layered history of sex work in Beyoğlu neighborhood of Istanbul, where different communities of women (i.e., Greek, Romani, Armenian, Kurdish) have been living and doing sex work since 1800s despite the multi-layered histories of precarity, abuse, and criminalization.

How do we analyze linguistic forms of re-engagement across time and space in contemporary forms of queer kinship? How palimpsestic memories of gendered violence and erasure can create unexpected forms of engagement between generations of sex workers through a queer language created by trans mothers and daughters? I argue that trans mothers/daughters creatively engage with kinship, memory, and language in relation to the multi-layered histories of precarity and exclusion of different minority groups in Istanbul. Trans mothers and daughters show how specific memories of violence get mobilized through language and kinship practices while offering a legacy in the present that points to not one simple historical story of the city but to many stories of violence, coexistence, and aspiration to exist.
Fieldwork Dilemmas: The Politics of Engagement, Exchange, and Collaboration

DISCUSSANT: Terra Edwards
Assistant Professor
Department of Comparative Human Development,
University of Chicago
- **Engaging with the Police: The Politics of Collaboration (Virtual)**
  
  Britni Moore, PhD Student  
  *Department of Linguistics,*  
  *University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*

- **Rituals of Engagement: Monetary Donations and the Ethics of Doing Ethnography in Eastern Indonesia**
  
  Rafadi Hakim, PhD Candidate  
  *Department of Anthropology,*  
  *University of Chicago*

- **Soft Power Factory: Stockholm as Global Songwriting Hub and Sweden’s Foreign Language Nationalism**
  
  Kevin Laddapong, PhD Student  
  *Department of Anthropology,*  
  *Indiana University Bloomington*
Engaging with the Police: The Politics of Collaboration

Britni Moore, PhD Student
Department of Linguistics, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

“Don’t you think you’re just helping put a band aid on what should be an amputation?” I was asked this question by a fellow linguistic anthropologist when discussing my research on the language that police officers use when interviewing rape complainants. This person was, in reality, questioning my willingness to engage with an institution that they felt should be abolished and replaced with some new convention. Whether or not I share these sentiments (I do) has become a non sequitur regarding my research. To me, my research is about the victims. Working with the police, and the academies in which they train, is vital to improving the interactions between officers and rape victims to reduce the revictimization that so many survivors experience. By disengaging from the activism that calls for abolishment, I have cultivated a space where officers not only feel comfortable with my presence, but where they are willing to engage. This has allowed me to partner with a midwestern police academy to conduct ethnographic research of the cadets’ training on sexual assault and interviewing techniques. I found that the trainings had a strong emphasis on police word choice, and the impacts of trauma on narrative construction. I then gave the cadets a survey to gauge their rape myth acceptance and victim blaming language. While the results mostly aligned with the goals of their trainings, I identified key areas for improvement and presented this information to the police academy for further development. All because I chose collaboration.

Rituals of Engagement: Monetary Donations and the Ethics of Doing Ethnography in Eastern Indonesia

Rafadi Hakim, PhD Candidate
Department of Anthropology, University of Chicago

While doing fieldwork in Kupang, an eastern Indonesian locale, I encountered the ubiquity of monetary donation boxes—an opaque box with an opening that allows cash to be inserted in an envelope. Churches and prayer groups, for instance, pass offering boxes during every worship, and funerals expect attendees to give cash, sealed in an envelope, into a donation box in full view of other mourners. Such monetary donations, however, are not unidirectional: for instance, when Kupang residents host a ritual feast, especially for weddings and funerals, they expect neighbors and kin to donate money in return. Thus, I propose that these forms of reciprocal obligation, which my interlocutors describe as kebersamaan (lit. “togetherness”), also shape an ethnographer’s modes of engagement (see Cody 2016). As an ethnographer whose everyday life required guidance and explication from my interlocutors, I also became a participant in these relationships of exchange: in addition to assisting their entrepreneurial projects, I began to diligently donate money in these ritual gatherings. Through these practices that indexically link monetary donations with social value, I negotiated the ambiguous subject positions I inhabited: I occupied a position of social and economic privilege as a grant-
funded researcher while being limited my own temporary nature at a US university. Therefore, while an ethnographer’s role has been described as neither an insider nor an outsider, I contend that an ethnographer’s engagement is mediated by these ethical forms of exchange—forms of mediation that are open to contestations and competing valorizations among their interlocutors.

- **Soft Power Factory: Stockholm as Global Songwriting Hub and Sweden’s Foreign Language Nationalism**

  Kevin Laddapong, PhD Student
  *Department of Anthropology, Indiana University Bloomington*

  From Britney Spears to BTS, a huge swath of global popular music is written by Swedish songwriters and produced in Stockholm. Sweden have become global soft power outsource, hiding behind American or Korean successful pop culture export. However, the Swedish government and people in music industry became active in claiming Swedes’ roles and labor in this soft power ecosystem. This proposal is a start point for engaging with this eccentric scheme of Swedish nation branding through behind-the-scenes-ness and what I tentatively call *foreign language nationalism* as they use English to demarcate Swedish-ness. I attempt to bridge STS method with linguistic ideology, for example disentangle actor-network of music production and merchandizing (Latour 2005), identifying boundary objects in the process of nationalization of sounds (Star and Bowker 1999), and looking at expert techne configured by Swedish-English bilingualism ideology (Mullaney 2017). I will present initial literature review, research plan, prospect significance of the project and some challenges ahead. In addition, I briefly reflect on my placement in the field as an “outsider” from Southeast Asia researching the European Others in their space.
Friday, MAY 6
2:00 – 3:40PM
Hybrid

PANEL 3

Engaging Contact: Boundary Making, Breaking, and Revitalization

DISCUSSANT: Bruce Mannheim
Professor
Department of Anthropology,
University of Michigan
Towards the Equitable Integration of Creoles into Our Teaching (Virtual)

Presented by:

Joy Peltier, PhD
Department of Linguistics,
University of Michigan

Interpreters, Electoral Politics, and Language Use within Boston’s Multilingual Chinatown

Jonathan WuWong, Joint BA/MA Student
Department of Linguistics,
University of Chicago

A Language Without Borders: Cabo Verdean Creole in Massachusetts

Sophia Eakins, PhD Student
Department of Linguistics,
University of Michigan

Prosody, “Convergence,” and Social Categories in Multilingual Interactions (Or, The Importance of Human “Engagements” in Theories of Language Change)

Promise McEntire, PhD Candidate
Departments of Anthropology and Linguistics,
University of Michigan
Towards the Equitable Integration of Creoles into Our Teaching (Virtual)

Presented by:

Joy Peltier, PhD  
Department of Linguistics, University of Michigan

Co-authored by:

Ariana Bancu, Assistant Professor  
Department of Linguistics, Northeastern Illinois University

Felicia Bisnath, PhD Candidate  
Department of Linguistics, University of Michigan

Danielle Burgess, PhD Candidate  
Department of Linguistics, University of Michigan

Sophia Eakins, PhD Student  
Department of Linguistics, University of Michigan

Wilkinson Gonzales, PhD Candidate  
Department of Linguistics, University of Michigan

Moira Saltzman, PhD Candidate  
Department of Linguistics, University of Michigan

Yourdanis Sedarous, PhD Candidate  
Department of Linguistics, University of Michigan

Alicia Stevers, Lecturer  
Department of Linguistics, San Diego State University

Marlyse Baptista, Uriel Weinreich Collegiate Professor  
Department of Linguistics, University of Michigan
Our objective is to move away from hegemonic paradigms and towards social justice, decolonization, and community engagement by revitalizing attitudes towards Creole languages: to refresh, reroute, and redefine how we perceive, present, and discuss these languages. This requires that we forefront as researchers, teachers, and speakers a liberated, anti-exceptionalist (cf. DeGraff 2003), normalizing narrative about Creoles and their speakers that emphasizes their naturalness, creativity, diversity, and resilience. Towards that end, we used a community-based approach (Léglise & Migge 2006) and consulted Creole speakers and linguists to obtain a holistic view of these two populations’ representations (e.g., labeling practices), characterizations, and ideologies about Creoles. In the first research phrase, we drew upon our own personal and professional connections with three Creole-speaking populations to conduct interviews with five speakers (language experts) each of Cabo Verdean Kriolu (Cabo Verde), Kwéyòl Donmnik (Dominica), and Trinidadian English Creole (Trinidad & Tobago). Second, we designed a survey combining questions from the interviews with questions about pedagogical approaches to Creoles and distributed it to linguists teaching general linguistics courses; fifty-eight linguists responded. Finally, we hosted a virtual workshop bringing together language experts and linguists from several geographical areas to discuss how best to integrate Creole languages and their speakers into linguistics classrooms. In the hope that sharing our findings with speakers and researchers alike will promote the equitable inclusion of Creoles into linguistics, anthropology, and related fields, we report the outcomes of each phase, as well as our recommendations for a revitalized, engaged approach to creolistics pedagogy.

- **Interpreters, Electoral Politics, and Language Use within Boston’s Multilingual Chinatown**

  Jonathan WuWong, Joint BA/MA Student  
  Department of Linguistics, University of Chicago

As demonstrated by the work of Lou (2016), Chinatowns within America are sites of intense linguistic and cultural contact. Following trends of migration, the place and prominence of Chinese Americans within the US intersections with ideologies of nation, belonging, and language. To analyze questions of Chinese American racialization and identity, this paper focuses on the multilingual behaviors of Boston Chinatown residents. Furthermore, by focusing on political participation and electoral politics in this paper, I illustrate a societal/cultural atmosphere around which a variety of language contact effects are taking place. Employing a multimethods approach, I present an analysis of Boston’s Chinatown Linguistic Landscape, the place of interpreters within the community, as well as multilingual behaviors are being employed. Through an introductory view of the linguistic landscape, we see evidence of established linguistic barriers despite a willingness of residents to participate in the larger Boston political landscape. Following an analysis of both group and individual interviews with community interpreters, I argue that language both hinders and facilitates Chinatown residents’ access to the wider community of Boston, and by extension American culture. From creation of words to the explanation of culturally sensitive topics, community based translators and interpreters
are able to address the barriers that the political signage happens to support. I present a view of Chinatown residents in hope of placing them at the center of both theoretical as well as social inquiry, hopefully introducing a perspective that highlights the difficulties migrants have within a linguistically and culturally different atmosphere along with the solutions that are created to define a unique, socially-dynamic, and multilingual environment.

- **A Language Without Borders: Cabo Verden Creole in Massachusetts**
  
  Sophia Eakins, PhD Student  
  Department of Linguistics, University of Michigan  

  Since the mid 18th century Cabo Verdeans have been making homes beyond the borders of their native archipelago with the largest diaspora located in coastal New England (Gibau 2005). Even though the U.S. population continually rivals that of the islands, there is little representation of their language practices in the field of Linguistics. Indeed, this is reminiscent of a broader trend in Linguistics to place disproportionate value on the ‘native’ culture and ‘monolingual’ speaker. The proposed paper on the bilingual Cabo Verdean community in Massachusetts hopes to join the voices of those pivoting research towards bilingual, diasporic cultures especially the pioneering work on the Cabo Verdean diaspora (Gibau 2005; Lima 1997). One reason linguistics research shies away from diasporic languages is it is difficult to make the generalizations traditional top-down methodology encourages due to high variation. However, this challenge should not mean excluding these communities. The present study employs a bottom-up methodology inspired by bilingualism and sociolinguistic frameworks such as Translanguaging (Otheguy et al. 2015) and Conversation Analysis (Auer 1998). Both frameworks make space for variation by focusing first on individual’s language practices. Six participants contributed to naturalistic sociolinguistic interviews as well as two bilingual surveys. One 27-minute conversation between two participants was chosen for a detailed Conversation Analysis. Preliminary analysis reveals that participants who strongly identify as Cabo Verdean naturally interweave Cabo Verdean Creole and English, showing their language can transition beyond both traditional geographic and linguistic borders.

- **Prosody, “Convergence,” and Social Categories in Multilingual Interactions (Or, The Importance of Human “Engagements” in Theories of Language Change)**
  
  Promise McEntire, PhD Candidate  
  Departments of Anthropology and Linguistics, University of Michigan  

  How do we get from interaction and speaker coordination to language change? Baptista (2020) argues that it is the “similarities (the congruent features) that speakers perceive
between the languages in contact [that] are favored to participate in the emergence and development of a new language” and that bi- and multilingual speakers “maximally exploit shared, parallel syntactic patterns and morphophonological matter.” While Baptista focuses on parallel morphonological (form/function) units and syntactic patterns, research on prosody in interaction suggests that interlocutors collaboratively use prosody to create linguistic parallels and make specific meanings relevant across turns at talk. Taking the interactionally embedded nature of grammar as its starting point, this paper proposes to explore the role of prosody in signaling and identifying similarity in morphophonological units and syntactic patterns in situations of language contact. I first review literature on prosody and contact-induced language change, which insists on situating differently fluent bi- and multilingual speakers in their communities. I then propose to investigate asymmetrical speaker dyads’ morphophonological and syntactic convergence and divergence through an analysis of the interactive components of live radio programs in multilingual settings, using the frameworks of interactional linguistics and contact linguistics. Importantly, this analysis ensures both linguistic similarity and difference by focusing on interactions between differently fluent speakers of two typologically similar languages associated with two distinct ethnic identities. I hypothesize that interlocutors are most likely to converge and/or diverge at prosodically salient positions (i.e., boundaries and prominences.) Thus, the proposed study aims to begin to link interactional convergence/divergence to concepts of congruence and similarity in contact linguistics. Prosodic systems – which simultaneously comment on grammar, interaction, and context – are ideal sites for investigating this relationship.
Negotiating Uptake: 
*Metapragmatic Indexicalities of Engagement*

DISCUSSANT: 
Erika Hoffmann-Dilloway 

Professor 
Department of Anthropology, 
Oberlin College
• Exclaiming What?! – Indexicality and Metapragmatics of the Exclamation Point in Chinese Language Reform

Jiarui Sun, PhD Student
Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations,
University of Chicago

• Oh Yeah, That Was Super Sincere: Listener Ideologies and Social Meanings of Congratulatory Speech Acts

Anna-Marie Sprenger, PhD Student
Department of Linguistics,
University of Chicago

• “Eonni, Come Here:” Locating a Fieldworker in the Shifting Matrix of Fictive Sibling Terms

Yeon-ju Bae, PhD Candidate
Department of Anthropology,
University of Michigan
Exclaiming What?! – Indexicality and Metapragmatics of the Exclamation Point in Chinese Language Reform

Jiarui Sun, PhD Student
Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations, University of Chicago

What kind of political engagement and disengagement are involved in the seemingly benign use of punctuation marks? What can metapragmatic discourses of punctuation use teach us about the users, their social positions, and the political struggles at stake for them? These questions were important for Chinese writers and readers in the 1920s and 30s when the Western-style punctuation marks were first standardized for public use. Especially, motivated by the language ideology that expects the language used in vernacular literature to be a transparent reflection of emotions, intellectuals with different political stances debated over whether the abundant use of the exclamation point was symptomatic of national psychological crisis or indicative of freedom of emotional expression unimaginable in classical Chinese writings. Further, within the literary circle, the frequent use of exclamation points was often construed as an index of artistic failure. However, as my case study shows, female author Xiao Hong’s creative deployment of exclamation points not only achieved artistic effects conceived as powerful by literary critics but also created a balance between her femininity and leftist stance, which granted her much social capital during a time of war and political turbulence. Tracing different metapragmatic uptakes of the exclamation point from grammar guides to psychological research and then to literary evaluation, this paper argues the nonreferential indexical functions of this symbol make it a productive site for understanding the dialectic relationship between language ideologies and linguistic structure, and how such a dialectic plays into realms of politics, gender, and artistic virtuosity.

Oh Yeah, That Was Super Sincere: Listener Ideologies and Social Meanings of Congratulatory Speech Acts

Anna-Marie Sprenger, PhD Student
Department of Linguistics, University of Chicago

Sociolinguistics has theorized social meanings relating to groups of speakers, and their facets of identity, as attaching, through indexicality, to forms within a community’s system of variation; there has been a particular focus on sociophonetic features, while larger units of speech remain undertheorized (Eckert 2012, 2019). I expand on this literature to consider how social meaning may function for speech acts. Despite the fact that traditional studies of speech acts argue that their illocutionary forces derive from social contracts within a community (Searle 1965), these studies are disengaged with the language ideologies that contribute to the success or failure of speech act utterances, treating speech act failure as simply deriving from speaker ambiguity. At the same time, broader discussions around which individuals may produce certain kinds of speech (e.g.
consent or apologies) show that ideology does control what speech acts are deemed legitimate. In this paper, I present results from a sociolinguistic experiment involving congratulation speech acts in workplace interactions in US American English. My results complicate the notion of speech act failure – showing that it is not due to speaker ambiguity, but rather gendered listener ideologies around who is a canonical utterer for a congratulation, interpellating speakers into a limited range of possible legitimate affective displays. Further, I argue that speech acts have indexical fields of fluid, ideologically-linked meanings (Eckert 2008) and that due to the more intertextual nature of speech acts, their indexical orders (Silverstein 2003) are organized in the opposite direction as for sociophonetic features.

- “Eonni, Come Here:” Locating a Fieldworker in the Shifting Matrix of Fictive Sibling Terms

Yeon-ju Bae, PhD Candidate
Department of Anthropology, University of Michigan

This paper reflects on a moment when a middle-aged man addressed me, a young female fieldworker, as “eonni” (Korean sibling term used by younger sister to older sister). What does it mean that he used “eonni” to me, in terms of cultural norms and social relations to which I was invited? The fieldsite where I stayed from 2018 to 2020 is a Buddhist return-to-the-farm village in South Korea, to which many educated urbanites have migrated for cultivating egalitarian ideals across humans and nonhumans drawing on the Buddhist ideology of interrelatedness. While there are four sibling terms that can be widely used outside family, i.e., eonni (younger sister to older sister), oppa (younger sister to older brother), hyeong (younger brother to older brother), and nuna (younger brother to older sister), some newcomers in the village appear to shift the normative usages of fictive sibling terms. They employ eonni and hyeong to a great extent even if the gender and age features do not conform to those of normative situations. These shifting usages oftentimes take place when middle-aged villagers interact with one another for club activities in cross-gender context. The same people might not show the same practice in different social relations and situations, and those who don’t participate in these club gatherings were not even aware of the shifting usages. What does it mean if I followed or didn’t follow them? In what ways could I negotiate the distance with different groups of people? Where was I located as a fieldworker?
Alignment/Disalignment/Misalignment: Engaging in Science, Government, and Institutions

DISCUSSANT: Matt Hull

Associate Professor
Department of Anthropology,
University of Michigan
• The Counterlaboratory: Conspiratorial Thinking as Radically Socialized Knowledge

Eman M. Elshaikh, PhD Student
Department of Anthropology and Committee on the Conceptual and Historical Studies of Science, University of Chicago

• Stabilizing People to Stabilize the Social Service Intervention: Qualia of Stability and Axes of Differentiation

Kathryn R. Berringer, PhD Candidate
Departments of Anthropology and Social Work, University of Michigan

• #eyesonSerbia: Tracing the Digital Media Circulation of Protest Materials Against Lithium and Jadarite Mining in Serbia

Nikolina Zenović, PhD Student
Department of Anthropology, Indiana University Bloomington
The Counterlaboratory: Conspiratorial Thinking as Radically Socialized Knowledge

Eman M. Elshaikh, PhD Student
Department of Anthropology and Committee on the Conceptual and Historical Studies of Science, University of Chicago

Living through a global pandemic during a climate change crisis, where scientific authority is called into question and knowledge is tangled with forms of conspiratorial thinking, the ethnographer’s stance has political power. When engaging with scientific discourses and their doubles, do we practice credulity or skepticism, and what are the stakes of both in any given encounter? How do we engage in modes of reasoning and thinking which regiment and order scientific propositions in unusual ways? What participation frameworks and production formats characterize such encounters (Goffman 1981)? Social epistemologists have pointed out that institutionalized and vetted scientific knowledge, like knowledge about vaccines and climate change, are “radically socialized knowledges” (Levy 2007), thereby construing conspiratorial thinking and scientific skepticism as antisocial and immoral—even on the part of the “intellectual” who engages with it sincerely. I propose that conspiratorial thinking is itself radically socialized in particular ways, often representing a kind of hyperscientization and hyperempiricism. This framing prompts us to consider the epistemic function of the ethnographer’s role as it highlights how forms of alignment and disalignment with actors, propositions, or sensibilities get tied to voicings of credulity, skepticism, openness, and firmness. These voicings themselves do political and ethical work. I examine discourses about energy and health to examine the stakes of ethnographic engagement in domains where conspiratorial claims about science are being staged, negotiated, and circulated, attending to how people voice different kinds of authority, skepticism, and ethical commitments through their commentaries about scientific controversies.

Stabilizing People to Stabilize the Social Service Intervention: Qualia of Stability and Axes of Differentiation

Kathryn R. Berringer, PhD Candidate
Departments of Anthropology and Social Work, University of Michigan

In the logic of Implementation Science, an emerging but largely unscrutinized field that systematizes the design, replication, and dissemination of social policy and practice, the ontological stability of the intervention takes on paramount importance. In order to test, replicate, and disseminate the social service intervention, it must first be consolidated as an ontologically stable unit that can move, unchanged, across spatial and temporal contexts. This paper draws on two years of ethnographic research with practitioners taking up Implementation Science to improve outcomes for LGBTQ+ youth and families, examining how the work of stabilizing the social service intervention depends on the
concomitant semiotic work of typifying and diagnosing the “stability” of individuals, families, practitioners, and purveyors of the intervention, all of whom are enrolled as participants vital to producing a viable, replicable intervention. Drawing on the semiotics of differentiation (Gal & Irvine, 2019), this paper analyzes the discursive work of practitioners, evaluators, and researchers to identify the qualia of the “stable” participant or family, interpelled as ready to be engaged in the intervention, as well as the “stable” practitioner, prepared to structure and implement the intervention with fidelity. In this way, practitioners invoke qualities to establish axes of “stability” and “instability” conducive to the stabilization of the intervention. Ultimately, this paper grapples with the stakes of inclusion, as practitioners weigh the ethical imperative they identify to bring their work to scale and expand its reach, against the cost of the exclusion of “unstable” actors that their work entails.

- #eyesonSerbia: Tracing the Digital Media Circulation of Protest Materials Against Lithium and Jadarite Mining in Serbia

Nikolina Zenović, PhD Student
Department of Anthropology, Indiana University Bloomington

Over the last year, Serbia has seen protests opposing lithium and jadarite mining erupt throughout the country and virtually in response to Rio Tinto’s proposed mine. Although the protests began by expressing discontent with the potential creation of Rio Tinto’s lithium and jadarite mine, and the Serbian government’s support of this venture, they have transformed into a larger movement against ecologically harmful mining projects in Serbia and, in some ways, against the government itself. This paper traces the semiotics of protests against mining projects in Serbia and how protesters communicate their imagined national futures in contrast to that which the national government aims to achieve through these transnational business deals. Given the significant social media presence of protesters and local organizations, the following explores the question what strategies afforded by social media do protestors employ in amplifying their message(s)? Attending to intertextuality and digital media circulation of materials related to the hashtag #eyesonSerbia, this paper seeks to shed light on the communicative affordances of protests and varying levels of engagement. Furthermore, the following reflects on the in/exclusive capacities of forms of involvement (digital and otherwise) with protesters. In this moment of politico-environmental crisis in Serbia, protesters create digitized images, videos, memes, and signs that become indexical of their multi-layered resistance to the social, political, economic, and ecological impacts of extraction. By analyzing protesters’ use of such materials, this paper comments on the creative capacities of protest materials in protesters tackling of politico-environmental crises and engaging in developing alternative solutions.

Please join us for:

7:00PM  Student Dinner at Casa Dominick’s (812 Monroe St) Reservation under “McEntire”
7:30PM  Faculty Dinner at Paesano (3411 Washtenaw Ave) Reservation under “Lempert”
Saturday, MAY 7
9:50 – 11:20AM
Virtual

PANEL 6

Radical Engagement in Political Semiosis

DISCUSSANT: Kate Graber

Associate Professor
Departments of Anthropology and Central Eurasian Studies,
Indiana University Bloomington
Radical Engagement and Moral Envy in Contemporary China: A Comparison of Moralization in Dujing and other Social Movements

Yukun Zeng, PhD Candidate
Department of Anthropology,
University of Chicago

What Does a Political Anthropology of Communication Look Like?

Özge Korkmaz, PhD Candidate
Department of Anthropology,
University of Michigan

How Does the State Imagine? Two Semiotic Models of the State’s Governance in Hong Kong in the 2000s

Eugene Yu Ji, PhD Candidate
Department of Psychology,
University of Chicago
Radical Engagement and Moral Envy in Contemporary China: A Comparison of Moralization in Dujing and other Social Movements

Yukun Zeng, PhD Candidate  
Department of Anthropology, University of Chicago

The willingness to do some things for public goods is the fundamental drive of social movements, or any altruistic social action. However, inchoate good will may not bring beneficial outcomes. Often more vicious than material punishment is the question, denial, and hypocritical reading of the initial good will, and as a necessary consequence, schismogenesis, and the destruction of the metapragmatic structure that direct actions along with good will. In contemporary China, this phenomenon is particularly observable in social movements engaging moral idealism radically, be it progressive movements devoted to issues like gender and labor, and conservative movements like dujing, an educational movement in which parents bring their children to intensive reading Confucian classics, often at the cost of illegally dropping-out the official education system.

To analyze this phenomenon, this paper draws on the concept of moral envy, originally defined by David Graeber as “feelings of envy and resentment directed at another person, not because that person is wealthy, or gifted, or lucky, but because his or her behavior is seen as upholding a higher moral standard than the envier’s own” (2018: 248). I regard Graeber’s depiction of moral envy as precise to capture the moralization nature of schismogenesis in China but inchoate to give an interpretation given the culturally specific divisions of value in contemporary China. With my ethnographic data, this paper gives a semiotic elaboration of moral envy and radical engagement.

What Does a Political Anthropology of Communication Look Like?

Özge Korkmaz, PhD Candidate  
Department of Anthropology, University of Michigan

In this presentation, I reflect on my long-term ethnographic research in Turkey’s Kurdistan in an attempt to reconstruct the decisive moments that led me to think of “communication” more attentively as a subject matter of political anthropology. Focusing on three separate but interrelated examples from my fieldwork, I examine the ways politics institute its own communicative context and become embodied in actors’ communicative dispositions. The goal is to demonstrate the co-indexical relations between forms and styles of communicative engagement, utilized by locals and anthropologists alike, albeit sometimes for different reasons, and the political contingencies that make these forms and styles relevant to the everyday management of social relations.
My paper applies language ideology and metapragmatics to examine how the state of China developed two alternative models of governance through the politics of performance and spectacle in Hong Kong in the 2000s. Much previous work across linguistic anthropology, comparative politics, and political psychology argue that performance and spectacle are crucial to nation branding. Many such studies, however, mainly focus on receptions and effects of nation branding for understanding the state’s affective and cognitive interventions towards the intended audience, in which the state’s motivation and semiotic imagination are often deemed as empirically and ethnographically difficult to investigate, and hence secondary to the scholarly interest. Primarily focusing on two cases of “performance via the media” in the Chinese state’s nation branding towards Hong Kong in the post-reunion era, this paper intends to show that the state had developed two models of semiotic cosmology for its governance towards Hong Kong, one of which I name “realist” and the other “idealistic”. The two models can be in particular probed through the state’s politics of performance and spectacle, which is intrinsically embedded in the multiplicities of codes (Mandarin, Cantonese, and English) and channels (local, national, and international media). Analyzing how the state creates, manipulates, adjusts the semiotics of performance and spectacle through meaningful comparisons between related cases can enable scholars to more finely identify the state’s ideological imagination in contemporary multi-channeled nation branding projects, and propose proper scholarly interventions facing the complex dynamics of productions and reproductions, uptakes and feedback of semiotic imaginations between the state, the media, and civil society.
A Taste of Authority: Semiotic Engagement in Identity, Voice, and Ownership

DISCUSSANT: Webb Keane

George Herbert Mead Collegiate Professor
Department of Anthropology, University of Michigan
• Talking Sushi: Enregistering Materiality and Projecting Cosmopolitan Identity in Changsha City, China

  Ziqi Chen, PhD Student
  Department of Linguistics,
  University of Chicago

• Containers or Mediators: Christianizing Diplomacy in Transnational China

  Alice Yeh, PhD Candidate
  Department of Anthropology,
  University of Chicago

• “She’s a Rotten, Recipe-stealing Bitch:” Conflicting Theories of Recipe Ownership

  Ariana Gunderson, PhD Student
  Department of Anthropology,
  Indiana University Bloomington
Talking Sushi: Enregistering Materiality and Projecting Cosmopolitan Identity in Changsha City, China

Ziqi Chen, PhD Student
Department of Linguistics, University of Chicago

Everyday materials have been shown to be enregistered indexicals of social meanings, e.g., wine (Silverstein, 2006) and porcelain (Gal, 2017). How material registers are produced, circulated, and consumed in the present-day context of urban China? In this paper, I explore this question by observing the semiotic processes of sushi as commodities in the making of elite ways of talking Japanese food in Chinese. Ethnographically, I focus on a sushi restaurant in the style of omakase (entrusting the chef with deciding a multiple-course meal, usually expensive), located in Changsha, a rapidly growing second-tier city in south-central China. By analyzing the menus created by the chef and owner, the restaurant’s food reviews posted on social media, and the opinions shared by the restaurant’s long-term customers/reviewers in their group chat, I show 1) how Japanese is borrowed and calqued into Chinese at lexical, morphological and syntactical levels; 2) how the reviewers’ language presents a stronger flavor of Japaneseness as compared to the menu language; 3) what qualities are picked out by the reviewers in judging a ‘good’ piece of sushi, manifesting a linguistically and culturally exotic image-text; and 4) what ideologies are shared among the reviewers. Findings are discussed in the framework of enregisterment, pertaining to cosmopolitan identity projection linking to Shanghai and Tokyo, knowledge production and social differentiation embedded in a city-specific context.

Containers or Mediators: Christianizing Diplomacy in Transnational China

Alice Yeh, PhD Candidate
Department of Anthropology, University of Chicago

This paper explores how Chinese political theater is commensurated to a vision of Christian politics in which spiritual credibility is measured not by the ease of communication but by the labor of its authentication. Commensuration is the semiotic process of using the same metric to compare, and therefore to bring under the same social order, different things (Espeland and Stevens 1998). Through the making and maintaining of the everyday contrast between listening and scheming, commensuration emerges as a Christian practice that helps to purify the Augustinian axis of differentiation between angels and demons, heavenly and earthly cities. I analyze a New York-based Chinese Catholic priest’s deployment of a theme associated with the settler-colonial myth of the frontier: the voice in the wilderness. Long associated with mission and migration (e.g., the Puritan “errand into the wilderness”) and the myth of the frontier, the image of the wilderness plays on the sanctity of God’s voice as well as the difficulty of recognizing it. I show how this semiotic uncertainty is deployed to commensurate the law-enforcing ethos of the Chinese state with the credibility of the global, institutional church.
“She’s a Rotten, Recipe-stealing Bitch:” Conflicting Theories of Recipe Ownership

Ariana Gunderson, PhD Student
Department of Anthropology, Indiana University Bloomington

Recipes are food transformed to text, a sensory experience translated into words, circulated as a set of instructions to recreate a simulation of that same sensory experience in a different time and place. Recipes as a text are fixed - but can they be owned? Ideologies of recipe ownership vary, and can come into conflict when a recipe is considered stolen, adapted, or appropriated. In this paper I will examine conflicting ideologies of recipe ownership as presented in a U.S.-based recipe-dispute-turned-TikTok video by musician Lubalin, in which Helen accuses Caroline of stealing her broccoli casserole recipe 8 years ago – and claiming it as her own. Helen and Lubalin present differing conceptions of recipe ownership in their social media content, which Lubalin frames as an intergenerational debate. I will then consider the recipe as a genre of text, its conventions and variations as a textual proxy for sensory food experience, and some means by which people safeguard their recipes. The paper concludes with a reflection on scholarly engagement with recipes, and on the stances anthropologists have taken regarding theories of recipe ownership in the past.
Chronotopic Engagement: Contesting Images of Tradition and Newness

DISCUSSANT: Constantine Nakassis

Associate Professor
Department of Anthropology,
University of Chicago
- **Thinking with the Past through Discourse (Virtual)**
  
  Robin Sudanan Turner, PhD Student  
  *Departments of French and Italian,*  
  *University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*

- **The Metaculture of Accumulation in Eurasian Imperial Histories**
  
  James Meador, PhD Candidate  
  *Department of Anthropology,*  
  *University of Michigan*

- **Youth and the Future of Multi-Ethnic Bosnia and Herzegovina: Language Standardization and Youth Linguistic Practices in an Ethnically Mixed City**
  
  Dejan Durić, PhD Candidate  
  *Departments of Anthropology and American Culture,*  
  *University of Michigan*
Thinking with the Past through Discourse (Virtual)

Robin Sudanan Turner, PhD Student
Departments of French and Italian,
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Studying diffusion and maintenance of ideologies over time creates a unique set of considerations that the language researcher must undertake. Diachronic structural linguistic changes must be juxtaposed with cultural and political contexts, shaping how, when, and why an ideology transforms in a specific direction. Such a project aligning social and linguistic histories therefore demands a methodological framework informed by intersectional approaches to knowledge production (The Combahee River Collective, 1977; Crenshaw, 1989) and a critical, reflexive awareness of the intercultural and intertemporal positionality of the researcher relative to the language users that create and take up the studied discourse. This paper is intended as a reflexive exercise of my dissertation project that examines the discursive presentation of gay men and lesbians in Montreal (1956-1977) in publicly circulating discourses, specifically news media, theatre, and activist literature. The periodization is framed by landmark moments for gay men and lesbians in Montreal and in the larger region of Quebec during the era of substantial social and political reform referred to as the Quiet Revolution. As a cisgender anglophone US linguist born long after the Quiet Revolution, the stakes of this project are directly affected by the connections to as well as absence of intimacies I have towards the producers and publics (Warner, 2002) that participated in these discourses. The ethical framework deployed in my project draws on historical, queer, and sociological scholarship that I propose as a culturally and temporally conscious method for language researchers to consider in their production of knowledges.

The Metaculture of Accumulation in Eurasian Imperial Histories

James Meador, PhD Candidate
Department of Anthropology, University of Michigan

What do wars of conquest seek to create? This paper examines linguistic reflexes of territorial expansion to sketch what I call the metaculture of accumulation. Sharing features with Urban’s metaculture of tradition and of newness (2001), accumulation’s characteristic dynamic is nevertheless captured by neither. To illustrate this dynamic, I discuss two historical examples of person-referring forms and semantic equivalence classes: the titles of the pre-revolutionary Russian Emperor, and polyglot lexicographic works from eighteenth century Qing China. Both examples celebrate their empires’ incorporation of diverse populations of subjects through cumulative lists of subordinated units: named territories and regimented lexemes, respectively. These two examples differ not just in their contents, but in how they are organized, which in turn helps to define one axis along which metacultures of accumulation may vary. While the growth of the Tsar’s titles over time diagrams the Russian empire’s history of expansion while also preserving multiple distinct idioms of political authority, the Qing lexicons stage a much more...
thoroughgoing process of erasure. The final five-language (“Pentaglot”) lexicon neutralizes the differences between the times and modes of subjugation of Mongolian, Chinese, Tibetan, and Turki (Uyghur) constituencies to their Manchu rulers. Importantly, the Pentaglot lexicon also erases the Oirat Dzungar people and their language, who - unlike their other Inner Asian neighbors - were subjected to genocide rather than incorporation following their defeat by the Qing. I suggest that highlighting the origins of post-imperial political sovereignty in imperial accumulation and erasure may help us better account for the enduringly hierarchical tendencies of supposedly egalitarian nation states.

- **Youth and the Future of Multi-Ethnic Bosnia and Herzegovina: Language Standardization and Youth Linguistic Practices in an Ethnically Mixed City**

Dejan Durić, PhD Candidate  
*Departments of Anthropology and American Culture, University of Michigan*

Twenty-seven years after the signing of the Dayton peace accords which signaled the end of the Yugoslav Wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) the country’s tripartite divisions along ethnic lines are still refracted in and through language. BiH’s three fully-mutually intelligible “new” official languages—Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian—have become the de-facto languages of the country’s three ethnic groups: Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs. Such paradoxes are perhaps best exemplified by the saying that “the only thing more preposterous than claiming that Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs speak three languages is that they speak one language.” The post-Dayton standardization of Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian as separate languages with their own literary and political histories has seen its ups and downs: from disagreements about what the languages should be called (i.e., Bosniak and not Bosnian according to some Serb politicians), to attestations of purity (i.e., Bosnian is not a language but just a variant of Serbian), to the intensification of neologisms in Croatian, language standardizations practices abound. Less understood, however, is how such standardization efforts affect the speech practices of youth in BiH. In this paper I explore how youth in the ethnically mixed city of Mostar, BiH, where Croats and Bosniaks make up most of the population effortlessly code-switch between the two dominant variants Bosnian and Croatian. Such code-switching reveals not just the anxieties associated with (ethnic) self-identification and coming of age in multi-ethnic BiH but also anxieties about one’s future and role in an unstable multi-ethnic society.
Saturday, MAY 7
3:40 - 5:40PM
In-person

KEYNOTE

“Engaging Linguistics Toward Justice and Liberation”

Presented by

MICHEL ANNE-FREDERIC DEGRAFF

Professor of Linguistics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Director of the MIT-HAITI Initiative
Michel DeGraff is Professor of linguistics at MIT, co-founder and co-director of the MIT-Haiti Initiative and founding member of Akademi Kreyòl Ayisyen. His research contributes to an egalitarian approach to Creole languages and their speakers, as in his native Haiti. His writings also engage intellectual history and critical race theory, especially the links between power-knowledge hierarchies and the (mis)representations and (mis-)uses of Creole languages, Indigenous languages and other non-colonial languages in the Global South and beyond. His work is anchored in a broader agenda for human rights and social justice, with Haiti as one spectacular case of a post-colony where the national language spoken by all (Haitian Creole) is systematically disenfranchised while the (former) colonial language (French) spoken by few is enlisted for élite closure and for political and geo-political domination. This devalorization of Kreyòl in Haiti and other non-colonial languages worldwide, especially in the Global South, is embedded in systematic patterns of hegemony and white supremacy where language and education are enlisted as tools for external and internal colonialism. Michel DeGraff tackles these political challenges as he unveils age-old myths about Creole languages in linguistics and as he engages the MIT-Haiti Initiative in a broad campaign for democratizing access to quality education and for the universal respect of human rights. Through the strategic use of Open Education Resources in Haitian Creole (Kreyòl), Platfòm MIT-Ayiti effectively sets up a model for other communities where language is often used as a pernicious tool for hegemony and exploitation, especially in the context of education and other spheres where knowledge and power are created and transmitted.


Please join us for the following receptions:

In-person: 6:00PM at Blue Tractor (207 E Washington St)  Virtual: 6:00PM on Gather Town (https://www.gather.town/)
PRESENTED BY THE GRADUATE STUDENTS & FACULTY IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF ANTHROPOLOGY & LINGUISTICS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN IN ANN ARBOR

A BIG THANK YOU TO THIS YEAR’S ORGANIZERS:

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Yeon-ju Bae, Promise McEntire

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Yeon-ju Bae, Dejan Durić, Promise McEntire, Karandeep Mehra, Jose Enrique Solano, Anna Whitney

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