



Bergen Summer  
Research School

› Global Development Challenges

## BSRS2011: Norms, Values, Language and Culture 20<sup>th</sup> June – 1<sup>st</sup> July 2011

### PhD-Research Course: *Norms and Language*

#### Course leaders:

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#### Guest teacher:

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#### Relevant thematic frameworks

Norms are essential to the human condition. Whether in the guise of tradition, culture, canon or rules, norms are therefore central to studies in the humanities. This course draws on current research in sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology and cultural studies, with an empirical focus on Spanish and the languages of Latin America, and Russian and the languages of the former Soviet Union. We deal with language as an integral part of culture, and suggest an approach that allows for an integrated understanding of language and society.

#### Course description, goals and objectives

The introductory lectures address norms in general and outline different understandings of norms in linguistics. Central perspectives include the notion of norm in the development and maintenance of a standard language, the power structures which influence such processes and the fate and conditions of minority languages.

This course has a global scope and seeks to gain an understanding of how languages exist and coexist in different societies. Societies differ in their eagerness to influence norms and linguistic usage: we discuss attempts to enforce, modify and regulate norms and the institutions, organizations and individuals who engage in such endeavours. We further zoom in on norm negotiations, assessing the variety of ways in which linguistic norms are discussed, challenged or accepted in verbal interaction between human beings. Finally we bring up questions of norms related to oral language, literacy and the creation of alphabets in a global perspective and invite participants to reflect on the language situation in their home countries.

## **Course description**

### **A. NORMS, IDEOLOGIES AND ATTITUDES**

#### **1. Norms in general and norms in linguistics (MP)**

Norms are now central to the study of language. But what are norms? Why do we need norms for communication? And how have they been understood in linguistics? This lecture offers an introduction to the study of linguistic norms and presents the most influential understandings of norms in linguistics.

#### **2. Language ideologies: The Great Experiment: Russian of the Soviet Era (GG)**

This lecture explores the concept of language ideology (ideologies) by looking at a particular case: Russian of the Soviet Era, a period dominated by heavily centralized linguistic authority and prescriptive movements to promote the norms of Standard Russian. It is important to show that this process implied much more than just a Stalinist manipulation. It started at once as a great liberation of spirit and a revolution in literacy, giving alphabets to the languages without alphabets, etc. At the same time, it was the beginning of strong ideological constraints for the Russian-speaking community.

#### **3. Attitudes to language (ABC)**

*Attitude* is a central concept in the social sciences, and has served as a variable of great significance in numerous sociolinguistic studies. The study of individual and collective reactions to specific languages or their varieties may uncover entrenched perceptions and value judgements of their speakers and may lead to a better understanding of the perception a person has of the speaker of these varieties. The purpose of the lecture is to discuss the most common types of attitudes behind prejudice or preconceived ideas about particular linguistic communities.

### **B. NORMS AND POWER**

#### **4. Standard languages (MP)**

In linguistics norms are often related to a standard language. But how is this standard language established? And who decides which norms are to be elevated to the status of standard? Do gains from using standardized language outweigh efforts needed to adhere to norms? The topic opens up for a broad discussion of language and power in society. We invite students to reflect on the language situation in their home country and relate and discuss this with regard to the concepts of norm(s), standards, language variation, status and prestige, and functional registers.

## 5. Minority languages (MQ)

Most countries have one or more official/standard languages in which laws are proclaimed, newspapers are written, radio and television programs are broadcasted, and that serve as the formal medium for conveying political, economic, educational and cultural ideas. However, the native language of hundreds of thousands, sometimes millions of inhabitants is very often different from the official or the official languages. This is the case in numerous African, Asian and American countries where non-official languages — at times even co-official languages — suffer discrimination. This lecture will focus on the situation of the minority languages, which will not share the resources provided to official language maintenance, and are left to their own devices to carve their own linguistic identity.

## C. LANGUAGE CULTIVATION, LINGUISTIC POLICIES AND NORM

**NEGOTIATIONS 6.–7.** Language cultivation and linguistic policies amount to attempts to establish, maintain, enforce or modify norms and language usage. In many countries, specific institutions are responsible for defining and maintaining linguistic norms, and generally, education tends to play a central role in this respect. We offer a wide range of examples of ways in which people and institutions have engaged in language cultivation and discuss their “success.” Using Spanish, Russian and French as examples, we also discuss the role of traditional world or commonwealth languages, their status and possible regional developments, and their relation to local languages. Parts of this section will be organized as panel and group discussions. (MQ, IL, AB, GG, HVH, LBN)

## 8. Norm negotiations (IL)

Norms are often understood as tacit agreements in society. But how do we get an understanding of them if they are not discussed by the members of society? This lecture describes the ways in which norms are debated, challenged, broken, adjusted, or revised in both *explicit debates* and *implicit usage*. Central to this discussion is the theoretical linguistic notion of *norm negotiation* (Henning Andersen).

## D. NORMS, LITERACY AND WRITING

### 9. Oral and written languages — and the norms (AB)

Do norms play the same role in written and oral speech? And did they, when literacy was less widespread? What are norms for modern unwritten languages? This lecture describes the influence of the spread of literacy and writing on the norms, and vice versa.

### 10. The creation of alphabets (MQ, GG)

There are thousands of languages in the world without a written tradition. In the modern world, where the written word is the one that counts, it is difficult to identify oneself as a part of a community if a language community has no written medium through which ideas are communicated. How may an alphabet be created in order to legitimize such oral communities in cultural life? In the creation and adoption of an alphabet two political attitudes may be identified: a policy of consensus or a policy of imposition or arbitrariness. According to the first, attempts are made to unify traditions or opinions and seek by consensus a written language or languages that serve the needs of the population. According to the latter, which is the most common attitude today, a group of thinkers,

educators or politicians are given the responsibility of creating an alphabet based either on a spoken dialect or on a *koiné* of all represented dialects forming a new language which has to be learned. This lecture will discuss the means by which a written language may be established, and the advantages and disadvantages of these two main models. Special attention will be given to the process of the configuration and support of the local languages, in particular those with the least number of speakers. Examples are taken mainly from Guaymí (Panama), Spanish; Tatar (Tatarstan), Azeri (Azerbaijan) and Russian.

### **Targeted students, Prerequisites and ECTS**

The course is targeted at PhD students with a background in linguistics, cultural studies, anthropology or related fields. It is planned as a two weeks course which will include lectures, groups discussions, field work presentations and film screenings.

Course literature, which will be ready by May 2011, must be read prior to the course. Group work and presentations will be set during the course.

Students will complete one written assignment (5000 words) on a specific topic in agreement with one of the course leaders. The essays should be typed, double spaced, 1.0~1.5” margins on all sides, and 12 size font. Deadline for delivery will be specified by the course leaders, and the papers will be graded according to pass/not pass.

Students are required to attend all the sessions of the course and participation is also mandatory in the plenary events of the overall programme of the Bergen Summer Research School 2011 (the programme will be published on the web in June 2011).

10 ECTS will be awarded upon successful participation and completion of the full programme, including the delivery of a research paper which is approved by the course leaders.

### **Required reading**

Andersen, H., 2010, “Living Norms,” in *Poets to Padonki: Linguistic Authority & Norm Negotiation in Modern Russian Culture*, Slavica Bergensia 9, eds. I. Lunde & M. Paulsen, Bergen, pp. 18–33.

Bartsch, R., 1982, “The Concepts ‘Rule’ and ‘Norm’ in Linguistics,” *Lingua* 58 (1/2), pp. 51–81.

Barton, David. 2007. *Literacy: An Introduction to the Ecology of Written Language*. Blackwell, Oxford. (Read chapter *Configurations of language*, pp. 87–100).

Bourdieu, P., 1991, *Language and Symbolic Power*, Cambridge: Polity. [read chapter 1 “The Production and Reproduction of Legitimate Language”, pp. 43–65. Those who prefer French can read Bourdieu’s original: “La production et la reproduction de la langue légitime” in *Ce que parler veut dire: l’économie des échanges linguistiques*, Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1982, pp. 23–58.]

Cameron, Deborah 1995, *Verbal Hygiene: The Politics of Language*. London: Routledge. (Read chapter *On Verbal Hygiene*, pp. 1–32).

- Cargile, A. C., H. Giles, E. B. Ryan, J.J. Bradac 1994, "Language Attitudes as a Social Process: A conceptual model and new directions," *Language & Communication*, 14 (3), pp. 211–236.
- Coupland, N. and A. Jaworski 2004, "Sociolinguistic Perspectives on Metalanguage: Reflexivity, Evaluation and Ideology," in *Metalanguage: Social and Ideological Perspectives*, eds. N. Coupland, A. Jaworski and D. Galasiński. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, pp. 15–51.
- Dodsworth, Robin 2008, "Sociological Consciousness as a Component of Linguistic Variation," *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 12 (1), p. 34–57.
- Guchteneire, Paul (dir.) 2002. Protecting Endangered Minority Languages: Sociolinguistic Perspectives. *International Journal on Multicultural Societies* 4 (2) [articles by S. Romain (pp. 194–212), J. Fishman (270–275), E. Derhemi (pp. 150–161) and S. Mufwene (162–193), available at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001387/138795e.pdf>]
- Haugen, E., 1966, "Dialect, Language, Nation," *American Anthropologist* 68 (4).pp. 922–35.
- Irvine, Judith and Susan Gal 2000, "Language Ideology and Linguistic Differentiation," *Regimes of Language: Ideologies, Politics, and Identities*, ed. Paul V. Kroskrity, Oxford, pp. 35–84.
- Ladegaard, Hans J. 2000, "Language Attitudes and Sociolinguistic Behaviour: Exploring attitudebehaviour relations in language," *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 4 (2), pp. 214–233.
- Linell, Per. 2005. *The Written Language Bias in Linguistics*. Routledge. (Read section *The norms of language and the normativity of linguistics*, pp. 157–168).
- Milroy, J., and L. Milroy, 1999, *Authority in Language: Investigating Standard English*, London: Routledge. [read chapter 1 "Prescription and Standardisation," pp. 1–23.]
- Robinson, Clinton, and Gadelii, Karl. 2003. *Writing Unwritten Languages* [http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=28300&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=28300&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)
- Wray, Alison and Grace, George 2007, "The Consequences of Talking to Strangers: Evolutionary corollaries of socio-linguistic influences on linguistic form," *Lingua* 117, pp. 557–559.

### ***Suggested reading***

- Adebija, Efurosibina 2000, "Language Attitudes in West Africa". *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 141, pp. 75–100.
- Bugel, Talia 2009, "Explicit Attitudes in Brazil Towards Varieties of Portuguese", *Studies in Hispanic and Lusophone Linguistics*, Volume 2, Issue 2, Fall, p. 275–304.
- Cameron, D., 2004, "Out of the Bottle: The Social Life of Metalanguage," in *Metalanguage: Social and Ideological Perspectives*, edited by A. Jaworski, N. Coupland and D. Galasiński. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, pp. 311–321.
- Cooper Robert & Joshua Fishman 1974, "The study of language attitudes," *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 3, p. 5–19.
- Dahlstedt, Karl-Hampus 1976, "Societal Ideology and Language Cultivation: The Case of

- Swedish." *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 10, pp.17–50.
- Flores, Nancy de la Zerda; Hopper, Robert 1975, Mexican-American's Evaluations of Spoken Spanish and English. *Speech Monographs*, 42 (2), pp. 93–98.
- Francis, Norbert; Reyhner, Jon. 2002. *Language and Literacy Teaching for Indigenous Education: a bilingual approach* / Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters. [selected chapters]
- King, Kendal. 2004. "Language Policy and Local in South America: New for Enrichment Bilingual in the Andes Planning Directions Education." In: de Mejma, Anne-Marie (editor), *Bilingual Education in South America*, Clevedon, GBR: Multilingual Matters Limited, 2004. p 1–14.
- Kuiper, Lawrence 2005, "Perception is Reality: Parisian and Provençal perceptions of regional varieties of French." *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 9 (1), pp. 28–52.
- Liebscher, Grit and Dailey-O'Cain, Jennifer 2009, "Language Attitudes in Interaction," *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 13 (2), pp. 195–222.
- Lipsky, John 1976, "Prejudice and Pronunciation," *American Speech* 51 (1/2), pp. 109–118.
- Milroy, J., 2001, "Language Ideologies and the Consequences of Standardization," *Journal of Sociolinguistics* (4), pp. 530–55.
- Molina, Isabel 2008, "[The sociolinguistics of Castilian dialects](#)," *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 193/194 (1), pp. 57–78.
- Omdal, Helge 1995, "Attitudes Toward Spoken and Written Norwegian," *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 115, pp. 85–106.
- Rothman, Jason; Rell, Amy Beth (2005). "A Linguistic Analysis of Spanglish: Relating language to identity". *Linguistics & the Human Sciences* 1 (3), p. 515–36.
- von Wright, G.H., 1963, *Norm and Action: A logical enquiry*, ed. A. J. Ayer, London: Routledge. [read chapter 1]