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Abstracts

Chryso Hadjidemetriou

The Use of Grammatical Gender in Cypriot-Greek by the Armenians of Cyprus

This paper is based on empirical data which examines the results of the contact between Armenian and Cypriot-Greek (CG) regarding the use of the grammatical gender of CG by the Armenian speakers in Cyprus. The data employed in this paper come from two different sources: i. natural recordings with adult speakers further divided into speakers who were born in or arrived to Cyprus as infants and speakers who arrived to Cyprus as teenagers or young adults, and, ii. a written test administered to elementary school children.

Armenian and CG are characterized by completely different gender systems. The Armenian language has no grammatical gender classification, whereas CG is characterized by a three-way gender-system - masculine, feminine and neuter. Grammatical gender not only classifies nouns in CG, but at the same time triggers syntactic agreement between the nouns and the articles or modifiers accompanying a noun. The focus is on the results of the contact between a language with no grammatical gender, Armenian, and a language with a relatively complex grammatical gender system, namely CG.

The results from the adult speakers and the children point to the observation that an early exposure to CG does not guarantee a more complete gender acquisition; rather it is the frequency, type and intensity of contact which seems to enhance the acquisition of this complex feature. This abstract has been abridged. Download full version.

Fabienne Chevalier

'But you never finish your sentences!' - Unfinished utterances as an interactional resource

The turn-taking system described by conversation analysts places constraints upon speakers. One of these constraints is the obligation to complete a turn. There are, however, two sets of cases where this obligation is not met and speakers leave their utterances unfinished. The first set is anticipatory completions, where a speaker begins a compound two-component turn of the 'if X, then Y' type, leaving the utterance unfinished at the end of the first component. This first component projects a) roughly what it will take to bring the turn to possible completion and b) a possible form for the final component of the turn. It is this projectability that enables the recipient to complete syntactically the utterance left unfinished by the first speaker. The second set of cases of non-completed turns covers circumstances in which speakers produce a turn that is 'simply left unfinished'. This talk will discuss the latter phenomenon in naturally-occurring conversation in French. It will attempt to show that this phenomenon is not so much a psychological characteristic of speakers who 'just don't finish their sentences' as an interactional resource that French speakers use to accomplish certain actions in specific places in talk. Data will be

analysed, with a particular focus upon a) the placement of unfinished utterances and b) the possible actions that these utterances aim to accomplish.

Dave Sayers

'Declining Linguistic and Cultural Diversity'

Global capitalism is a major and central cause of language death. A different L1 language forces speakers to codify their thoughts and memories differently, so every language saved contributes to a richer and more varied approach to the world. A causal link will be established between the uniformity of rational bureaucracy and the worldwide drop in linguistic diversity. The paper's focus is the means by which languages become obscured in the modern world as a result of capitalism - and its desires to rationalise communication and production, and make the details of its world uniform and predictable.

Bukpa A. Bagamba

A Study of Language Shift in Rural Africa: A Case of Language Shift Among the Hema of the Northeastern Democratique of Congo

In this research, we will investigate the language shift situation that began some two hundred years ago and is currently underway among the Hema of the North-East Democratic Republic of Congo. Traditionally this community spoke Oruhima but this language is being replaced by Baledha. This has captured our interest for three reasons. Firstly, it is a case of an indigenous language wiping out another indigenous language while most of the well-known studies in this field have concentrated either on languages of wider communication replacing minority languages or immigrant communities. Secondly, the phenomenon occurs in a purely African rural setting. Thirdly, the community that is losing its language was until recently wealthier and politically more powerful than the other.

This research will firstly investigate the language behaviour of the Nywagi clan which constitutes a buffer zone between the clans that have already shifted to Baledha and those who still speak Oruhima. Secondly, it will identify the socio-historical and socio-psychological factors that triggered the language shift. Thirdly, it will investigate whether five years of ethnic war between the two tribes has resulted in a change of attitude in the Hema toward Baledha.

Moreover, the study will determine to what extent a language shift processes in an African rural environment may differ from those described in the west.

Kana Suzuki

The Japanese response tokens honto and so: Aspects of their conversational use

The Japanese lexical items honto and so belong to different syntactic and semantic categories. In actual conversation, however, they are interchangeable. The analytic concern should then be not 'what those lexical items mean' but 'what they do in conversation'. This study employs conversation analysis to examine two aspects of their use as response tokens: a) what kind of utterances they are responsive to; and b) how their deployment affects the course of the on-going talk. These two aspects will highlight the ways in which these tokens display, as any utterance in conversation does, their backward- and forward-relationship to their prior and following utterances.

Manuel Camacho

The Narrativization of Morality in the Community of Bullfight Aficionados

Important work has been done to define the notion and functions of 'Evaluation'. There is a general agreement on assigning sense-making, emotional, and point-of-view properties to this section of a narrative. Such elements are part of, and depend on, a series of cultural common-understandings, that is, the sharing of beliefs and values having to do with social behaviour and acceptance. In this sense, the community of bullfight aficionados has proved to be a cultural group, perfectly defined by ideologies, values, and institutions, that counts on narrative discourse as a major communicative genre. An exploration of the narrative activity within this particular community intends to contribute to a deeper knowledge of the functional and linguistic nature of 'evaluation'. The current work is a discussion on the analysis of one narrative of vicarious experience where the conveyance of morality is a main issue. It is shown how various evaluative devices are managed in order to validate and legitimize the narrator's moral authority to narrate certain events, the relevance and the content of the narration, and the narrative itself.

Mona Al-Qooz

Sunni Vs. Shia Dialect Contact In Manama, Bahrain: Are Shia Upper Class School Children Linguistically Shia?

This study is based on a large-scale empirical research that aims to investigate dialect contact in Manama, the capital city of Bahrain. The major dialects involved are the Sunni dialect, the dominant dialect, and the Shia dialect, the less dominant one. The Shia dialect ties in closely with early East and South Arabian Arabic while the Sunni dialect shows clear resemblance to Central and Northern Arabian Peninsula Arabic.

The sample represents the Bahraini younger generation (both Sunni and Shia) and includes around three hundred informants of both genders distributed over five age groups, three social classes, and two types of schools.

This paper discusses the general linguistic behaviour of thirty-two Shia upper class school children (16 from state schools and 16 from private ones) of both genders whose ages range from six to seventeen. It presents findings with regards to the Shia school children's use of four phonological Shia variants - [f], [d], [D] and [dZ] - as well two morphosyntactic variants - [ana] first person singular masculine pronoun and [ani] first person singular feminine pronoun.

Results in general show systematic correlations between age, social class and type of school, as a social variable, and the degree to which Shia young speakers adhere to their original Shia phonological as well as morphosytactic variants.

Pamela Knight

Sociolinguistic Research in the NHS

Informed consent is an important issue in sociolinguistics, as, in order to avoid the observer's paradox and obtain as near naturally occurring talk as possible, data collection might involve covert methods. With ever increasing awareness of the need to protect personal information, issues relating to how data is collected and stored become important. Consent is also crucial to establishing and maintaining social relations and rapport with research participants.

Most often, the approach to sociolinguistic research is that of 'ethical research', i.e., research on people as opposed to for or with people. In this approach, ethical considerations may amount to a simple statement of plan and activity to ensure that the participants do not feel like experimental animals, (Jackson, 1987). The process of making application, for my MA dissertation, to NHS ethical review committees, revealed that from the NHS viewpoint ethical considerations go further than simply obtaining consent. The basic sociolinguistic approach may not be enough when research is to be carried out in the healthcare setting. The process revealed a number of potential breaches of the "common set of secular principles", (Goodyear-Smith et al 2002), that NHS ethics committees apply to any research proposal. Additionally, the ethical principles of the World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki, (2000), which are of paramount consideration when conducting research on human subjects in the medical setting, can be overlooked when planning sociolinguistic research.

This paper provides some guidance for future student, and indeed established sociolinguists researchers, who wish to conduct research in the NHS and points to a model that we might emulate

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John Atkinson

Conversational H-dropping in Darlington

Speakers of English in the North-East of England, particularly in Tyneside, retain 'h' in word initial position. The geographical position of Darlington situated on the north Yorkshire (h-

dropping)/south Durham (h-retaining) border raises an interesting sociolinguistic question: do Darlington English speakers retain or drop 'h' in word-initial positions? This presentation gives results of Darlington English speakers' realisation of word-initial 'h' as a function of age, gender and social class.