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Gradient grammaticality and gradient acceptability in English as a Lingua Franca

Piotr Choromański (Warsaw)

The quite recent evolution of English to the official language of all mankind has created a unique linguistic situation in world history. This has engendered a broad spectrum of understandings and opinions about the place that the language has or should have in the world. English as a Global Language, English as an International Language and English as a Lingua Franca are some of the terms coined to reflect the wide variety of contexts contemporary English is used in. The notions of grammaticality and acceptability are at the heart of the debate about the shape and dynamic nature of English as a Lingua Franca. Grammatical correctness and acceptability are theoretical constructs deeply ingrained in the branch of science dedicated to the study of human language. Moreover, the abstract idea of grammaticality can only be discussed and elucidated with explicit reference to an existing formal representation of grammatical competence. English as a Lingua Franca is not a term denoting a type of English but a notion embodying how English as a Native Language, English as a Second Language and English as a Foreign Language are used today. More to the point, there are no speakers of English as a Lingua Franca in the world. There are only speakers of English as a Native Language, English as a Second Language and English as a Foreign Language. Simply put, English as a Lingua Franca is the English that native speakers and non-native users rely on in international and intercultural contexts. Traditional notions of standardization and codification firmly rooted in the field of linguistics are not relevant to English as it is in the present day. In order to fully comprehend the nature and many intricacies of modern-day English a conceptual framework built on the notions of gradient grammaticality and gradient acceptability need to be employed.

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Making Romani and the ideology of standard Czech

Eva Eckert (Prague)

Maintaining Romani as a minority language and the making of its standard is tied to the Czech Roma's identity as the excluded and incapable of assimilation. This identity was invented and attached to the Roma by the "white" majority living in the standard culture of Czech and subscribing to the ideology of infallible and homogeneous Czech standard. Sociolinguistic beliefs and attitudes of the society locked within this ideology have a direct impact on the teaching and elaboration of Romani. Deliberate choices involved in the modeling of Romani are also affected by the discord among Czech Roma concerning the dialect they speak and choice of a suitable dialect upon which to model the standard. Mutual understandability of Roma dialects is aggravated by ethnic and social tension splitting the Roma into communities, and by disagreement about the desired outcome of standardization and usefulness of a standardized Romani. Should the elaboration reflect the prevalent ideology followed by speakers of Czech that standards aim at unifying and representing users of various dialects? Or, should it incorporate morphosyntactic and lexical variants, and be flexible and useful to speakers without a dedicated study of an elaborate standard?

In the Czech space the planning is driven by linguistic decisions coming from the above, i.e., from institutions rather than speakers, and necessarily interferes with the use of language. Since the ethno-linguistic national revival in the 19th c. Czechs have defined their nation as a homogeneous entity opposed to multicultural coexistence. The study seeks to answer the question how the Roma (forming the largest minority) fare in the space where their integration (piloted in *Koncepce 2009* and since developed in *Zpráva 2012* and *Program 2013*) has been contested by the policy of assimilation (Hübschmannová 2002). It addresses reasons for contention over Romani planning, teaching and revitalizing. Finally, it examines prospects of the first generation Romani (affected by contact with Slovak and Czech) to stabilize as an ethnolect vernacular of Czech Roma who have been congregating in temporary housing since their economic and social downfall in the 1990s (Toušek 2011). The study is grounded in the research of extent and degree of Romani usage and knowledge, language maintenance, intergenerational transmission, potential for language shift and speakers' attitudes, conducted in selected locations between 2007 and 2009 by Červenka, Sadílková and Kubaník (2009). It recommends instituting standard Romani in order to offset the self-imposed identity of exclusion and to rehabilitate Romani by improving its status so that it could represent a real language on par with other foreign languages and function in the community as a prestigious marker of identity. Planning Romani would rid it of the stigma of being spoken by half-literate parents and children attending practical schools (since supposedly unable to master standard Czech). Rehabilitating Romani would imply rescuing it in order to build speakers' positive identity. Prospects of this rehabilitation are ambivalent due to the prevalent standard language ideology that sees Romani as a stigmatized ethnolect, the history of discouragement to speak Romani and speakers' self-distancing from Romani as a language that has disadvantaged them in their socioeconomic practice.

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The influence of diglossia in the configuration of standard Galician

Naír García Abelleira (Santiago de Compostela)

Galician is a minorized romance language spoken in the Northwestern area of the Iberian Peninsula. Although this language is the own (i.e. native) language of Galicia, its coexistence with Spanish gave rise to a diglossic situation since the eighteenth century. That situation was the responsible for the loss of the 'language' status Galician had formerly been endowed with. Its speakers conserved Galician as a familiar language, but, at the same time, they considered their language to be just a dialect, instead of a true language.

After the eighteenth century, a nationalist movement emerged, and took Galician to be the main representation of the Galician nation. This political movement aimed at normalizing the use of Galician, especially within the literary field. Therefore, writers recovered its ancient use (for instance, in poetry). Within this context, the first attempt for this language to be planned came to the fore. However, the standardization process did not really begin until the last quarter of the twentieth century, when the political situation radically changed (i.e. the advent of democracy in Spain) and Galician progressively spread over new contexts of use.

Those who promoted Galician normalization fully assumed the nationalistic imaginary. This relationship is worth noting, for it may explain the fact that the standardization process (more specifically, corpus planning) highlighted the linguistic differences between Spanish and Galician.

This talk will consider some syntactic, morphological, and ortographic forms favoured by the Galician standardization process, in order to analyze how the influence of extra-linguistic factors shaped such a process. More concretely, I will concentrate on (1) how differentialism became a main guideline for the selection of Galician standard forms, and (2) how preventing learners from using Castilian words and dialectal forms is the main aspect Galician teaching is currently concerned with.

Germanismen in der Modalbedeutung 'Notwendigkeit' im Tschechischen und ihre kodifikatorische Betrachtung

Dagmar Heeg (Salzburg)

Das Tschechische hat in der vorhistorischen Periode das Verb *musiti* 'müssen' aus dem Deutschen entlehnt. Diese Entlehnung besteht bis heute kontinuierlich in der tschechischen Sprache und stellt im modernen Tschechischen das häufigste Mittel zum Ausdruck der Bedeutung 'Notwendigkeit' dar. In den älteren Perioden gab es zum Ausdruck dieser Bedeutung noch zusätzlich die Infinitivkonstruktion mit der Kopula *býti*, die es im modernen Tschechischen nicht mehr gibt.

In meinem Vortrag möchte ich mich ausführlich mit der Frage befassen, ob es in der gesamten Sprachgeschichte von den Anfängen bis heute kodifikatorische oder puristische Versuche gab, das aus dem Deutschen entlehnte Verb *musiti* aus der tschechischen Sprache zu entfernen, und welcher Ersatzausdruck gegebenenfalls vorgeschlagen wurde. Ebenfalls ist in diesem Zusammenhang interessant, ob die Infinitivkonstruktionen mit der Kopula *býti* auch in den Verdacht des deutschen oder später ggf. des russischen Einflusses geraten sind.

Tilman Berger befasste sich in Rahmen seines Artikels „*Deutsche Einflüsse auf das grammatische System des Tschechischen*“ (in: Studien zur historischen Grammatik des Tschechischen: bohemistische Beiträge zur Kontaktlinguistik, München 2008) mit der Betrachtung des entlehnten Verbs *musiti* und stellte fest, dass sich die puristischen Sprachratgeber mit der lexikalischen Entlehnung abgefunden haben und sich nur gegen die Verwendung in epistemischen Sätzen wenden und auch für andere Verwendungen archaische Ersatzkonstruktionen anbieten. Mich interessiert in diesem Zusammenhang nun, um welche Ersatzkonstruktionen es sich dabei handelt (Sind es etwa Infinitivsätze?) und wie werden gerade diese Ersatzkonstruktionen in anderen Sprachetappen bzw. anderen Sprachratgebern oder Grammatiken betrachtet. Eine Auswahl aus den zu untersuchten Informationsquellen sei unten angeführt.

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Language and conservatism

Mate Kapović (Zagreb)

The subject of the paper is the relation between language and conservative political ideology. The talk deals, among other issues, with the way conservative political ideology is manifested in language, the origin of linguistic conservatism and its relation to the standard language, as well as with differences between conservatism in politics and in language. The basic premise of the talk is that what is called linguistic prescriptivism is actually a reflection of conservative ideology in language. While linguistic prescription is a process of codification of a certain variety of language for some sort of official use, linguistic prescriptivism is an unscientific tendency to mystify linguistic prescription.

The relation between prescriptivism and conservatism, although rarely (if ever) overtly noted, is quite obvious. Prescriptivism, for instance, places much importance to the status quo, stability (preserving the language as it is), order (strict abidance by the prescribed linguistic norm), tradition (sometimes real, sometimes imagined), authorities (e.g., prescriptivist linguists, 'usage guides', language academies), it is adverse to linguistic change ('corruption' of language), it usually promotes national unity (under the standard language), it is opposed to the 'anarchy' of colloquial speech and dialects (although not always openly and explicitly) and it considers some forms 'authentic' and other 'nonauthentic'. All of the mentioned traits can be characterized *mutatis mutandis* as elements of conservative political ideology.

While there is a substantial body of linguistic critical literature on the problem of prescriptivism, for some reason it has almost never been explicitly claimed to be a reflection of the conservative ideology in language. Outside of linguistics as an academic discipline, this can be related to the curious fact that linguistic prescriptivism is mostly so internalized that practically no public awareness of the connection between linguistic prescriptivism and conservatism exists. Thus, among non-linguist prescriptivists, one finds not only political conservatives but also liberals, social-democrats, socialists etc.

This means that the correlation of political and language ideology is rather complex – a political conservative is usually a language conservative, but a political non-conservative is most often an (unaware) language conservative. A failure to closely examine the relation between language and conservatism represents an unfortunate blind spot in modern sociolinguistics.

Language ideologies and their impact on grammatical complexity – evidence from New High German

Péter Maitz (Augsburg) & Stephan Elspaß (Salzburg)

In recent research on linguistic complexity, several social factors have been discussed which potentially have an impact on the degree of structural complexity of a language: intensity of language contact, the density of social networks and the size of the language community (cf. Trudgill 2011).

The role of language ideologies, however, has not been considered so far. In our paper, we take on an argument by Maitz & Németh (2014) that the degree of normativity in a speech community can significantly influence the development of a language with respect to the loss, maintenance or increase of its grammatical complexity. Normativity in this sense can be regarded as a result of three main language ideologies, namely *scripticism*, *linguistic conservatism* and *standardism* (*standard language ideology*).

After an outline of the theoretical background of our study, we will identify some prominent instances of grammatical complexity in German *Schriftsprache* ('written language' in the sense of conceptually literate language) which have been maintained or even restituted due to a supposed influence of normativity in the New High German period. A comparison between the developments in written and spoken German of this period (cf. Elspaß 2005) will serve to illustrate the extent of divergence between registers and varieties which have been under intense normative and prescriptive pressure and those which were *not*.

Based on such data, we will argue that a high degree of normativity – resulting from the language ideologies mentioned above – can lead to the maintenance or even increase of structural complexity of grammatical categories and markers, while the absence of them promotes simplification.

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Explaining codeswitching patterns in Nairobi: English as a marker of urbanity

Carol Myers-Scotton & Janice L. Jake (East Lansing, MSU)

Linguistic ideologies are at the heart of why codeswitching (CS) is a popular vehicle when bilinguals wish to convey pragmatic messages. The reason is the socio-psychological associations that all linguistic varieties carry. That is, employing two varieties in the same conversation (i.e., CS) offers speakers the chance to fine tune their contribution to the conversation in two obvious ways. First, there is *le mot juste* effect – selecting a near-synonym from a second language to bring in a desired connotation in a clause otherwise in Language 1. Second, again simply a word, but also a phrase, from Language 2 in a clause largely in Language 1 can negotiate a change in “the footing” or the “markedness temperature” of the clause (cf. Goffman (1981) on footing and Myers-Scotton (1993) on markedness).

In addition to considering the above roles of CS in bilinguals’ conversations in general terms, this paper will analyze specific patterns of CS in urban conversational exchanges in Nairobi, Kenya. The argument is that these patterns are one indication of an ideology that is shared among young adult Kenyans of what constitutes urbanity.

Naturally-occurring CS data from 1988 will be contrasted with data from 2013. When such bilingual conversations are very informal, Swahili still is typically the language that sets the grammatical frame. That is, Swahili is the Matrix Language (ML) when English is typically the Embedded Language (EL). English and Swahili are both official languages in Kenya. Both languages are school subjects, but, except for the elite, many Africans are more proficient in Swahili than English. This is due to Swahili’s wide use as the *lingua franca* of informal interactions. While most relevant to some age groups, Sheng, a variety of Nairobi Swahili with much slang, is not the subject here.

Across many CS corpora with diverse languages involved, EL nouns are the most frequent EL addition to a conversation. This observation holds for diverse language pairs in most CS settings. What is interesting about CS patterns in contemporary Nairobi (2013) conversations is that EL (English) verbs are perhaps even more frequent than EL nouns, see (1):

- (1) Swahili-English CS (Myers-Scotton 2013) (One Nairobi female market stall owner to another)

Ohh, hata sikuwa ni-me-notice hiyo; kwangu sijamaliza rent ya last month.

Siku zi-na-rush haraka sana.

‘Oh, even I didn’t notice that; at my place I haven’t finished [paying] the rent of last month. [The] days rush [by] very fast.’

The paper argues that the increased use of English verbs in Swahili frames can be explained as an emblem of one’s social identity. Speaking English well is a mark of education and also positions of authority. The ideology of what it means to be an urban African in Nairobi—someone who is sophisticated even if not a member of the elite—can be conveyed by engaging in CS that conspicuously includes English verbs. That is, speakers can create messages about their ideology through the CS patterns they select; this involves exploiting the role of relevance and especially procedural knowledge (Blakemore 1992, Wilson and Sperber 2012).

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Multiglossic Arabic from the perspective of ideological conceptions

Kazuhiko Nakae (Osaka)

The Arabic language has been explained by the framework of diglossia since Ferguson (1959) suggested. Diglossia is one of the sociolinguistic arrangements used to explain the asymmetric functional distribution between prescriptive variety versus vernacular varieties. Actually there are many kinds of lect-contact situations on the continuum between these two extremes, which Hary (1992) called "multiglossia". In these situations there can be found many kinds of fascinating linguistic interactions between the ideal prescriptive norm and the actually used vernaculars, such as pseudo-corrections on various linguistic structural levels suggested by Blau (1970). To understand these descriptive and actual linguistic phenomena, even more interesting considering the exogenous language contact situations, we must consider the history of Arabic grammar.

From the perspective of the history of Arabic language its grammar was codified and frozen to fix in the first and second century of Islamic era (from the end of seventh century to eighth century CE). This language has been called Classical Arabic in the western scholarly tradition. And this is the beginning of standardization process in Arabic grammar. From this era on standardization process means to maintain the codified grammar as a prescriptive norm and to endeavour to avoid various regional vernacular influences as well as grammatical deviations from the norm, because any vernacular flavoured Arabic is considered as vulgar and stigmatized. The Arabic grammar which was prescribed by Sibawayhi (d.793) in *al-kitāb* is the most important core grammar. This has been preserved in Islamic tradition because *al-Qur'ān* was written in this prescriptive Arabic.

What is important to be considered and discussed is why people stick to the prescriptive norm although they speak their own regional varieties, in other words why they consider the prescriptive variety only as Arabic language while they do not consider their vernacular varieties even as among Arabic language. This prescriptive assumption can be explained by the two sides: Arabic history and Islamic thought. In Arabic history the prescriptive Arabic originated in the speech of the Arab tribes in central Arabia, which only maintained the linguistic purity and correctness. This geographical restriction created the idea of its purity and correctness. In the Islamic thought speech is considered as an act under the same rule as all other kinds of human behaviours. If people commit errors in speech they deviate from the right human path. Grammarians also use ethical criteria to judge the righteousness of utterances in their grammar book. It is assumed that to maintain the prescriptive grammar in the speech is to pave the sound human path in life.

Arabic-speaking people want to stick to the prescriptive normative bind for its purity, sacredness, prestige and authenticity. I assert that all of them originated in the ideology from Arab tribal tradition and Islamic tradition. In the research of Arabic language situation this ideological conception is always to be considered.

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Restandardisation: Eradicating ideology in standardisation?

Gerda Odendaal (Stellenbosch)

The 80s and 90s of the previous century saw several international political and social developments that gave rise to the ideology of democracy, which focuses on things such as equal human rights and human dignity. These include, among others, the end of communism, the opening of borders and a subsequent development towards political integration in Europe, as well as the end of Apartheid in South Africa (Clyne 1993:11). Furthermore, globalisation gave rise to a worldwide ethnic Renaissance with a focus on the nurturing of diversity (Huss & Lindgren 2011: 11). These developments led to the increased valuing and validation of variation, which includes language variation (Clyne 1993: 22). According to Van der Horst (2009: 11) this also gave rise to a decreased mention of “correct” or “good” language.

Given this democratisation of the world, the relevance of standard languages, which are undeniably ideological in nature, are increasingly being questioned. Does a language variety which only serves the economic, social and political elite of the speech community still have a role to play in a democratic society? Or should we accept that this will inevitably lead to the destandardisation of languages? These are the questions that gave rise to discussions on the restandardisation of languages. The literature is however not yet clear on what is meant by restandardisation, as no unambiguous definition of this term exists as of yet. The aim of this paper is to give a clearer understanding of what restandardisation entails by discussing relevant literature on restandardisation, standardisation, destandardisation and other aspects of language planning in order to provide an unambiguous definition of restandardisation. By pointing to its language planning and democratic properties, this paper aims to define restandardisation as democratising language planning, i.e. a language planning activity with the ability to transform the standard language in order to make it a democratic tool of communication that serves the entire speech community and in which all the speakers of the different varieties of a language are represented. This paper will attempt to show that, although the influence of ideology on standardisation cannot entirely be avoided, language planners should ensure that past ideologies of exclusion be replaced with one of inclusion, so that the standard language not only serve the social, political and economic elite in society, but can successfully be used by the entire speech community.

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Macedonian – ideological aspects in its grammar

Helmut Schaller (Marburg)

After a long period of political and cultural oppression, the Macedonian people joined the new-formed Yugoslavia on 2nd August 1944 with its own official literary language. It was during the time of the new Socialist Republic of Macedonia that the linguist Blaže Koneski, who studied at the University of Sofia, as a poet, linguist, scholar and literary historian, began to play a leading role in the cultural development of his country. Koneski is sometimes considered to be as important for Macedonia as France Prešeren for Slovenia, Ljudevit Gaj for Croatia and Vuk Karadžić for Serbia. Blaže Koneski was the author of the first Macedonian grammar (in 1952 volume I and in 1959 volume II). He also prepared the first Macedonian dictionary and published scholarly appraisals of former periods of the Macedonian language. But maybe one has to put the question if these publications might be the result of ideological aims, arbitrary and government-provoked undertakings.

In 1945, a Commission for the Macedonian language and orthography was founded. In order to find acknowledgement for the new literary language outside Macedonia, one had to look out for specialists confirming the Macedonian language. Indeed, a series of non-Macedonian slavists wrote about the new language. Thus, the first grammar of Macedonian in English was published in 1952 by the leading American slavist Horace G. Lunt, while the book itself was published in Macedonia. Was it a decision based on ideology that the western dialects that were most distinct from Bulgarian and Serbian were chosen as the basis for standard Macedonian? In addition to this fact the new language is written in the Cyrillic alphabet, but as a special variant of Macedonian. Beside Slavic genetic and Balkan typological identities between Macedonian and Bulgarian there must be some peculiarities which could give Macedonian a special status as a literary language beside Bulgarian, Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian and Montenegrinian.

Genderlessness as a grammatical gender class? Language-systematic assumptions, grammatical effects, logical consequences

Dennis Scheller-Boltz (Innsbruck)

As we all know, the Russian language has three grammatical genders: masculine, feminine, neuter. Less known is the fact that the Russian language system contains a fourth gender category which one can find in a lot of Russian grammars: genderlessness. However, genderlessness is not presented as a separate gender category. It is only implied.

Genderlessness occurs when pronouns which refer to people are used in a context in which these pronouns can refer to both men and women – or in other words, in a context in which these pronouns do not reflect a concrete sex or gender but a clear indefiniteness. If pronouns have no sex, then they do not have a gender either. Yet, even at first glance, it is obvious that the genderlessness presupposed by the language system as an independent category is not maintained in a consistent fashion. Due to the lack of morphological means, this category is immediately overridden by the requirement to attribute one of the three main genders to a hitherto genderless object or subject.

While it appears questionable to attribute sexlessness to pronouns which refer to people – particularly from a contextual and consequently from a cognitive perspective, which implies that the phenomenon of genderlessness itself must be questioned – it appears even more questionable to classify pronouns assumed to be without gender as masculine. If genderless pronouns can refer to both men and women from a theoretical point of view, it is weird to require these pronouns to adopt masculine form exclusively. Particularly in a context which deals with women, such a requirement is in a blatant conflict with logic.

Consequently, it is safe to claim that genderlessness does not exist. To masculinise genderless entities means to unambiguously define them as masculine. This principle is not concordant with logic, yet it reflects the traditional basic assumptions of every patriarchal social order.

Moreover, psycholinguistic studies have been able to show that masculine forms cannot represent genderlessness.

The presentation which I propose is a plea for rejecting the assumption that there is a category of genderlessness within the realm of pronouns. Consequently, it also turns against the usage of genderlessness in works of grammar because:

1. The Russian language system does not allow for genderlessness as it does not provide the necessary means and categories.
2. The assumption of genderlessness would require the entity in question to be marked as either genderless or gender-neuter.
3. Genderlessness would have to allow for changes in gender which means that it would have to provide morphological means modifiable according to gender.
4. In a given context, every entity is immediately attributed a grammatical gender which means that from a cognitive perspective it is questionable that there could be an entity without sex.

Traces of ideology in the structure of Albanian and new perspectives for the solution to the existing problems

Lindita Sejdiu-Rugova (Prishtina)

The present paper aims at bringing to surface the main and most problematic issues regarding the post-codification period of Albanian. Forty years after its codification, Albanian standard has never stopped being manifested as a language variant of the “strong” communist leadership, an imposed variant of the Tosks and supported strongly by the former communist head of the state, a variant which not only unified, but also divided Albanians on geographical bases, especially in the last 10 years, with the creation of the second majority Albanian speaking country – Kosovo. A new linguistic ideology has partly substituted and partly dualised the views towards the existing standard Albanian. New orthographic rules have been discussed and after many efforts – proposed to change, the renaissance of Gheg dialect elements of morpho-syntactic structure, such as Gheg infinitive and participle, typical for Albanian before the Codification Congress in 1972, have been suggested, too, but in most of the linguists’ meetings - left for future discussion. Initiatives have been undertaken institutionally, mainly from the Kosovar part and supported partially from the Albanian part. Though not formally, one can notice the establishment of two new linguistic movements, corresponding with the two capitals of Albanian institutional development: Tirana and Prishtina. The former being divided into purists and anti-communists and the latter bringing the Albanian of Kosovars closer to the Standard Albanian by suggesting several linguistic corrections to the concept of what is known as a unifying element of all Albanians – the Standard. New perspectives have been suggested in order to bring down the gap between ideological concepts and the use of language, though, unsuccessfully.

Managing language for science in imperial contexts: The case of Polish purism around 1900

Jan Surman (Warsaw)

In the second half of nineteenth Century sciences in Central Europe have underwent a serious change. Together with development of scientific organizations, more and more attention has been put to the medium of scientific production, the language itself. In Polish for instance, commission aiming at standardization of scientific language has been established already in the 1860s and from 1870 an interdisciplinary committee has been working on chemical terminology. At the same time, purist tendencies have been growing stronger, aiming at the making Polish scientific language more vernacular, devoid of influences labeled as foreign. The proposed paper looks at the processes of managing of language around 1900 at the example of precisely these proposals to perfect Polish language for natural sciences and technology. In the first part of the paper I will analyze the discourse of language planning of the time, showing how philosophical ideas were interwoven with political ideologies to achieve the aim of most suitable language to convey knowledge. Othering processes at the lexical level, were particularly interesting in the multilingual environments, as the distinction between “own” and “foreign” has been variously discussed and followed clear political ideologies. I will, however, not only concentrate on purist, but also on the alternative projects discussed at the time (e.g. by Jan Baudouin de Courtenay). In the second part, I will analyze exemplary scientific terms, which were inscribed into vernacular language and thus modified on the lexical level, for the conceptual changes which were caused through these alterations. One such example is *tlen* (oxygen), which in Polish, differently to almost all other languages, is built not through a reference to acids, but to glowing. This caused not only different associations and imagery, but also influenced systems of chemical classification.

Between Biology and Grammar: Gender in German

Martina Werner (Stuttgart)

The view that the dimension of natural gender (*sexus*) explains the existence of grammatical gender (*genus*) is very common in public and often, even to a lesser extent, in some linguistic discourse (WERNER 2012, chapter 2). Both the public and the linguistic perspective go back to earlier and now to be called “folklorized” approaches of the 19th century (WEBER 2001).

As opposed to the exponents of the 19th century, feminism in the 20th century pointed to the discrimination of women in language (see SIEBURG 1997 for an overview). It was argued in favor of gender-sensitive language utterances with gender-neutral forms (e.g. for English as in *the person who*; or *who forgot their/?his/?her car* for an unmentioned antecedens) or – as e.g. for German – for utterances with overtly gender-marked forms (resulting in gendered “double forms” as in *Studentinnen und Studenten / StudentInnen / Student_Innen*). Radical feminists demanded the complete replacement of any “masculine” forms (cf. German personal pronoun *man* ‘(some)one’ to *frau*) as well as the systematical use of the female form (i.e. *Studentinnen* over *StudentInnen*).

Especially with respect to grammatical semantics, feminist linguistics described grammatical gender to be a historically discriminating category especially due to the ambiguous character of the Generic Masculine by primarily encoding men and by making women invisible (consider word-formations of agentive nouns in German such as *Lehrer* ‘(male) teacher’, *Schüler* ‘(male) pupil’; see LEISS 1994 for an overview).

In contrast, recent trends in public discourse (such as legal texts in Germany) again display a preference for the Generic Masculine by referring to its “grammatical equivalence” for both natural genders. This means a withdrawal of the feministic approach which would – in feminist axiomatics – be reproachable as a matter of “patriarchalism”. Even for this reason, in some formal texts, e.g. in Austria, the gendered forms are preferred (WISSIK 2012).

From a grammar-theoretical point of view, the paradoxical debate on gender raises the question which of the approaches can be regarded as “neutral” in terms of an ideologically neutral conception of grammar: the feministic one (doubling forms or gender-neutralization) or the other one (Generic Masculine). By delving into the history of the linguistics, the aim of the talk is to discuss different notions of gender in German and its axiomatic implications by pointing to results from language history, morphology, and historical semantics and for approaching a non-ideologically inspired conception of gender in terms of a re-motivation of the linguistic distinction between *genus* and *sexus*.

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