INTERNATIONAL AND INTERDISCIPLINARY CONFERENCE
OUT OF THE NORM?!
CURRENT PERSPECTIVES ON LANGUAGE AND GENDER

When?

10/05/2022 – 10/07/2022

Where?

KH 1.011, Universitätsstr. 15, Erlangen;
00.15 PSG, Kochstr. 6a, Erlangen

What?

Hybrid conference
(Zoom links will be sent upon request to
rom-violin@fau.de)

Keynotes:

10/05/2022, 05:00pm:
"Mein Geschlecht – Mein Menschenrecht"
(Tessa Ganserer, Member of the German
federal parliament)

10/06/2022, 11:00am:
"Hab ich doch gesagt. Das Finden von
Sprache für Queere Selbstverständlich-
keiten" (Tessa Hart, artist and writer)

Information and Program:

https://www.romanistik.phil.fau.de/
out-of-the-norm/

Funding

FAU Friedrich-Alexander-Universität
Büro für Gender und Diversity

FAU Friedrich-Alexander-Universität
Institut für Romanistik

Dr. Alfred-Vinzl-Stiftung

Organization

Miriam Zapf (Erlangen)
Andrea Chagas (Mannheim)
Prof. Dr. Silke Jansen (Erlangen)

Program

Wednesday, 10/05/2022

Location: KH 1.011 (Kollegienhaus), Universitätsstraße 15, 91054 Erlangen

2:30pm – 3:00pm:	Registration and Welcome
3:00pm – 3:45pm:	The definitional dilemma of gender in language (Ben Papadopoulos, Berkeley)
3:45pm – 4:30pm:	Gender marking in Sign Languages (Maria Kopf, Hamburg)
4:30pm – 5:00pm:	Coffee break
5:00pm – 6:30pm:	Keynote: Mein Geschlecht – Mein Menschenrecht (Tessa Ganserer, Member of the German Bundestag)

Thursday, 10/06/2022

Location: 00.15 PSG, Kochstraße 6a, 91054 Erlangen

9:00am – 9:45am:	Discursive shifts associated with coming out: A corpus-based study of news media texts on Ricky Martin (Heiko Motschenbacher, Bergen)
9:45am – 10:30am:	Cisgender straight women as allies of queer language variation in Brazil (Eduardo Alves Vieira, Leiden)
10:30am – 11:00am:	Coffee break
11:00am – 12:00pm:	Keynote: Hab ich doch gesagt. Das Finden von Sprache für Queere Selbstverständlichkeiten (Tessa Hart, artist and writer)
12:00pm – 1:30pm:	Lunch
1:30pm – 2:15pm:	Gender (bias) in medicine: A corpus-assisted discourse study of German radiology reports (Karoline Irschara, Innsbruck)
2:15pm – 3:00pm:	The debate on language and gender in the Spanish press (Susana Guerrero Salazar, Málaga)
3:00pm – 3:45pm:	On gender stereotypes in Spanish proverbs (Benedicta Adokarley Lomotey, Accra)
3:45pm – 4:15pm:	Coffee break
4:15pm – 6:15pm:	Picture a Scientist (documentary): Screening and discussion

Friday, 10/07/2022

Location: 00.15 PSG, Kochstraße 6a, 91054 Erlangen

9:00am – 9:45am: Gender stereotypes in dictionaries: the potential conflict between the descriptive standards of lexicography and society's mandate
(Carolin Müller-Spitzer, Mannheim)

9:45am – 10:30am: The role of gender stereotypes in the emergence of verbal violence
(Silke Jansen, Erlangen)

10:30am – 11:00am: Coffee break

11:00am – 11:45am: Beyond the binary: Psycholinguistic studies on how the gender asterisk in German is read and interpreted
(Evelyn Ferstl, Freiburg)

11:45am – 12:30pm: Language structures and gender stereotyped perception: the effect of differences in the level of grammatical gender between fully, semi-, and non-gendered languages
(Jonathan Kim, Trondheim)

12:30pm – 1:15pm: A psycholinguistic study on the interpretation of the masculine generic and some alternatives in Spanish
(Miriam Zapf, Erlangen)

Abstracts

The definitional dilemma of gender in language (Ben Papadopoulos, Berkeley)

It is difficult to contextualize the rise of gender-inclusive language within formal linguistic theory. Current theories of linguistic gender define any language with a requisite system of nominal classification as having gender, in turn defining languages that manifest gendered distinctions in other ways as 'genderless' (Corbett, 1991; Kramer, 2015). In this way, linguistic gender is defined based on a given language's morphological type, not the particular ways that it may encode socially-meaningful gendered distinctions throughout the grammar and lexicon. Drawing from data on twelve typologically distinct languages, I present linguistic features of gender that are not purely morphological in order to argue that a reimagined theory of linguistic gender that centers the concept of social gender must be constructed in order to empirically situate the concept of gender-inclusive language. Such a theory would isolate languages with systems of nominal classification that are not based (even in part) on gender, and bridge dominant theories of gender, which emphasize the role of language (e.g. Butler, 2006, p. xx; Wittig, 1985; Irigaray, 1993, p. 67-74), and formal linguistic theory in order to explain the features of language that speakers determine to mark gender and analyze the capacity of a gendered language to change.

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Gender marking in Sign Languages (Maria Kopf, Hamburg)

The beginning of linguistic research on sign languages dates back to the 1960s. Although comprehensive studies on gender and sign languages are still missing, brief descriptions in various studies mention different systems of gender marking. One such example is the case of Korean Sign Language using different handshapes to mark gender. An extended pinky represents a female marker, an extended thumb a male marker.

In my talk I will give a short introduction into the linguistics of sign languages followed by a presentation on how different sign languages mark gender. With a focus on German Sign Language I will give an insight on how current discussions on gender-fair language influence the way of signing and how language experts view this evolution.

Discursive shifts associated with coming out: A corpus-based study of news media texts on Ricky Martin (Heiko Motschenbacher, Bergen)

This paper presents research carried out as part of the project Linguistic Dimensions of Sexual Normativity. It seeks to contribute to a strand of recent research that has focused on the discursive construction of celebrities' public coming out in the media (King 2017, Magrath, Cleland & Anderson 2017) and conducts a corpus-based critical discourse analysis of the linguistic representation of Latino pop star Ricky Martin (Calafell 2007, Rivera Santana et al. 2010) in the media. Drawing on a corpus of English-language newspaper articles, the study seeks to investigate whether and how the language used to write about Ricky Martin has changed after his public coming out as a gay man in 2010. For this purpose, two sub-corpora (pre-2010, post-2010) are compared and various types of quantitative and qualitative analysis are carried out, using the corpus tool AntConc (Anthony 2018). These include an analysis of the keywords (see Baker 2004) resulting from a comparison of the frequency lists of the BEFORE and AFTER corpora, and an analysis of the concordance lines (see Carroll & Kowitz 1994) of the two terms *gay* and *homosexual**, which turn out to be key in AFTER. This combination of quantitative and qualitative corpus linguistic analysis sheds light on discursive shifts between the two datasets. The findings are discussed in relation to the theorisation of coming out (Chirrey 2003) and normativity (Motschenbacher 2014) in language and sexuality studies.

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Cisgender straight women as allies of queer language variation in Brazil (Eduardo Alves Vieira, Leiden)

Queer Linguistics is a recent study area that no longer has minority status. However, the discipline has been disproportionally introduced and studied in different countries and languages. Although scholars have been researching how queer/LGBTQIA+ communities use language worldwide since the 1970s, and the study of queer lexicon seems to be an overstudied subject within the field, the literature on the intersectionality of language, gender, and sexuality has been published predominantly in and about English. Likewise, these studies have focused primarily on how particular sexual identities use language (i.e., gays and lesbians), excluding participants from other dissident sexualities (asexual, bisexual) and non-hegemonic gender identities (transgender individuals), as well as cisgender straight people. Therefore, in this presentation, I analyze the sociolinguistic factors influencing the use of the Brazilian LGBTQIA+ dialect, aka Pajubá, by speakers who identify as female, cisgender, and straight. The data comes from an online Qualtrics survey taken by 387 cis-het women reporting on their attitudes and use of the dialect. This study confirms that these women use Pajubá and tend to convey messages of tolerance towards the LGBTQIA+ community.

Gender (bias) in medicine: A corpus-assisted discourse study of German radiology reports

(Karoline Irschara, Innsbruck)

Gender is a pervasive category in our daily lives, and language serves as a powerful means by which this category is continuously (re)produced. In health care, the impact of gender has been studied, inter alia, in doctor-patient communication (Wodak et al. 1990; Menz 2015), pain descriptions (Jaworska & Ryan 2018), and online patient feedback (Baker & Brookes 2021), but there are only few studies regarding the communication among health professionals themselves. This paper uses a Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS) approach to investigate gender as well as potential gender bias in radiology reports, which represent a form of professional, medical discourse. The database collected for this purpose consists of 332,901 German computed tomographies (cranial, thoracic, and whole-body CTs) which were extracted from *MedCorpInn*, a large medical corpus built within an interdisciplinary project between the University of Innsbruck and Innsbruck Medical University. To explore whether there are differences and/or subtle similarities (Taylor 2018; Brezina 2018) in the largely standardized reports on female vs. on male patients, a CADS-approach with a focus on language and gender is applied: Keywords, collocation and concordance techniques are utilized to provide an in-depth analysis of gender (bias) in the medical discourse under study.

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The debate on language and gender in the Spanish press (Susana Guerrero Salazar, Málaga)

This paper is part of the *DISMUPREN project: The metalinguistic discourse on "women and language" in the Spanish press: Analysis of the linguistic debate and its social repercussions*, whose aim is to reconstruct the history of this debate, to highlight the issues dealt with in the press at different times and to analyze linguistic ideologies. The metalinguistic discourse on "women and language" in the Spanish press has three stages: the first one runs from the end of the 19th century to the end of the 1970s; the second one from the 1970s to the end of the 20th century; and the third one covers the 21st century. The paper will address the issues discussed in each of these stages with respect to the historical context, focusing mainly on the most topical issues.

On gender stereotypes in Spanish proverbs (Benedicta Adokarley Lomotey, Accra)

Recent studies (e.g. Caldas-Coulthard, 2020) have shown that while feminist linguistic activities have been successful to some extent in mitigating gender discrimination in language, the successes achieved have been mainly at the lexical level whereas discursive practices that indicate underlying sexist beliefs continue to endure in most societies around the globe. Indeed, proverbs remain an excellent channel for the propagation of gender stereotypes in that they are considered as age-old truths, making it easy for them to evoke a certain form of social normality through discourse. The current study therefore seeks to critique androcentrism in proverbs by finding the connection between old arguments and new debates since linguistic discrimination is still a real-world problem. The author investigates the sustenance of gender bias within the Spanish context using insights from Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis and underpinnings from Connell's (Connell, 1995; Connell, 2005) theory of masculinities. By so doing I aim to address concerns of female subordination as well as challenges men and boys face in contemporary times. The analysis of proverbs shows that both factors work in tandem in sustaining the gender order.

Gender stereotypes in dictionaries: the potential conflict between the descriptive standards of lexicography and society's mandate (Carolin Müller-Spitzer, Mannheim)

Dictionaries are often a reflection of their time; their respective (socio-)historical context influences how the meaning of certain lexical units is described. This also applies to descriptions of personal terms such as man or woman. Lexicographers have a special responsibility to comprehensively investigate current language use before describing it in the dictionary. Accordingly, contemporary academic dictionaries are usually corpus-based. However, it is important to acknowledge that language is always embedded in cultural contexts. Our case study investigates differences in the linguistic contexts of the use of man and woman, drawing from a range of language collections (in our case fiction books, popular magazines and newspapers). We explain how potential differences in corpus construction would therefore influence the "reality"[1] depicted in the dictionary. In doing so, we address the far-reaching consequences that the choice of corpus-linguistic basis for an empirical dictionary has on semantic descriptions in dictionary entries. Furthermore, we situate the case study within the context of gender-linguistic issues and discuss how lexicographic teams can engage with how dictionaries might perpetuate traditional role concepts when describing language use.

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[1] What can be seen as "linguistic reality" is a very complex matter that goes beyond the scope of this paper. When we use in the following the term "linguistic reality", we are aware that texts or corpora are not a "description" or "representation" of this assumed reality, but serve to construct and interpret one possible part of this reality from language use (e.g. simply in reading or in specific work such as lexicography).

The role of gender stereotypes in the emergence of verbal violence (Silke Jansen, Erlangen)

This contribution examines the interplay of Gender and ethnic stereotypes in the emergence of verbal violence. It is based on a corpus of 52 interviews with Spanish speaking migrants from different Latin American countries who live in Germany. The participants were asked to recount "critical incidents", i.e. interactions in which they felt negatively affected by their interlocutor's communicative behavior. In those narratives in which gender was made relevant by the participants, reference to widespread stereotypes such as the "sexy Latina", the "Latin Lover" or the "Latin American housemaid" can be observed, which contain both an ethnic and a gender component. Using Goffmann's notion of face, as well as analytical tools from Speech Act Theory and Narrative Analysis, we will examine why and how the evocation of these stereotypes can threaten or even damage the participants' positive representation of the self, and thus be perceived as verbal violence. Special attention will be paid on the respective importance of gender and ethnicity in the narratives.

Beyond the binary: Psycholinguistic studies on how the gender asterisk in German is read and interpreted (Evelyn Ferstl, Freiburg)

In the German language all nouns carry grammatical gender. When a person's sex is irrelevant or unknown, the default is to use the masculine noun in a generic sense. The use of feminizing gender-fair language has been effective in reducing the resulting male bias in language (cf. Ferstl, 2022; Gygax et al., 2021). About 10 years ago the gender star has been introduced to refer to people of all gender identities. For this form an asterisk is inserted between the masculine word stem and the feminine suffix "-in" (e.g., "*Reporter*in*"). Recent results from a coherence judgment task (Körner et al., 2022) suggest that the gender star activates female representations. However, non-binary representations have not yet been investigated.

In this talk I will present results from two experiments: First, using a lexical decision task, we show that the gender star does not impede readability of person denoting nouns. Second, using a word-picture matching task we confirm that the asterisk is interpreted in an inclusive way, and overrides the salient feminine suffix.

These findings on the word level need to be supplemented by further studies using language in context (Ferstl, 2021), but they are a first step in providing scientific arguments for the public debate about gender-fair language in German.

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Language structures and gender stereotyped perception: the effect of differences in the level of grammatical gender between fully, semi-, and non-gendered languages (Jonathan Kim, Trondheim)

Gender stereotyped perception is often assumed to differ between fully, semi-, and non-gendered languages, but alternative suggestions have been made as to what this difference should be. To this end, the manner and degree to which grammatical gender impacts upon gender stereotyped perception across one fully (French), one semi- (Norwegian), and one non-gendered (Finnish) language were examined through a yes-no complex forced choice task. Participants were tasked with deciding whether a person introduced by a first name (e.g., Daniel) could be part of a group represented by the plural form of a role noun (e.g., soldiers, acrobats). Our results indicated that Norwegian speakers were the least susceptible to activating gender stereotypes, while French speakers were the most susceptible to doing so, with Finnish speakers in between. Importantly, French speakers' gender stereotyped perceptions were modulated by grammatical gender form (i.e., masculine vs. epicene).

A psycholinguistic study on the interpretation of the masculine generic and some alternatives in Spanish (Miriam Zapf, Erlangen)

The results of numerous psycholinguistic experiments on the perception of the so-called masculine generic in languages with grammatical gender suggest a strong associative connection between linguistic gender and perceived biological sex and/or social gender, resulting in a male-biased interpretation of masculine forms, and more neutral interpretations of alternative forms (cf., e.g., Braun et al. 1998, Heise 2000, Brauer/Landry 2008, Gygax et al. 2008, Kim et al. 2022). However, experiments on the Spanish language are still rare (cf. Perissinotto 1983, Núñez Cedeño 1999, Nissen 2013). Additionally, the perception of explicitly nonbinary forms (e.g., the asterisk in German or the morphemes {e} and {x} in Spanish) have received little attention until now. Another gap in research is the possible influence of person-related variables (like attitudes, own language use, etc.) on the perception of different forms of personal reference.

In this talk, I will present the results of a study carried out in Málaga/Spain, in which the interpretation of various forms of personal reference in Spanish was examined through two tasks: a free association task and a yes/no choice task. The collection of person-related variables in a questionnaire following the tasks allowed more far-reaching insights into the gender-related interpretation of different linguistic forms.

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