Call for Papers

VERBAL Workshop
“Queer Linguistics: Between Theory and Applicability”

This year’s Austrian Linguistics Conference (Österreichische Linguistiktagung / ÖLT), held at the University of Graz/Austria (24-26 October, 2010), will host an international workshop on the topic of Queer Linguistics.

For this workshop, we invite papers that deal with language and sexual identity from a Queer Theoretical point of view. In accordance with the framework of the Austrian Association of Applied Linguistics (Verband für Angewandte Linguistik / VERBAL), which will co-host the workshop, a central focus will be on the applicability of Queer Linguistics to concrete communication contexts.

Queer Linguistics transfers ideas from Queer Theory (Degele 2008, Jagose 1996, Kraß 2003, Sullivan 2003) to the study of language and is not exclusively restricted to documenting the linguistic behaviour of lesbian women and gay men. A central issue in the field is the critical discussion of heteronormative practices that surface in both language structure and use. For this purpose, gender binarism and heteronormativity are exposed as essentialist, mutually reinforcing mechanisms that need to be questioned and/or deconstructed.

Further topics of interest include the discursive construction of sexual identities and/or sexual desires, and the conceptualisation of heterosexuality as norm.

Finally, cross-cultural or historical linguistic analyses may be used to highlight the relativity of dominant Western identity categories such as female – male, hetero – homo, gay – lesbian.

We do not set any restrictions as far as type of language data and research methodologies are concerned. This is done out of a conviction that heteronormative structures linguistically surface in heterogeneous ways and that many linguistic approaches may be used to perform critical heteronormativity research. Possible methodologies include those prevalent in Critical and/or Poststructuralist Discourse Analysis, Conversation Analysis, Sociolinguistics, Pragmatics, but also more structure-oriented types of linguistic analyses as found, for instance, in Contrastive Linguistics or Diachronic Linguistics. We hope to unite research on and from a variety of cultures.

Abstracts of no more than 300 words may be sent to Martin Stegu, WU (Vienna University of Economics and Business)/Austria (martin.stegu@wu.ac.at) and/or Heiko Motschenbacher, Frankfurt am Main University/Germany (motschenbacher@em.uni-frankfurt.de). The deadline for the submission of abstracts is 31 May, 2010. Applicants will be notified on whether their proposals have been accepted by the end of June. Presentations are supposed to have a length of 20 minutes plus 10 minutes for discussion. The workshop language is English.
References


