

**Alla önskas hjärtligt välkomna till följande öppna seminarium
vid Centrum för tvåspråkighetsforskning.
Högre seminariet
i tvåspråkighetsforskning
tillsammans med Engelska institutionen**

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Language: Attitudes to Ideologies

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Abstract

Twenty-five years ago, linguistic anthropologists from diverse analytic traditions joined forces to forward a collective research agenda on language ideologies, i.e., selective, interested cultural conceptions of the nature of language and of its role in social life. The premise was that language ideology is not just an epiphenomenon, but rather a mediating link between social and linguistic structures that reflexively affects the form of each (Woolard, 1998). Therefore, as Michael Silverstein argued, the necessary “linguistic datum” was the “total linguistic fact”: “the mutual interaction of meaningful sign forms, contextualized to situations of interested human use, mediated by cultural ideology” (Silverstein, 1985).

The net was cast wide enough to bring into potential relation linguistic studies of historical changes in form and use, anthropological studies of cross-cultural differences in conceptualizations of language as an object or a social activity, and socio- and psycholinguistic studies of language attitudes and prestige within linguistic contact situations. Later waves of sociolinguistic studies came to privilege speakers' agency and concepts of language ideology such as social indexicality and iconization as explanatory keys to account for linguistic variation and change. These accounts resonate in some ways with earlier explorations of linguistic attitudes.

Sociolinguistic indexicality has been demonstrated to be socially productive, in that listeners project personal qualities onto unfamiliar speakers and make decisions about their social status and fate on the basis of previously conceived indexical relations. But when does such social indexicality become productive in the perceiver's *own* speech? In this presentation, I argue that even if we are committed to a model that privileges speaker agency, we need at least one more crucial link in the ideological chain between what can be measured as linguistic attitudes or characterized as sociolinguistic indexicality and an individual's linguistic practice. Following an observation made by William Labov (Labov, 2001), I develop the argument that if language attitudes are to be used to account for the diffusion of linguistic changes, we must posit a covert belief structure: that speakers feel that their adoption of the linguistic form will lead others to attribute to them the positive traits and a share in the privileges associated with it. I sketch the outline of a model and illustrate it with some of my research in Catalonia as it evolved across 35 years from a focus on language

attitudes to language ideologies. I also consider the applicability of the model sketched to examples from others' research on intra-language phonological variation.

References cited:

- Labov, William (2001). *Principles of Linguistic Change. Vol. 2: Social Factors*.
Silverstein, Michael (1985). "Language and the culture of gender: at the intersection of structure, usage and ideology." In *Semiotic Mediation*, edited by E. Mertz and R. J. Parmentier, pp. 219 - 259. Orlando: Academic Press.
Woolard, Kathryn A. (1998). "Introduction: Language ideology as a field of inquiry." In B. B. Schieffelin, K. A. Woolard, & P. Kroskrity (Eds.), *Language Ideologies: Practice and Theory*, pp. 3-47. New York: Oxford University Press.

Vi önskar alla hjärtligt välkomna till seminariet och till postseminarium efteråt!

Caroline Kerfoot