

CALL FOR PAPERS

The ICAR laboratory (UMR 5191) specializes in the multidimensional analysis of the uses of spoken language in interaction and of text. The specificity of the analytical approaches practiced and developed in the laboratory lies in a tool-based apprehension of large corpora of oral and/or written data. Thus, ICAR brings together several research teams focusing on various scientific fields such as interactional linguistics, corpus linguistics, acquisition and learning studies, language and science didactics, as well as French linguistics and semiotics.

In 2024, the ICAR doctoral students' committee is organizing its fifth international multidisciplinary conference of young researchers working in the fields of two disciplines representative of the laboratory's research axes: language sciences and educational sciences. For this edition, we are offering a space for reflection on the links between language and power, a theme represented in the ICAR laboratory and which is currently of growing interest in human and social sciences research.

The power of words

If language can exercise power, power can reciprocally manifest itself through language practices. It is, among other things, from an institutional point of view that the problematic of an “order of discourse” (Foucault, 1971) has been approached. Based on the effects of the performativity of language (Austin, 1962; Butler, 2004 [1997]; Boutet, 2010), the symbolic value attributed to it (Bourdieu, 2001), and the patterns of domination conveyed by language, the research has shown that power is not an inherent characteristic of individuals, but is linked to the communication situations that imply it, especially in the institution. The legitimacy of language practices, far from being natural, is constructed by social norms and rituals (Goffman, 1974) which do not, however, erase the agentivity of individuals (Ahearn, 2001).

These few thoughts raise the following questions:

- Who exercises power and how?
- In what way(s) is power transmitted through language?
- How is legitimate language constructed and reproduced?

These relations between language and power can be approached in various ways within the following axes.

Axis 1: Acting on language, expressing power

The first form of power to which a language bears witness are the rules and norms that govern its functioning. To question the normativity of a language or languages is to be interested first in the institutions that establish these norms. The study of language policies has made it possible to understand how these arrangements govern “the modernization (of the lexicon, of the graphic system), the defense or expansion of a language, the relationships between languages, development, and the will to unify a country linguistically” (Calvet, 2021). In addition, the notion of glottopolitics (Guespin and Marcellesi, 1986) has enabled to highlight the actions of actors who are separate from the state and its institutions. For instance, the fact that individual and collective practices of inclusive writing have become sufficiently widespread for the French Ministry of the Interior to prohibit it in the public service (circular of 21-11-17 n°5189/SG), demonstrates that there are different scales of action on language that interact. These power actions can also be expressed at a finer grain of analysis, particularly through the use of modalities (Gosselin, 2010), expressions from the lexical field of domination or capacity, and in political discourses (Keel and Mondada, 2017).

This axis aims at exploring the following questions:

- How are the norms of a language constructed? Through which media, institutions, over time, by which actors and actresses?
- How is power thematized or represented in and through language and discourse?
- What meaning can be given to the use of “to be able to”? What role do modalities play?

Axis 2: Acting through language, bringing into existence

Denomination is another form of the power of language. Establishing a more demanding referential relationship than that of designation, it establishes a prior link between a sign and an entity in the real world (Kleiber, 1984). The act of denomination sets a referential fixation, thus it can bring something into existence in the social space. As a cultural act, this can give rise to selective axiological interpretations (cf. the subjective evaluations attributed to a language according to the richness/poorness of its lexicon). To bring something into existence, one can resort to borrowings or neologisms. This reflects the social act of language which responds to a need for communication (Vendryes, 1968 [1921]). Yet, it is the power dynamics between social groups that determine whether (and how) a new terminology will be accepted and used over time.

The notion of agentivity is relevant in this respect, as it stems from action, the ability to act through socio-cultural knowledge and a certain control over one's own behavior (Duranti, 2004). It is used to explain identity tensions and resistance against power that manifest themselves in various contexts, such as: i) creation of suburban languages, slangs as a collective assertion, ii) marker of identity and belonging to certain social categories (Wiese, 2015); or iii) creation or innovation in language based on aesthetic and/or emancipatory needs (reappropriation of terms, inclusive writing) (Duranti, 2011). If we consider the performative power of language, a totalitarian language can be seen as an act of coercion, excluding all other thought.

Confronting this language(s) of power while manipulating it at the same time can thus create group identities, being in itself an act of resistance (Scott, 2009) or an expression of conformity.

This axis aims at exploring the following questions:

- Who can bring a new name into the language and by what means/power issues?
- How do languages reflect the underlying power?
- How and by what means can we act against power through language?

Axis 3: Power asymmetries

Power relations are constantly negotiated in interactions and the resulting asymmetries are observable at both the sequential and enunciatory levels. This is related not only to the different statuses of the participants but also to their common orientation towards the goal of the interaction (Mondada & Keel, 2017). The asymmetry in the interaction is therefore not static, but can be balanced by the participants in different ways. Furthermore, from a psychological perspective, interactants bear representations, their own worldview (Koltko-Rivera, 2004), their personality type, which plays on power relations (e.g. via the feeling of self-efficacy) and influences language use. In particular, we will find different enunciative markers depending on the hierarchical position of the speaker, and strategies to attenuate, maintain or reinforce the hierarchy (such as politeness markers or jargon).

Conversely, while social contexts impact language, language plays an important role in a person's well-being and place in society (Baldo et al. 2015; St Clair et al, 2011). Indeed, it is crucial for the expression of thought and socialization, which is particularly disabling for people with language disorders, such as aphasia and dyslexia, as well as for non-native people who must find alternative ways to communicate (Piccoli & Traverso, 2020).

This axis aims at exploring the following questions:

- How is asymmetry negotiated in interaction?
- What effects can a lack of language proficiency have on the people who experience it, and what phenomena emerge from that?
- What strategies exist to compensate for a lack of power or a language deficit?

Axis 4: Transmission of power through language

Language is not only a tool for exercising power, it can also be a vector of it. Language elements and rhetorical devices conveyed by the media allow the worldview of the ruling classes to be normalized to the point of influencing people's perception of reality (Samuels & Comor, 2011). The impacts of this transmission, whether voluntary or not, are noticeable on very different scales. It can thus contribute to perpetuating an unbalanced conception of gender roles, even in paradoxical situations (Taylor & Ochs, 1992).

Teaching a language is also a way of conferring power. This is particularly apparent in situations of diglossia (Fishman, 1967) where there are power dynamics between groups using preferentially each of the existing languages, which can even lead to the replacement of a progressively depreciated language by a new one associated with the most powerful part of the population (Kulick, 1992). Here again, these mechanisms can be found on a smaller scale, such as that of individual language competence. Corpora collected in call centers demonstrate that learners participate in reproducing an ideology and accents (Cayla and Bhatnagar, 2015), the mastery of which can affect the chances of recruitment (Roy, 2003), and thus, access to income, which, in turn, influences the status of speakers in their linguistic community.

This axis aims at exploring the following questions:

- What power(s) can language convey?
- By what means is power transmitted through language?
- What traces do power relations leave in language productions, for example in interaction?

Axis 5: Knowledge and/is power

The academic world is not exempt from structural inequalities related to the differentiated visibility of so-called “Northern” and “Southern” researchers. On the one hand, the decolonial movement has brought to light the “coloniality of language” (Veronelli, 2015) structuring the field of humanities and social sciences. On the other hand, critical sociolinguistics has set out to show how unequally language resources are distributed in the context of late capitalism (Duchêne & Heller, 2012), thus perpetuating and reproducing school and university inequalities (Martín Rojo, 2021).

Scientific reflexivity leads to questions about linguistic research and its application. For instance, advances in NLP, while having enriched research with new applications, have also granted new power to potentially problematic private and public actors (reinforcement of biases, diffusion of false information...). More broadly, linguistics as a whole, through the production of discourses on language, can reinforce or break stereotypes, help or hurt minorities (Pauwels, 2003). Indeed, the question must be raised about the impacts of linguistics on the world and the role it has to play (Combs & Penfield, 2012).

This axis aims at exploring the following questions:

- What power relationships exist between researchers or between researchers and survey participants?
- How can linguistic research contribute to the improvement of social conditions? How can we ensure that research is conducted in an ethical and non-discriminatory manner?

Format of contributions

We accept two presentation formats either in French or in English:

- **30-minutes oral presentation** (20 minutes of presentation, 10 minutes of discussion) ;
- **posters** (A0 format, portrait layout, 3 to 5 minutes of presentation during a plenary session).

Proposals should include an abstract of maximum 5000 characters (including spaces) and a short bibliography of 5 references (not included in the total number of characters). Each participant may submit only one proposal (oral presentation or poster).

Submit your contribution here:

<https://icodoc.sciencesconf.org/submission/submit?forward-action=submit&forward-controller=submission&lang=en>

Publication

The selected contributions (oral or poster) will be published in two ways:

- before the conference, the abstracts of the contributions will be available online (5000 signs including spaces, 5 bibliographic references maximum);
- at the end of the conference, the articles submitted for selection will be published in paper and digital versions in a collective work published by [SHS Web of Conferences](#).

Calendar

- Opening of the submission of communication proposals: **March 11th, 2024**
- Closing date for submissions: **April 28th, 2024**
- Notification of evaluations and opening of registrations for the conference: **from 1st to 8th July**
- Return of corrected abstracts: **until September 15th, 2024**
- Online publication of abstracts on Sciencesconf: **September 15th, 2024**
- Deadline for submission of long texts selected for publication in the proceedings: **January 2025**

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