

## Language and Gender

Reed College

Fall 2012

Kara Becker

---

Linguistics 335

T/Th 1:10-2:30

Eliot 123

Office Hours, Vollum 125: Wednesdays, 2-4pm and by appointment

kbecker@reed.edu

---

### Course Description

This course is an introduction to the large body of literature on Language and Gender within Sociolinguistics. Students will investigate how language in use mediates, and is mediated by, social constructions of gender and sexuality. Emphasis is placed on the history of research in language and gender, which contains distinct phases and movements in the field, and will culminate in a current discussion of the state of language and gender research today. Particular attention will be paid to the evolution of feminist theory, ideology, hegemony, performativity, and the “borders” of gender identities. Students will read scholarly articles and write data-driven research write-ups that clearly relate fieldwork experiences to language and gender theory. Conference.

Prerequisites: Ling 212, or consent of instructor. Group: B

---

### Grading

#### 1. Participation 25%

As always, participation – both in preparation for and during class discussion – is crucial to the success of our course. As this is a theory-heavy course for Linguistics, you should focus your energies on honing your critical thinking skills. We will do the following:

1. One week in advance, I will post one to two questions designed to help you focus your reading for the following week. I will also list key terms that I'd like you to be familiar with when you arrive in class.
2. 24 hours before class (\*this is a firm deadline\*), you will post 1-2 discussion questions for us to draw from in class discussion. Good discussion questions can be in formats like “I was fascinated by...” “I was confused by...” “I'd like to talk

more about..." "I wonder what the rest of you thought X meant when..." Your goal is to 1) clarify concepts and topics for yourself and others as well as 2) to aid our conference by fostering discussions that move us beyond the surface.

## 2. Assignments: 50%

### Assignment 1: Labels

In this assignment we will work together to create an on-line survey exploring terms, and the reactions/perceptions of terms, related to gendered identities. Your write-up will not exceed 5 pages.

### Assignment 2: Discourse

This assignment follows a fieldwork/analysis/write-up model. You will record the casual speech of friends and analyze this recording for discursive features that contribute to the construction of gender. Your final write-up cannot exceed 10 pages (excluding accompanying transcripts), and must connect your data to relevant literature from class.

### Assignment 3: Acoustics

This assignment follows the fieldwork/analysis/write-up model, you will focus here on the acoustic correlates of gender identification and/or sexual orientation. Your final write-up cannot exceed 10 pages (excluding accompanying transcripts), and must connect your data to relevant literature from class. Max 10 pages.

## 4. Final Paper 25%

Your final paper will again be based on a fieldwork/analysis/write-up model, on a topic of your choosing. Max 10 pages.

---

### Course Readings

Readings are available on Moodle and through the Library's e-journals.

---

### Course Policies

On Absences: Regular, prepared and disciplined conferencing is intrinsic to this course. Once you have missed two weeks of class – whether or not your absences are excused – you will have missed too much material and will not receive credit for this course. If a

condition is chronic, appropriate documentation and reasonable accommodations should be considered in consultation with both me and the Disability Support Services office. A notice from Student Services that you are absent because of an illness or are taking a formal emergency absence does not mean that you are excused from meeting any of the requirements of this course. If you must be absent due to health or an emergency, it is your responsibility to catch up on missed material.

On Accommodations: If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodation for this class, it is your responsibility to contact and register with Disability Support Services and provide them with documentation of your disability, so that they can determine what accommodations are appropriate for your situation. With your permission they will discuss with me those reasonable and appropriate accommodations. To avoid any delay you should contact the DSS office as early as possible in the semester, and contact me for assistance in developing a plan to address your academic needs in this course. *Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and that reasonable disability accommodations cannot be provided until I have received an accommodation letter from and discussed your case with the DSS office.* You can reach Disability Support Services at (503) 517-7921 or [disability-services@reed.edu](mailto:disability-services@reed.edu)

On Incompletes: I don't give them except in the case of an acute, extreme emergency or health crisis that interrupts what otherwise was good work and timely progress in this course.

On Late Work/Extensions: Late work drops a full letter grade for every 24 hours past the deadline.

---

## Course Schedule

### **Week 1**

Aug 28: Introductions

Aug 30: Where it began

1. Lakoff, Robin. 1973. Language and woman's place. *Language in Society* 2: 45-80.

### **Week 2**

Sep 4 - Learning to do gender

1. Butler, Judith. 1990. Chapter 1 (Parts I,II, III, and V) and pages 183-193 from *Gender Trouble*. New York: Routledge.
2. Eckert, Penelope and Sally McConnell-Ginet. Chapter 1 from *Language and Gender*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

#### Sep 6: Data 1 – Labels

1. McConnell-Ginet, Sally. "What's in a name?" Social labeling and gender practices. In *The Handbook of Language and Gender*, pgs. 69-97.
2. Sutton, Laurel A. 1995. Bitches and Skankly Hobags: The place of women in contemporary slang. In *Gender Articulated*, pgs. 279-296.

*Assignment 1 survey finalized*

### **Week 3 – Women and Men in the Sociolinguistic Literature**

#### Sep 11

1. Labov, William. 1990. The intersection of sex and social class in the course of linguistic change. *Language Variation and Change* 2 (2): 205-254.
2. Gal, Susan. 1978. Peasant men can't get wives: Language change and sex roles in a bilingual community. *Language in Society* 7: 1-16.

#### Sep 13

1. James, Deborah. 1996. Women, men and prestige speech forms: A critical review. In eds. V. L. Berguwall, J. M. Bing, and A. F. Freed, *Rethinking Language and Gender Research: Theory and Practice*.
2. Eckert, Penelope. 1989. The whole woman: sex and gender differences in variation. *Language Variation and Change* 1: 245-267.

*Assignment 1 survey data collected*

### **Week 4 – Chasing "Women's Language"**

#### Sep 18

1. Dubois, Betty Lou and Isabel Crouch. 1975. The question of tag questions in women's speech: they don't really use more of them, do they? *Language in Society* 4 (3): 289-294.
2. Holmes, Janet. 1986. Functions of "you know" in women's and men's speech. *Language in Society* 15: 1-22.

#### Sep 20: Power.

1. O'Barr, William M. and Bowman K. Atkins. 1980. "Women's language" or "powerless language?". In eds. S. McConnell-Ginet, R. Borker, and N. Furman, *Women and Language in Literature and Society*. New York: Praeger. 93-110.
2. Mendoza-Denton, Norma. 1995. Pregnant pauses: Silence and authority in the Anita Hill-Clarence Thomas Hearings. In *Gender Articulated*.

### **Week 5 – More on "Women" and "Men"**

#### Sep 25

1. Ochs, Elinor. 1993. Indexing gender. In *Rethinking Context: Language as an interactive phenomenon*, eds. A. Duranti and C. Goodwin. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 335-358.
2. Kulick, Don. 1993. Speaking as a woman: Structure and gender in domestic arguments in a New Guinea village. *Cultural Anthropology* 8 (4): 510-541.

#### Sep 27 – Masculinity

1. Eckert, Penelope and Sally McConnell-Ginet. Pgs. 98-128 from *Language and Gender*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
2. McElhinny, Bonnie S. 1995. Challenging hegemonic masculinities: Female and male police officers handling domestic violence. In *Gender Articulated*.  
*Assignment 1 due*

### **Week 6: Masculinity and the unmarked**

Oct 2

1. Ochs, Elinor and Carolyn Taylor. The "Father Knows Best" Dynamic in Dinnertime Narratives." In *Gender Articulated*.
2. Bucholtz, Mary. 1999. You da man: Narrating the racial other in the production of white masculinity. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 3 (4): 443-460.

Oct 4

1. Kiesling, Scott. 2004. Dude. *American Speech* 79 (3): 281-305.

### **Week 7 – Language and Sexuality (and Gender) – Gay Men's Language**

Oct 9

1. Gaudio, Rudolph. 1994. Sounding gay: Properties in the speech of gay and straight men. *American Speech* 69: 30-57.
2. Levon, Erez. 2007. Sexuality in Context: Variation and the sociolinguistic perception of identity. *Language in Society* 36: 533-554.

Oct 11

1. Campbell-Kibler, Kathryn. 2011. Intersecting variables and perceived sexual orientation in men. *American Speech* 86 (1): 52-68.
2. Munson, Benjamin. 2007. The acoustic correlates of perceived masculinity, perceived femininity, and perceived sexual orientation. *Language and Speech* 50 (1): 125-142.
3. Borsel, John Van, et al. Breathiness as a Feminine Voice Characteristic: A perceptual approach. *Journal of Voice* 23 (3).

### **Week 8: Fall Break**

### **Week 9– Language and Sexuality (and Gender) cont.**

Oct 23:

1. Kulick, Don. 2000. Gay and Lesbian language. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 29: 243-287.
2. Bucholtz, Mary and Kira Hall. 2004. Theorizing identity in language and sexuality research. *Language in Society* 33: 469-515.

Oct 25: No class; *Assignment 2 Due*

### **Week 10: Queer Talk**

Oct 30

1. Livia, Anna and Kira Hall. 1997. "It's a girl! Bringing performativity back to Linguistics. In Livia and Hall (eds.) *Queerly Phrased*. 3-18.
2. Leap, Bill. 2002. Not entirely in support of a Queer Linguistics. In Campbell-Kibler et al., *Language and Sexuality*.

Nov. 1

1. Moonwoman-Baird, Birch. Toward a study of lesbian speech. *Queerly Phrased*, 202-213.
2. Livia, Anna. 1995. "I Ought to Throw a Buick at You:" Fictional representations of Butch/Femme speech. In *Gender Articulated*
3. Koller, Veronika. 2009. Butch camp: On the discursive construction of a queer identity position. *Gender and Language* 3 (2): 249-274.

### **Week 11**

Nov 6 – Acoustics Workshop

1. Podesva, Robert J. 2011. Salience and the social meaning of declarative contours: Three case studies of gay professionals. *Journal of English Linguistics* 39 (3): 233-264.

Nov 8

2. Zimman, Lal. 2009. 'The other kind of coming out': Transgender people and the coming out narrative genre. *Gender and Language* 3 (1): 53-80.
3. Gaudio, Rudolf P. Not talking straight in Hausa. In *Queerly Phrased*. 416-429.

### **Week 12: Ideologies, Indexicalities**

Nov 13

1. Silverstein, Michael. 1985. Language and the culture of gender: At the intersection of structure, usage, and ideology. In eds. E. Mertz and R. Partmentier, *Semiotic Meditation: Sociocultural and Psychological Perspectives*. Orlando: Academic Press. 219-259.

Nov 15

1. Inoue, Miyako. 2002. Gender, language, and modernity: Toward an effective history of Japanese women's language. *American Ethnologist* 29 (2): 392-422.

### **Week 13**

Nov 20:

Nov 22: Turkey Day

### **Week 14: Gender, Sexuality, and Intersectionality**

Nov 27

1. Morgan, Marcyliena. 1996. Conversational signifying: grammar and indirectness among African-American women. In eds. E. Ochs, E. Schegloff, & S. Thompson, *Interaction and Grammar*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 405-434.

2. Mendoza-Denton, Norma. 1996. 'Muy macha:' Gender and ideology in gang girls' discourse about makeup. *Ethnos* 61 (1-2): 47-63.
3. Shankar, Shalini. 2008. Speaking like a model minority: "FOB" styles, gender, and racial meanings among Desi teens in Silicon Valley. *Journal of Linguistics Anthropology* 18 (2): 268-289.

Nov 29

1. Podesva, Robert J. 2011. The California Vowel Shift and gay identity. *American Speech* 86 (1): 32-51.
2. Besnier, Niko. 2003. Crossing genders, mixing languages: The linguistic construction of transgenderism in Tonga. In *The Handbook of Language and Gender*. 279-301.
3. Hall, Kira. 2005. Intertextual sexuality: Parodies of class, identity, and desire in liminal Delhi. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 15 (1): 125-144.

**Assignment 3 is Due**

**Week 14**

Dec 4: Last Day of Class

Final work is due Wednesday, December 12, at 5pm