Part IV

Language and Local/Global Power
Language and Political Economy

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Introduction

One way to survey the study of language and political economy is to consider why language seems, more than linguistic anthropologists would like, to be left out of studies of political economy. This approach considers why language and economy have sometimes been taken to be opposed (e.g., in such formulations as base vs. superstructure), and then suggests strategies for overcoming the binary, theoretically and empirically. I will, below, briefly review these arguments. This article, however, takes a different approach; it asks why, at certain moments, debates about language are so central to discussions of political economy. It argues that if we understand language as one means among many of making meaning, we can better grasp both why or how language does (or does not) matter in different ways, to different kinds of people, at different times. Language is one particularly important means for the construction of relations of social difference and social inequality, but not the only one and not always the most important one. This chapter is constructed around a loosely chronological account of how capitalism, as an uneven world system, has been linked to particular ways of understanding language in the production of inequality. In the template I was given for writing it, I was asked to offer an overview of historical perspectives, and then critical current themes and future directions. But this chronological approach combines these, by asking us to regard the history of work on language with a fresh eye, and to be richly attentive to the ways that current approaches, taken as critical, may occasionally be collusive in changing political situations, as some past linguistic ideas were. It suggests that a historical eye – one that asks “Why this, why now?” – needs to suffuse all of our analytic accounts.

There are extended debates on the relationship between linguistic ideologies, practices and political economic forces (Coulmas 1992, Eagleton 2007, Friedrich 1989). Briefly, one approach, often called the base/superstructure model, suggests that economic forces shape all else – religion, cultural expression, political life, religious expression, and forms of consciousness. This is the view often associated with Marx (1859). Engels (1890) protested that Marx’s comments were often misread, that rather than saying that the economic element was the only determinant, he and Marx had argued that the ways that life was produced and reproduced were ultimately determining. Volosinov (1973), writing after the Russian Revolution of 1917, agreed. He critiqued earlier Marxists for ignoring language, but also linguists like Saussure for studying...
language as an abstract sign system, rather than as something involved in economic and other social struggles. He argued, instead, that the study of language was a key site for understanding economic struggles. Williams (1973, 1977) offered an even more profound challenge to the base/superstructure distinction (see also Bourdieu 1977).

Gal’s influential (1989) review of language and political economy argued that much sociolinguistic research since its origins in the 1960s could be seen as challenging both the separation of the linguistic sign from the material world, as well as the relationship of (socio)linguistic structures to individual or group strategies (p. 346). She argues that Gramsci, Volosinov and Williams show how language is central to how domination is achieved, and why subordinate groups accept the power of the dominant as legitimate. Gal notes, “Whether the term is hegemony, symbolic domination, oppositional culture, subjugated discourse, or heteroglossia, the central insight remains: Control of the representations of reality is not only a source of social power but therefore also a likely locus of conflict and struggle” (p. 348). (See Irvine 1989 for another useful review at the same time.) Scholars continue to debate these questions (compare Gal 2012, Heller 2010, and McGill 2013 for different positions on the relationship between base and superstructure and the relative independence of language ideologies).

Gal’s (1989) article proceeds with a rich overview of a variety of different ways in which sociolinguistic research illuminates these struggles, through studies of sociolinguistic variation, commodified language, literacy, institutional language, the construction of national standards, struggles about language in colonial settings, expressive genres, and the ways anthropological discourse is itself a dominant discourse, and not just a site of criticism for it. Arguably, the most detailed and lengthy section of the review focuses on the role of language in state formation, including the elaboration of national standards and the role of education in constructing hegemonically legitimate linguistic varieties. She also notes that although sociolinguistics has excelled at description of linguistic variation, a key challenge for the field remains explanation, which could be done by more carefully locating “the role of language in colonization, capitalist expansion, state-formation, class relations and political economic dependence” (p. 349). We also need, she argued, to do more work on active resistance of subordinate groups (p. 354) (see also Huayhua, this volume). In this review, I take stock of some of the work in the twenty-five years since her review, noting the irony that her definitive review was published in 1989, often construed as a year marking the conclusion of a set of significant changes in the 1970s and 1980s, as the Berlin Wall fell, Western nations moved from more welfarist regimes to neoliberal states, Soviet and Chinese communist governments adopted a more marketized face and international agencies required more marked economic restructuring plans for countries seeking development aid (Harvey 2005).

Building on the imperative to further understand how legitimation of inequity occurs, as well as to challenge overly reductionist accounts of the manipulation of people by ruling class interests, a significant site for work in linguistic anthropology through the 1990s was a focus on ideology, which was seen as a way “to relate the micro-culture of communicative action to political economic considerations of power and social inequality” (Woolard 1998: 27). See Kroskrity, this volume, for a more detailed review. While the term “language ideologies” is useful precisely because it facilitates conversations amongst people who can have remarkably different approaches to linguistic study (see Woolard 1998), Philips (1998) cautioned that ideology should not be merely substituted for culture or worldview; because “[i]deology carries with it connotations of the exercise of power primarily because Marxist writings about ideology and reactions to them in the nineteenth century have given the term those connotations” (p. 213). Some explicit and implicit critiques of what a focus on language ideology can facilitate are evident in the recent concentration of work on language and materialism.
(Shankar and Cavanaugh 2012; see also Holborrow 2015). Studies of language and materialism also, however, display a broad and ecumenical approach, with some studies attentive to power and inequity while others are not (see Eagleton 1989 for early notes on this).

The project of critical analysis does not stop with asserting the materiality of language; this is where the project of developing a critique of capitalism starts. This requires investigating precisely the kinds of dilemmas, challenges and contradictions thrown up in different places and times by, variously, mercantile, industrial, monopoly and finance capitalism that shape, and are shaped by, ideologies and practices of language, with an eye to analyzing the inequities created or rationalized by such ideologies and practices. This chapter, therefore, is organized historically rather than thematically, to see what kinds of questions arise at particular moments, and to think about continuities and discontinuities, with particular attention paid to the twentieth and early twenty-first century. I give more attention to the topics that have received least attention, as well as to building some linkages between literatures that are often taken as discrete. Such an approach certainly raises the question of how periodization is defined, and from whose perspective. These questions are helpful in a more historicizing account. Linguistic anthropology has taken as its objects of study a wide-ranging set of sites and people, but the approach itself is one developed within, and still largely articulated within, Western, and even American, institutions (witness the affiliation of authors published in the Journal of Linguistic Anthropology). A key step in historicizing studies more carefully is also deprovincializing them (Bauman and Briggs 2003, Chakrabarty 2000). This step is also a necessary first move in developing a more inclusive international dialogue – on which, more at the end.

Language and Colonialism

Edward Said has analyzed how both Marx and Williams fail to take into account the central role of European imperialism in shaping European capitalism, social formations and knowledge production. His book Orientalism (1978) catalyzed a new wave of studies of colonialism. Said argued that while military, political and economic policies had dominated academic studies of colonialism, his contribution was to consider the role that knowledge and culture play too. Said defines Orientalism as

... a way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient’s special place in European Western experience. ... Orientalism expresses and represents that part culturally and even ideologically as a mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles.

Said (1978: 1–2)

In Orientalism, Said asks how a variety of disciplines, including, history, biology, political theory, economic theory and literature all come into the service of imperialism. Comparative linguistics attracts particular attention from him, for the ways it construes people as separate, and in distinct genealogical and hierarchical relationships to one another. Others have built on this work. For instance, Trautmann’s superb trilogy (1997, 2005, 2006) of works on linguistic scholarship in British-occupied India looks at the ways British linguistic innovations, including the study of phonetics, were often indebted to Indian traditions of linguistic scholarship in ways that remain largely unacknowledged, as he traces the varying meanings of Aryan, notions that started out to elaborate ideas of kinship between Europeans and Indians, and were narrowed to focus on white superiority. As Gilmour writes, “the development of colonial linguistics was fundamental to strategies by which Westerners interpreted the world, categorized its peoples, and affirmed
the superiority of their own position within it” (2006: 2). How did and does language study and instruction help construct, maintain and consolidate imperial power? What notions of language are developed in colonial and imperial settings? How do concepts of nation evolve with imperial rule?

Said’s account begins with the first wave of European imperialism, a story that begins in the fifteenth century. There has been some critical and compelling work done on this period (Hanks 2010, Errington 2008, Mannheim 1991, Rafael 1988). For the purposes of considering how we can continue to deepen and broaden our historical approach, I will focus here on the second wave of European imperialism, co-extensive with a period of intensive nation-building and beginning at the end of the nineteenth century, when capitalism in Europe was facing one of its periodic crises (Hobsbawm 1987). The number of industrial producers and industrial economies was growing rapidly, and technological advances improved the output of industry, but because a significant market for consumption had not yet developed (strikingly, the advertising industry evolved in this period, as a way of identifying and creating needs), prices and profits dropped. Ideas of nation, standards and national language policy became extensively elaborated in this period, as governments used four strategies to address this crisis: (1) protectionism, insulating industries in the nation from competition, as well as developing domestic markets; (2) scientific management, detailed regulations for production processes and laborers’ actions, in order to increase productivity (see Urciuoli and LaDousa 2013 on Taylorism and language); (3) monopoly, combining potential competitors to make it possible to raise prices without risk of competition; and (4) imperialism, formal conquest, annexation and administration of territories to control access to raw materials, markets, and people. The word imperialism was coined in British politics in the 1870s (Hobsbawm 1987: 60). Conquest of other countries helped alleviate class tensions produced by industrialization, in part by improving economic conditions at home and offering sites where dissatisfied Europeans could migrate to find economic opportunities, but also by encouraging the disenfranchised to identify with nation, and increasingly race, rather than focus on class divisions and conflict (Hobsbawm 1987: 69). Developing national, often monoglot, linguistic standards was part of this European nation-building. Hierarchized notions of racialized difference, which helped to rationalize colonial rule, were sharpened in a number of sciences of the time, including linguistics.

By 1914, one quarter of the world outside Europe and the Americas was divided into territories formally controlled by a handful of countries, specifically Britain, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, the United States and Japan (Hobsbawm 1987: 57–59). By the end of World War I, 85 percent of the world was colonized by Europe (Said 1978: 123). The earlier pre-industrial empires of Spain and Portugal were in some cases carved up by other imperial powers, and in others remained. Two major areas of the world, Africa and the Pacific, were comprehensively divided up. A number of studies have examined debates about what the languages of rule should be (the colonial language, a local language, a local lingua franca). Different colonial powers had different official approaches, though colonial officials, businessmen and missionaries often had conflicting views. Linguistics often played a key role in rationalizing racialized difference and colonial rule. For some helpful reviews see Errington (2008), Fabian (1986), and Gilmour (2006).

One of the domains of language and political economy perhaps best studied in the overall literatures is the development of European nations, and the forms of linguistic homogenization and standardization linked with these national movements at this same time. However, sociolinguistics has yet to take on a move more widely seen in colonial, post-colonial and anti-colonial studies: more fully integrating metropole and colony into one field (see Stoler and Cooper 1997). In other fields, this has meant not assuming nations as fully formed and shaping
imperialism, but rather nations emerging in the context of imperialism. In linguistic anthropology, this could involve:

- tracing actors and ideologies from one site to another in one colonial domain (for instance, considering how French policy in Algeria and Vietnam was like and unlike policy in Brittany, and indeed shaped metropolitan policy);
- looking at linkages between disparate sites (for instance, exploring how English language instruction pioneered by US missionaries for nineteenth-century industrial education in Hawaiian schools was transplanted to the mainland as a model for the education of African-Americans, and Native Americans, and then returned to the Pacific during the US colonization of the Philippines);
- examining the import of the simultaneity of the codification of Spanish and its teaching in the early Spanish colonies;
- considering linkages between subaltern groups that drew on each other’s resistance strategies, including linguistic ones, in thinking about overthrowing colonial rule (compare exchanges between Indian and Irish nationalists (Chandra 2012), or note how francophone activists in Canada in the 1960s compared themselves to Black nationalists elsewhere); and
- more carefully linking accounts of immigration related to various colonial developments and immigrant interactions with indigenous groups in complex imperial circuits.

Notions of race were, of course, not simply perpetuated by but critiqued in linguistic anthropology. A key challenge came from the work of Franz Boas and his students (Darnell 2001). In the United States, in the late nineteenth century, industrial capitalism was seen as tearing the fabric of rural society, large numbers of immigrants coming from southern and eastern European countries gave rise to eugenics movements for racial purification; there were backlashes against the achievements made by African-Americans after the Civil War era; wars continued between the US military and Natives defending territory; and the United States became involved in overseas colonialism in Guam, Hawai’i, Panama, Puerto Rico, the Philippines and Samoa. Departments of American anthropology, which included linguistic study as one of four fields (alongside physical anthropology, ethnology and archaeology), were founded at the same time. A key figure in the professionalization of anthropology, and in establishing the field of linguistic anthropology as one of anthropology’s four fields, was Franz Boas, a German-born Jew who moved to the United States in the late 1880s. At Columbia, he trained a number of anthropologists, including Ruth Benedict, Zora Neale Hurston, Alfred Kroeber, Robert Lowie, Margaret Mead and Edward Sapir, who played key roles in establishing anthropology as an intellectual field and who also fostered its growth at other universities like California, Berkeley, Chicago and Yale. Boas’s work ranged widely: he wrote on the language and culture of Northwest Coast Indians, on the bodies and cultures of American immigrants, especially those from southern and eastern Europe, on the position of “Negroes” in American society and their cultural achievements in Africa, and on race-mixing. He critiqued eugenics, Nazi science, anti-Semitism, miscegenation statutes, and concepts of nationalism. In Boas (1911) he separated notions of language, culture and race, arguing that each pursues a different historical trajectory. Such a notion directly critiqued ideas of nationalism (like Herder’s) that described, and prescribed, these as unified. He challenged evolutionary ideas of “primitive” language, such as those evident in some of the accounts of missionary and comparative linguistics in southern Africa, arguing that this was a matter of European observers transferring their own analytic biases onto the perception of cultural material. Nonetheless, a biography by his former student, Melville Herskovits (1953), an illustrious anthropologist of the African diaspora, noted that “[m]atters of colonial rule touched
him lightly” (p. 112). Bauman and Briggs (2003) elucidate Boas’s theories of language and their role in challenging evolutionary concepts, but also, ultimately, show some of their limitations, arguing that “Boas’s cosmopolitanism was friendly to capitalism”, since he saw commerce, science and art as fostering ties that would bind mankind together, and he “denounced imperialism and colonialism, but he did so on cultural and political grounds; opposing them did not lead Boas to question the logic of capital” (p. 290).

The rivalries between the imperial powers eventually led to World War I (1914–1918). strikingly, some of the first clashes were between British, French and German colonial forces in Africa – which ended with the dismantling of the German, Austro-Hungarian, Russian, and Ottoman empires, the creation of many new European nations and significant transformation of the colonial landscape. Continuing capitalist crises led to both communist and fascist revolutions. Space here does not permit a full review of the ways that linguistic ideas forged in the Soviet Union and its satellites, and in communist China, questioned capitalism, class distinctions and Western imperialism, as other forms of expansionism were ratified. A number of these concepts also raised key questions about how to understand the relationship of language and political economy that were not evident in Western discussions until the 1960s (and, indeed, the translation of some of these works was key to many of the discussions that led to the rise of sociolinguistics at that time). Some key works that deserve further consideration, however, or that have already raised some significant questions, include: Brandist (2003), Lähteenmaki (2006), Stalin (1951), and Zhou (2004).

Language and Fascism

As Arendt (1968) argued in her landmark integration of European histories of anti-Semitism, imperialism and totalitarianism, fascism in Europe is a product of the second wave of European imperialism that began in the late nineteenth century, as well as of the form of nationalism, also shaped by imperialism, in which the equation between language = nation = race is taken to its most extreme and violent form. Fascism also tried to resolve, in the most isolationist, genocidal and racist way possible, the contradictions that imperialism raises: the creation of racial proximities and interactions, in spheres ranging from families and children to politics and trade, as well as shared languages, in the context of occupation and claims to racial superiority. A focus on imperialist glory, and national unity, helped redress class antagonisms arising in the wake of industrial capitalism, substituting notions of national/racial superiority for class consciousness and solidarity. Thomas (2014) argues that Italy, Germany and Japan did not become fascist because they were not modern, but because they were modern. Studying fascism helps us to examine contemporary forms of racism, and forms of discontent that are expressed, partially, as racism, and consider the dynamics under which a fascist politics might emerge now (see Eley 2013, Woodley 2012).

In a recent and superb master’s thesis, Sheppard (2014) notes that there are two key questions to ask of linguistic ideologies and practices under fascist regimes: (1) how they draw on linguistic ideologies to elaborate notions of race and nation, and (2) how they go about “creating new sensibilities . . . as well as new subjectivities” (p. 1) (see also Faye 1964, Klemperer 2000, Orwell 1995). National Socialism in Germany has received the most attention, and so these notes also rely heavily on that case, without assuming it can be easily extrapolated to other sites.

The lack of a unified German state before 1871 meant the task of unification seemed more urgent for nationalists, especially in light of increasing German migration in the wake of industrialization’s economic disruptions and the putative dangers of foreign influence linked to German’s imperial presence in Africa and the Pacific (Townson 1992). Germany was hard-hit
by World War I, with restrictions placed on its military forces, the surrender of European territory and all of its overseas colonies, and high expenses for reparations. Strikingly, it was in the context of this more extreme anxiety about national identity that Jews, a group seen as distinctively cosmopolitan and not attending to norms of nation states, were seen as threatening. National Socialism was seen as a response both to the problems with capitalism and the concerns about communism (Hutton 2005). However, as Sheppard notes, “What National Socialism promised then was not in the end a revision of the economic system in order to achieve a more equitable re-distribution of the goods of production . . . . Class distinctions would not disappear, but they would be reinterpreted . . . . Economic equality would be substituted with social egalitarianism . . . .” (2014: 16). The Nazi concept of the Volksgemeinschaft – “people’s community” – was central to the definition of “Germany” in the interwar years, drawing its boundaries between “races” rather than classes.

Linguistic and other scholarship (especially biological and genetic) had a critical role to play in defining who was German, and who was not. Strikingly, though Said (1978) focuses on the development of comparative linguistics in France and England, it was Germany that was generally seen as the key and most influential site for the elaboration of this work. Some of the earliest articulations of the notion of Volkegeist, or “spirit of the people,” or “national character,” come from Herder and Humboldt, who were making sense of human diversity in the light of European expansion (Bauman and Briggs 2003). Herder focused more on global unity, while Humboldt’s work on linguistic diversity argued for the different natures of different people, as well as the fact that certain languages were more successful than others in ways that easily led to hierarchized notions of difference. Philologist Jacob Grimm also studied contemporary diversity in order to reconstruct a unified golden age, with a single German people and a single German language (Bauman and Briggs 2003). Hutton’s (2005) landmark work shows how ideologies of Muttersprache, “mother tongue,” were the ideologies of language through which fascist ideas of kinship, national identity and unity were built. With the German empire lost after World War I, the concerns about the purity of Germany were focused intensively on the internal others, European Jews, who were all the more dangerous because their differences were sometimes racially “invisible.” The dilemma, as raised even in Mein Kampf, was that there was no correspondence between the “racial” boundaries marked out by racial anthropology and linguistics; the task, therefore, was taken to be to make them congruent. But which should be prioritized? Hutton (2005) argues that eventually a division of labour emerged between a deterministic race theory based on genetics, and a voluntarist and teleological variety of linguistics.

There is significant work to do on how German fascism is like and unlike other fascisms, with the Italian and Spanish cases notably interacting with Catholicism in complex ways. In the Italian case, race was pre-empted by language as the primary determinant of membership, because of the need to forge a sense of shared identity from a highly regionalized population (Golino 1994, Sheppard 2014, Wodak and Richardson 2012), a project that focused the construction of the new Italian nation as the heir of imperial Rome. Francoist Spain pursued yet another strategy in which the idea of “race”, while invoked, had less to do with biology than traditional Spanish history, culture and language. Sheppard notes that the Spanish empire had only recently been lost, in 1898, and this gave rise to a notion of hispanism, a supernational notion which suggested that Spain’s unique culture was embodied in Castilian, an argument that allowed Spain to lay claim to a cultural continuity, if not military oversight, with former colonies, as it was used to manage internal diversity (Guibernau 2004, Pinto 2004).

There are continuing debates about whether to understand imperial Japan as fascist, though Thomas (2014) argues, compellingly, that in Japan there was not a violent overthrow of the government, but a violent redefinition of it, in which rightwing leadership and ultra-rightwing
popular movements embraced a new idea of the emperor to unify the nation, heal its dislocations and suppress the left. Strikingly, Thomas argues, this state of exception was coded as unexceptional, in contrast with Germany, so the ideological focus was on continuity and tradition, rather than temporal rupture. The ways in which this shaped Japanese linguistic study remains to be fully unpacked, though we can take some cues from the ways that Inoue (2006), working at a slightly earlier period, challenges histories of Japanese women’s language as linked to time immemorial rather than particular moments of state and capitalist crisis.

Sociolinguistic work has begun to consider how histories of fascism are invoked – or often euphemized and erased – in contemporary European politics, and the implications of this. A recent edited collection (Wodak and Richardson 2012; see also Wodak, Khosravinik and Mral 2013 on the discourse of rightwing populism) looks at the ways that political ‘rebranding’ has taken place across Europe, wherein parties with fascist political predecessors in Austria, France, Germany, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom both orient towards, and simultaneously deny, any continuity with arguments and policies of previous movements (see Moralejo 2012 for a thoughtful review noting that fascist discourses may be better approached not as failures of democracy, but in economic terms, as evidence of crises in capitalism). Debates about citizenship and migration, integration and assimilation in Europe and elsewhere, as well as moral panics about terrorism and diversity, continue to both perpetuate and challenge homogenized notions of nation (for related reviews, see other chapters in this volume, including: Baugh, Van Dijk, Huayhua, Pujolar, Chun and Lo, and Wodak).

After World War II ended in 1945, many countries in Africa, Asia and the Pacific gained their political independence; others were incorporated in various, often still contested, ways. The United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization maintains a list of countries that remain under imperial control (countries some call non-decolonized), with the aim of helping to eradicate colonialism, though even this list is contentious (for instance, it excludes many indigenous groups in settler colonial states). Linguistic anthropology and sociolinguistics were central to language planning in the new nations that became independent after World War II (see, e.g., Fishman 1972, Fishman, Ferguson and Das Gupta 1968); this work deserves further attention, and further articulation with other critical accounts of development. Similarly, many other anthropologists participated in post-war development schemes. John Gumperz was part of a large project in India, and though he has written of the ways long-standing Indian linguistic traditions influenced his work, there is more to do on this and the impact of development more broadly on our field (cf. Gupta 2012 on American anthropologists and India during this period).

Language and the Cold War

After World War II, and the revelation of genocidal atrocities linked to fascist notions of race, language and nation, new ideas of race, nation and imperialism shaped international discussions. An emerging body of literature explores the way that Cold War antinomies between capitalism and communism shaped scientific and social scientific inquiry (Chomsky 1997, Cohen-Cole 2003, Martin-Nielsen 2009, 2010, Simpson 1994, Solovey and Cravens 2012). Some of this work has begun to consider how linguistics was shaped by the Cold War, though there is much more to be done, and much of the effort has thus far focused on the United States. We see the rise in this period of more universalist approaches to understanding language, which sociolinguists and linguistic anthropologists then challenge, especially from the 1960s forward. But it is important to note the ways that these approaches arose at least in part as a response to the genocidal concepts of language, race and difference that emerged in fascist discourses, and to historize them as well.
During World War II, language expertise came to be seen as strategic for a variety of military, political and economic ends. After the war, linguistics was funded as never before in the United States, with support passing from philanthropic organizations to the government, and research being funded by the army, the navy, the air force, the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation. Linguistics departments were founded, with significant government support. In 1946 there were no linguistics departments; by 1965 there were close to 30; by 1970 there were 135. Professional societies grew astronomically (the Linguistic Society of America quintupled between 1950 and 1970), and language teaching was also funded after the passage of the National Defense Education Act, designed to remedy the skills of American students in three strategic areas: mathematics, science and foreign languages (Martin-Nielsen 2010).

Linguistic research was key to projects ranging from code-breaking to information retrieval, but the defining project of linguistics in the post-war period was machine translation, which was meant to enable more rapid access to information written in “the languages of the scientifically creative cultures,” a project in which the Soviet Union was reputed to be markedly ahead (Martin-Nielsen 2010: 142). Laboratories to study machine translation were established at universities like MIT, Berkeley and Georgetown, and in non-profit think tanks. This focus also helps explain the emergence of the centrality of syntax to linguistic inquiry: “The premise of postwar machine translation was to equip a computer with a set of formal rules which, when applied to an input text in one language (usually Russian or German), would produce an output translation in another language, usually English. These rules worked not by deciphering the meaning of the input text, but by using knowledge of syntactic structure to build an output translation . . . ." (Martin-Nielsen 2010: 142). Many linguists thus turned to the development of formal rule-based syntactic theories, and computational applications of these, as well as to thinking about discourse analysis. Two scholars notable in this regard were Zellig Harris, and his star student, Noam Chomsky. Both were immersed in, and significantly influenced by, socialist forms of Zionism (some of which might not be understood as Zionism now), and were thus thinking through the continuing implications of fascism, communism and toxic forms of nationalism in Europe. Both Harris and Chomsky were in departments and universities that benefited significantly from Cold War funding.

The Russian revolution led to significant debates about socialism and nationalism, and a dramatic change in the historical situation of the Jews (Harshav 1999). Jewish revolutionaries found themselves in a double bind, caught between those who had a vision for a better future and the populist aspirations of revolutionary groups, with some members arguing that pogroms were legitimate expressions of peasants’ critique of oppressors. Massive migrations to escape pogroms had a significant impact on many aspects of American life, including linguistics. The families of Zellig Harris and Noam Chomsky were part of these immense population movements. Both began their careers with studies of Hebrew linguistics.

As an undergraduate at the University of Pennsylvania, Harris became a member of Avukah, a student socialist Zionist group that expanded with the anti-fascist, anti-Bolshevik events of the 1930s. The goal of the literate, educated, articulate radicals was to de-fool themselves, and then help de-fool others (Barsky 2010: 44). Significantly, by the mid-1940s, Avukah’s leftist Zionist analysis mentioned the links between their work and a variety of other liberation struggles, seeing Black struggles against Jim Crow and Jewish struggles against anti-Semitism as analogous, and noting what could be learned to aid thinking about British colonialism in Palestine from critiques of British colonialism in India (Barsky 2010: 247–248). Harris and others engaged in a long-term, wide-ranging operation called the Frame of Reference project, which resulted in the posthumous publication of a book entitled *The Transformation of Capitalist Society* (1997).
The book aimed at moving out of capitalism by having more nearly equal allocations of resources, more efficient production and a lack of controlling and controlled behavior (Barsky 2010: 269). Science, and more reliable and rational linguistic communication, was seen as the solution. This led to Harris’ support for logical theories of language and information, including structural linguistics and machine translation, work funded by the National Science Foundation, the Air Force Psychological Research Division, IBM and Bell Laboratories. Students were assigned various related projects in discourse analysis (e.g. investigating the linguistic techniques used in influential US magazines to slant discussions of the new Labour government in the United Kingdom). One talented student was assigned a linguistic analysis of Sidney Hook’s writings from the time when he was a communist to when he became an anti-communist. That student was Noam Chomsky.

Scholars who are interested in sociolinguistic approaches are often puzzled by what they see as the paradox of Chomsky: a scholar who has generated some of the most searingly critical analyses of media and political discourse that exist, in books such as *Manufacturing Consent*, while regularly abjuring any social influence on language form. However, it is possible to see the ways that these are united in the way Chomsky understands human nature, language and freedom. In the aftermath of the extreme culturally relativist and genocidal policies associated with European fascism in the mid-twentieth century, new versions of linguistic thought emerged that downplayed difference. In Chomsky-influenced grammatical theory, the theory of human nature underlying the linguistic theory has strong liberal underpinnings; variations among humans are seen as fairly minor when compared with the overwhelming similarities that unite humans as a species (Otero 1988: 154). Rather than emphasizing rationality as the shared human trait (as eighteenth- and nineteenth-century liberal theorists did), Chomsky instead focuses on the human yearning for freedom as a critique of forms of behaviorist psychology that he saw as being used to control the masses (Chomsky 1959; Barsky 1997: 99). Chomsky has noted that he learned about the links between anarchism and classical liberalism from visits to the office of the Yiddish-language anarchist journal *Freie Arbeiter Stimme*, and after reading George Orwell, he became fascinated by the anarcho-syndicalist communes that had been set up during the Spanish Civil War as an example of a working libertarian society, the type of society that continues to remain his ideal (Barsky 1997: 26).

As linguists and other activists became increasingly uncomfortable with military patronage and American foreign policy, these frustrations were played out in discussions of linguistic theory, in debates Roy Harris has called *The Linguistics Wars* (see Martin-Nielsen 2010: 149). Martin-Nielsen notes that many critics of Chomsky’s linguistics program argued that heavy military investment at MIT gave Chomsky and his MIT colleagues an unfair advantage. Sociolinguists and linguistic anthropologists, meanwhile, critiqued the lack of social context in formal linguistic theory, and the notions of competence and performance it assumed (see key works by John Gumperz, Dell Hymes, and William Labov – and see Murray 1994, for a significant and helpful sociological account of this period).

Both Harris and Chomsky were prepared for public critique and even imprisonment, though both were protected to some degree by tenured positions. During the Cold War period, however, other linguists were much more publicly assailed. Price (2004) draws on over 30,000 pages of FBI and other government documents to note “how the repressive post-war McCarthy era shaped and dulled what might have been a significant and vital anthropological critique of race, class and the inadequacies of global capitalism” (p. xi). The inability to read certain works by the Bakhtin circle until the late 1960s could be seen as one example of a Cold War effect (due to internal policy in the Soviet Union as well as international dynamics), but so too were critiques of certain scholars. Two linguistic anthropologists markedly affected were Melville Jacobs and Morris Swadesh.
Jacobs studied under Franz Boas, and was the author of 15 books, most of them documenting and preserving Native American languages of the Pacific Northwest. Jacobs, like Boas, was Jewish, and concerned about anti-Semitism, fascism and racism, including Japanese-American internment during World War II and bills to prevent racial intermarriage. His 1947 book with Bernhard Stern on general anthropology argued, as did many Boasians, for the plasticity of human behavior and criticized racism and the cultural biases of IQ tests. Jacobs was subjected to two public loyalty trials, and decades of FBI persecution and surveillance. In 1947 hearings on what was believed to be a ring of communist professors at the University of Washington, Jacobs was called in front of the Washington State Interim Committee on Un-American Activities. Price argues that afterwards, “[t]hroughout the 1950s and into the early 1960s Jacobs became more subdued in his academic writings on race, and his public appearances advocating racial equality occurred much less frequently” (Price 2004: 97).

Although Jacobs retained his tenured job, those like Morris Swadesh who were in more precarious academic positions lost theirs. Throughout the 1930s Swadesh studied more than twenty indigenous languages in Canada, the United States, and Mexico. His FBI file also recorded his marching in the May Day parade, a letter of protest to the New Jersey governor about the trial of six African-Americans accused of a murder, and participation in a rally in favour of Paul Robeson. Swadesh was an untenured professor who worked on a year-to-year contract. In 1949 he was suddenly notified that he would not be reappointed. He argued that this was a flagrant violation of academic freedom, and also evidence of anti-Semitic racism. He lost his job, however, and ultimately moved to Mexico in 1956. It was not just Swadesh, but those who were seen as supporting him who would be affected. Dell Hymes, in an interview with Price, speculated that Cold War politics could have played a role in Harvard’s rejection of his tenure file, given subscriptions he had to leftwing journals, an invitation he arranged for Swadesh to give a talk, and his public attendance at meetings on how to revive the left (Price 2004: 343–344). Even avid critics of communism were not immune from persecution. McElhinny (2014) draws on documents shared by Price to review the surveillance of Roman Jakobson. In one interview with an FBI agent, Jakobson felt compelled to give the agent detailed critical quotations about himself in print in publications from Russia, satellite nations and China, to demonstrate his anti-communist stances. The kind of formal analysis, structuralism, which Jakobson centrally developed, is repeatedly labelled in these publications as bourgeois, reactionary and explicitly opposed to Marxism and materialist accounts. This work raises some important questions about which linguistic and anthropological interpretations might have been particularly feasible in the Cold War United States, and how these continue to shape accounts of language through the 1960s, and even now, including those with a more self-evidently sociological or anthropological bent.

**Language and Neoliberalism**

In much recent scholarship, globalization has been offered as an explanation for the changing ways that people understand interactions and social relations, though, as we have seen, global interactions are not new (see Jacquemet, this volume); we need, therefore, to capture more precisely what characterizes current interactions. Harvey (1989) conceptualizes globalization as changing experiences of space and time, shaped by the periodic crises of capitalist over-accumulation. He argues that in Western economies the Fordist regime of mass production of standardized items became so successful and efficient that it began to overproduce, leading to the lay-off of workers and a reduced demand for products. Companies moved operations to new countries to reduce costs. Serious discussions of productivity, efficiency and audit have proliferated for the
same reason (Urciuoli and LaDousa 2013). A post-Fordist regime of flexible accumulation has emerged in its place, with a focus on adjustable labour processes and production arrangements, and consumption focused on niche markets vs. mass production, all of which have transnational implications. Changing notions of the global and local are underpinned by neoliberalism, defined as “a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade” (Harvey 2005: 2); however, neoliberalism is not a description of social reality but a claim on the future (Fairclough 2000). Proponents of neoliberalism attempt to transform divisions of labour, welfare provisions, reproductive activities and “habits of the heart” (Harvey 2005: 3).

A number of recent works in sociolinguistic and linguistic anthropology (Block and Cameron 2002, Blommaert 2010, Coupland 2003, Heller 2003, Holborrow 2015, Leap and Boellstorff 2004, McElhinny 2007) consider the ways neoliberalization and globalization are leading to new ways of understanding language, as well as to the creation of new identities for workers, parents, students, citizens and consumers. In a pivotal collection, Heller and Duchêne (2012) argue that language plays a particularly central role at this moment because of its function in the regulation and legitimization of political economic spaces (p. 3). Language also plays a key role in a range of enterprises in which language may or may not be imagined as the primary work or commodity (see Heller 2010 on tourism, advertising, language teaching, translation, call centres and performance art). In this section, I will quickly review research on language and neoliberalism in four realms: definitions of personhood, labour, consumption and commodification, and nations.5

**Personhood**

The artist Jay Z was recently quoted as saying, “I am not a businessman, I am a business, man!” This comment neatly encapsulates the changes that neoliberalism might require in personhood – from a version where work is a portion of one’s life to being all of one’s life (Gershon 2011). “Language work, particularly in neoliberal regimes, presupposes the channeling of employee sociality and . . . subjectivity into company interests” (Urciuoli and LaDousa 2013: 176). Soft skills, or the ability to align oneself with certain people, tasks or situations, become emphasized (Allan 2014, Bell 2013, Urciuoli 2008); putative lack of such skills can be used to blame workers rather than structural conditions for un- or under-employment. A view of personhood as responsible, autonomous, self-sufficient and entrepreneurial leads, simultaneously, to a celebration of choice and self-realization through consumption, as well as a focus on diseases of the will, or failures of self-control. As affect becomes commodified, a focus also emerges on parsing authenticity and sincerity (see essays in Gal and Woolard 2001), as well as other affective stances; a number of recent sociolinguistic studies have thus recently returned to examining language and emotion (see McElhinny 2010).

Linguistic anthropological and sociolinguistic studies in a variety of different sites have attempted to consider how and where neoliberal changes of heart are actively engineered, in both capitalist and former communist countries. This is evident in the attempt to engineer work sensibilities amongst welfare recipients in New Zealand (Kingfisher 2006), and in ways that the attitudes of US workers towards work conditions are managed, without better pay or working conditions (Ducey 2007), and in the emergence of new words for talking about self-responsibility (Inoue 2007). See also Richard and Rudnyckyj (2009) on how grassroots networks in Mexico forge solidarity transnational networks with foreign donors and on how a Jakarta steel company attempted to use a spiritual practice to train workers in a manner that was
more disciplined and emotionally open. Lempert (2006) reports on changes in the ideas of moral discipline among Tibetan Buddhist monks in India as neoliberal ideologies about civility take hold, and Matza (2009) on the deployment of neoliberal technologies in host–caller exchanges on a Moscow talk show. Wilce and Janigsen (2014) and Brison (2014) document the rise of new emotional pedagogies which are circulated internationally, with Brison noting some of the contradictions and continuities between pedagogies for elite children in Fijian that educate them in Christian ways for capitalist roles. Language, affect and self are managed in the restructuring of socialist states as well, from workers’ interactions in the transition from Maoist planned economy to Dengist market economy (Yang 2006, 2007) to résumé workshops for workers in the Slovak Republic (Larson 2008).

Labour

From the end of World War II until the early 1970s, the old industrial mass-market capitalism in Western countries had large national markets for consumer goods (Gee et al. 1996). As markets became more heavily saturated with consumer goods, and industrial work moved to countries in the Global South, companies began to focus on creating new kinds of consumers and new sorts of desires, and they retooled workforces accordingly (Urciuoli and LaDousa 2013). Communication and affect are increasingly central in service jobs in health care, education, finance, entertainment, and advertising, where for the workers and their clients the production of feelings of well-being and even passion are key (Hardt 1999). While older studies of language and work tended to emphasize talk in medical, legal, therapeutic, and educational professions in ways that largely neglected other work sites, the new research examines a wider range of occupations in the interests of studying tertiarization, and the rise of the significance of service work in countries from which industries have fled. Nonetheless language in the primary and secondary sectors (resource extraction/agriculture, and the processing of these products in factories and warehouses) remains a largely neglected topic in linguistic anthropology, a gap that perhaps shares the ideologies of institutions that do not perceive linguistic practice and form as part of their responsibility.

The rise of research on language and landscape, and language and environment, sometimes called ecolinguistics, explicitly addresses the impact of increasingly destructive practices in the primary sector, but sometimes only implicitly articulates these within political economic frameworks (Myerson and Rydin 1996, Muhlhausler and Peace 2006). Work reporting emergent trends examines how companies manage their image and publicity (Benson and Hirsch 2010, Benton and Short 1999); the linguistic training of previously marginalized workers for such industries (Bell 2013); clashes over the meaning of water and landscape, often within the context of privatization or shifts from uses for production to consumption/leisure (Strang 2004); and the transition from socialist land reform to neoliberal pastoralism (Zukosky 2008).

Sectors in which workers and clients are often in or from different regions, classes and nations, like call centres and domestic work, get particular, even fetishized, attention. Consider studies of the rise of communication factories (call centres), where the Fordist logic of the assembly line governs interactional routines, and certain personality traits are set as industry standards in England (Cameron 2000), francophone Canada (Roy 2003), India (Mirchandani 2012), and the Philippines (Salonga 2010). Heller (2010) insightfully argues that call centres attract such attention because they are symbols of the transition from industrial, white, masculine, working-class, first-world production to feminized, racialized, “off-shore” work. Domestic work is a counterpart in the realm of reproduction, and thus studies of paid caregiving have aroused particular interest because of the ways they highlight the interaction of the negative impact of structural
adjustment policies in the Global South with the privatization of health, elder care and child care in the Global North and the tragic irony of Third World women supporting their own families by leaving them to care for wealthier households, which themselves become more multicultural and cross-class as a result (see, e.g., England and Stiell 1997, Lorente 2007). The provision of other forms of reproductive labour, previously understood as unpaid labour in many feminist analyses in the 1980s, has also become significantly more commodified (Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2002). See, for instance, Di Leonardo (1987) on paid greeting cards and the work of kinship, Hall (1995) on paying for sex talk, and Leidner (1993) on paying for the preparation and serving of food.

The linguistic regulation of migrants often changes in light of changing economies. Allan (2014) notes how Canada’s earlier focus on the recruitment of agricultural and industrial labourers has been replaced by a focus on highly skilled professionals, who are nonetheless seen as requiring additional linguistic training for Canadian workplaces, a regulation that also serves to rationalize labour market exclusions of racialized workers from Asia and Africa, and workers from formerly socialist countries in Eastern Europe. Critiques of migrants or citizens deemed as “other” or “new” are linked to debates about colonialism and post-colonialism, and about assimilation and diversity, including discussions about whether new social formations should be understood as novel in their “superdiversity” or whether such notions reinscribe Western imperial and national attitudes. For discussions of the re-inscription of whiteness, see Hill (2008).

Commodities and Cosmopolitanism

Commodities are no longer only material goods (Urciuoli and La Dousa 2013). The increased attention to commodification of language is linked to capitalist expansion that requires management of communication across linguistic differences, technological changes demanding new literacy skills, the growth of the service sector, the need to add value to goods to sell products, and the development of niche markets as a response to market saturation markets (Heller 2010). The question of whether global phenomena are homogenizing ones is a particularly controversial question (Meyerhoff and Niedzielski 2003). Corporations ask how to sell products in a global marketplace, how to sell in multiple locations, how and whether to address the world, and how to accommodate linguistic and cultural differences while remaining internally coherent (Klein 2000: 115). Though some companies try to persuade the world to come to them – to speak their language and absorb their culture – and argue that an inability to get consumers to do this is a sign of corporate weakness, other companies focus on selling diversity (Abu-Laban and Gabriel 2002), and trying to distance themselves from any easy critique of Western imperialist practices (see Machin and van Leeuwen 2003).

One of the sharpest changes in corporate worlds over the last fifteen years is that many successful corporations now produce brands, rather than products. Klein (2000) argues that branding is not the same as advertising. Ads inform people about the existence of a product, arguing that their lives will be better if they use it. But now, she argues, companies are advertising brands – a lifestyle, an experience – and penetrating into domains previously untouched by commercialism (see Gaudio 2003). Manning’s (2010) semiotic review of brands is, however, wary of an argument that moves from more productivist to consumerist approaches. Considering the international variation in consumer desires that Western brands may not fully attend to, he warns that brands may reveal different things depending on whether they are approached as semiotic objects within an economy, or meta-semiotic objects that can reveal semiotic ideologies latent in economic categories (p. 46). For some recent ethnographic approaches to the analysis of brands see Bucholtz (2007), Shankar (2015), and Zhang (2007).
Over a decade ago Philips (1998) challenged linguists to move beyond strictly Gramscian approaches to hegemony in nationalist contexts to thinking about how language and power are organized across institutions and groups, both within a nation and transnationally. Feminist critics Grewal and Kaplan argue that a new conception of scattered hegemonies is needed to more fully acknowledge transnational flows and material conditions in diverse locations, in part to be able “to construct an effective opposition to current economic and cultural hegemonies that are taking new global forms” (1994: 17). To do this, we need to address a number of different hegemonic forces, which are also differently hegemonic: global economic structures, patriarchal nationalisms, “authentic” forms of tradition, local structures of domination, legal-juridical oppression, and even certain approaches to feminism and other forms of social critique (Grewal and Kaplan 1994: 17). A number of scholars (Besnier 2007, Gaudio 2009, Miskimmin 2007, Philips 2007, Yang 2007) have taken up ethnographic perspectives on language and “scattered hegemonies.”

One of the sites at which studies of language global economy were most robustly developed in earlier studies was research in multilingualism (though Besnier 2007 has recently argued that even in these studies analysis often seems to stop at national boundaries). In bilingual or multilingual societies, in areas where national boundaries have been drawn and redrawn, in post-colonial contexts, and in diglossic linguistic situations, it is often the use of, or access to, certain languages that differentiates the speech of men and women, or more elite and less elite men and women. In colonial or post-colonial situations, access to economic and political power may depend on being able to speak the language of imperial, or former imperial, powers (see Haeri 2007, Hill 1987, Pavlenko et al. 2001, Weidman 2006). Indeed, the question most frequently debated in the emerging literature on language and globalization may be how best to understand the effects of cultural and linguistic imperialism, especially of English (Canagarajah 1999; Pennycook 2003).

New economic developments are seen by some to throw the political primacy of the nation-state into question, and by others to simply change its forms and functions. This may be articulated as post-nationalism (Heller 2011), as changing notions of publics, polities and publicity (Cody 2011), of sovereignty (Barker 2005) or of standards and standardization, shaped not just in national, or even settler colonial or post-colonial circumstances but also by transnational governmental bodies (Gal 2012) or transnational labour migration needs (Lorente 2012). New economic developments, however, may also be articulated as new or renewed claims to sovereignty from marginalized groups, sometimes linguistic minorities or indigenous groups, sometimes using the notion of nation, and with language often key to defining inclusions and exclusions (Frekko 2009, Galley 2009, Urla 2012).

Critical Issues and Future Directions

This review has suggested that studies of language and political economy can continue to deepen their attention to the distinctive political and economic forces in each historical period, to arrive at accounts that not only have more explanatory power, but can be more readily integrated with debates in other fields, and thus play a more pivotal role in scholarship and movements that resist inequities. It has offered a few critical moments in Western history and thought that have shaped the ways that knowledge is produced, and language is understood, in distinctive ways – without claiming that such forms of periodization will be universally useful. This review has suggested the ways in which linguistic analysis can be a critical – or collusive – tool in thinking about constructions of inequity. Even seemingly progressive approaches need to be evaluated.
not by comparison with past practices, but with attention to what current work they do. Gee et al. (1996) analyze the key words of the new work order evident in new capitalist texts, and consider whether ESL (English as a second language) classes and team meetings at a Silicon Valley company with a multilingual workforce, offered in the name of empowering workers to collaborate as a team, may work as a new form of surveillance and regulation. Holborrow (2015) considers when and how notions of “linguistic market” and “discourse-centred” approaches can reinforce neoliberal ways of centering economic understandings. McElhinny (2012) examines the congruence of the focus on communities of practice, a sociolinguistic concept developed in Silicon Valley, and strategies for industrial restructuring in a “knowledge economy.”

Contemporary interest in imperialism, communism, fascism and the Cold War may be ways to challenge earlier silences (which themselves deserve analysis), as they are, also, results of contemporary interests in globalization, resurgent rightwing populism and totalitarianism, and an interest in spaces of hope (Harvey 2000). These interests, that is, at the moment are also part of a complicated reaction to new forms of globalization, and heightened attention to marketization that goes under the name of neoliberalism. Linguistic anthropology will continue to consider the impact of forces labeled “global” in a range of settings, but the field itself is subject to some of the same forces of globalization and internationalization as other forms of knowledge production. There are more international conferences, with a wider range of scholars. This is evident, too, in compendia: compare the contents of the first Language and Gender Handbook (Holmes and Meyerhoff 2003) with the new edition (Holmes, Meyerhoff and Ehrlich in press). Some conferences now travel: consider the origins of regular conferences on language and gender at Berkeley, which then evolved into the International Gender and Language Association, which now has a different conference site every two years and has been hosted in the UK, New Zealand, Brazil, and Canada. There are intensive debates about what internationalization of scholarly discourse might mean, and attempts to create broader conversations (in such initiatives as Déjà Lu, and the World Anthropological Network). Part of the task of linguistic anthropologists is not just to cover more sites and processes but to find ways to develop more fully collaborative conversations with scholars working in a range of traditions and attempting to move beyond imperial ways of interaction (Chen 2010).

Related Topics
7 Language Ideologies (Kroskrity); 8 Social Subordination and Language (Huayhua); 14 Discursive Practices, Linguistic Repertoire, and Racial Identities (Baugh); 15 Language and Racialization (Chun, Lo); 20 Language, Immigration, and the Nation-State (Pujolar); 21 Language and Nationalism (Haque); 22 Language in the Age of Globalization (Jacquemet); 24 Discrimination via Discourse (Wodak); 25 Racism in the Press (Van Dijk).

Notes
1 Some parts of this approach have been developed in rich conversations with Monica Heller, with whom I’m writing a forthcoming advanced textbook on linguistic anthropology for University of Toronto Press informed by similar formulations.
2 See Brandist (2015) for a thoughtful review of debates about authorship in the Bakthin circle, the role of Marxism, and differential receptions of the work by American liberal and British Marxist critics.
3 One of the articles which was most widely circulated, “Aryans and non-Aryans (1933)” was printed on tissue-thin paper for circulation by the anti-Nazi underground, the better to conceal it as it was circulated hand-to-hand (Herskovits 1953: 117).
4 Even critics of the fascist state, like Gramsci, could see some benefit to a unified national linguistic strategy that might, for example, unite a divided working class.
5 Two other key topics not reviewed here are the ways changing technologies articulate with notions of language, and the ways changing ideas of space and leisure are evident in new kinds of tourism.
References


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Bonnie McElhinny


Further Reading


This book provided one of the earliest, most influential analyses of the ways imperialism has shaped Western knowledge production – see especially the chapter on comparative linguistics.


Ground-breaking and nuanced study of the role that linguistics played in racial ideologies.


Book-length survey of a significant sampling of existing research – especially strong on Spanish colonialism, philology, pidgins, and proto-national languages.


Collection on the changing significance of language and nation in late capitalism in a range of sites in Asia, Europe, Canada, and the United States.


Studies of language, gender and sexuality in a range of African, Asian, European, North American sites and a Pacific Islander site, with attention to the changing meaning of hegemony, multilingualism, commodification, and history.