

28. Wissensformen, Wissensansprüche und Schutz von kulturellem Wissen (Lab)

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Knowledge is shaped by culturally specific perspectives and is often discussed heterogeneously even within a society. Interdisciplinary research at the intersection of cultural anthropology, cognitive science, and linguistics examines knowledge in terms of cultural ideas which are expressed linguistically and which underlie social practices.

The protection of cultural knowledge, or as UNESCO puts it "*Protecting Languages and Preserving Cultures*", raises many questions for research, some of them controversial:

- What forms of knowledge exist? How is knowledge generated and how is it transmitted? To what extent is knowledge linked to language?
- Who owns knowledge or who has a right to knowledge? Who is granted access to knowledge? And how are rights regarding knowledge negotiated?
- Who declares which knowledge worthy of protection and with which goal? And which knowledge is instrumentalized politically?

The current socio-political focus on the protection of linguistic and cultural diversity and the debate about knowledge claims resulting from indigenous data also has consequences for scientific work. For example, may and can an anthropologist analyze a narrative text without including indigenous authors in the analysis? Or may a researcher go beyond documentary and descriptive work and become active in efforts to preserve languages and cultural practices (or under what conditions)? These are the questions and debates we want to address in this lab, and we will use a variety of studies to explore what innovative research formats this might yield for interdisciplinary research.

Svenja Völkel, University of Mainz

Forms of knowledge, knowledge claims, and protection of cultural knowledge: An anthropological-linguistic and cognitive-linguistic perspective

This introductory presentation will provide an overview of the lab topic: the concept of knowledge (as shaped by culturally specific perspectives and as encoded and expressed in different languages – their linguistic forms and

practices) and its impact on knowledge claims as well as the protection of knowledge. As a foundation for further discussion, a multitude of linguistic-anthropological and cognitive-anthropological questions are raised, several aspects of the topic are touched upon, and various examples are presented for their illustration. A fundamental consideration in all this will be what it means for different research approaches (e.g., what knowledge is to be collected or protected, who gets access to what kind of knowledge, or who can claim knowledge).

Keynote by Anthony K. Webster, University of Texas

Ethnography as speaking: Dialogical ethnopoetics and epistemological foundations of ethnography

This paper builds on previous work concerning a dialogical ethnopoetics and seeks to understand the ways the doing of ethnography—especially language-centered and discourse-centered ethnography—is epistemologically grounded in ways of speaking. It sees ethnography as, among other things, but vitally, speaking—the attempt to create shared understanding between interlocutors. Focusing on a set of transcripts of conversations between myself and Navajo poets, I attempt to highlight the ways I came to know things about poetry and particular poems, but also about the moral implications of such knowledge, in and through such talk.

Mandana Seyfeddinipur, Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften

Language archives: Jack of all trades or an archive is an archive?

After the shout out by linguists about language endangerment in the 90ties in the global North funding programmes and languages archives were created to document and preserve languages across the globe. 25 years later there are established language archives preserving multimedia recordings of language use of speakers of endangered languages from around the globe. The Endangered Languages Archive (www.elararchive.org) is such an archive managing such collections. This puts ELAR in the middle of the debates around protection and preservation, exploitation and extraction, ownership and repatriation of knowledge, resources, and intangible cultural heritage. Therefore, every aspect of ELAR's work is ridden with ethical, political as well as technical challenges. Ensuring the data is collected and archived with consent, organising materials in an accessible way, creating entry points for not only academic audiences and ensuring graded access, protecting against cultural appropriation and exploitation

are just a few of the challenges ELAR is managing. In all aspects the archive is walking a fine line that warrants discussion and continuous development. In this talk I will introduce these challenges and discuss the debates around each.

Adam Głaz, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University

Knowledge and wisdom in folk varieties of Polish: Insights from an ethnolinguistic team

The *magnum opus* of the ethnolinguistic team affiliated with Maria Curie-Skłodowska University (UMCS) in Lublin, Poland, is a multi-volume *Dictionary of Folk Stereotypes and Symbols* (SSSL 1996-onwards), based on thousands of records collected through fieldwork in traditional Polish rural communities over many years. It presents the totality of knowledge (cosmological, botanical, zoological, axiological, and other) that those communities gathered and preserved over generations in their folk varieties of Polish, in cultural models, and cultural practices.

In a series of interviews with members of the team, the following questions will be discussed:

- How is this knowledge entrenched in and transmitted through language?
- Who is the rightful owner of this knowledge? Under what conditions and in what form can it be disseminated?
- Can and should it be protected? How?
- To what extent can the descriptions and commentaries in the dictionary be considered as coming from the rural community members (emic) and to what extent must they be attributed to the researchers (etic)?

The interviews will be interpreted in the context of the relevant sections of the dictionary, summarised, and synopsised for a synthetic presentation.

Azeb Amha, University of Leiden

“Pearls in Peril”: Verbal art and women’s song in Zargula (Ethiopia)

As part of verbal art, songs are deeply connected to language. Language loss thus threatens continuity of knowledge and transmission of songs. The particular example that will be presented, analysis of a video-recorded work song by Zargula women in Southwest Ethiopia, is double endangered: first it is practiced in the domain of an endangered language. Second, the context of its use, i.e., manual grinding is almost obsolete due to the spread of gas and electronic mills. The song analyzed, *woddélla*, involves two or more women singing in alternating single-turns by inserting pairs of Zargula, Gamo or Amharic words or names in a fixed

frame of a recurring question-sentence structure in the Zargula language. The contents of the turns suggest a kind of cognitive exercise stimulating quick association of words and meanings in different languages, some of which they do not speak fluently. In my presentation, I describe the linguistic structure of the songs and discuss their interpretations, i.e. teasing or praising one another on character or making suggestive references about (secret or desired) relationships or activities they consider taboo. I claim that **woddélla** is a way of knowing/learning and of creatively showing (partial) knowledge of different languages and social relations.

James W. Underhill, University of Rouen

Jokes as a reminder of cultural values and minority perspectives

Jokes take many forms, and the vast field of scholarship that has developed in “Humour Studies” in English and in World English over the past thirty years has studied various social, cultural, and anthropological forms of laughing together. Irony, satire, poking fun, derision, one-up-manship, funny stories, puns, and Internet games are all part of this field. And perhaps Sylvatore Attarde’s *Routledge Handbook of Language and Humor* (2017) marks a high point in this tradition. Bringing together a wide range of multilingual scholars who focus on various genres, periods and languages, asking how we live together and laugh together in language.

Nonetheless, the vast majority of specialists in the field are Anglophones or English lecturers and the publications are inevitably “anglocentric”. What happens if we return to a cultural linguistics of laughter, an ethnolinguistics of laughter, a sociolinguistics of laughter? Approaches that consider how groups, subcultures and societies enjoy jokes together? What do jokes tell us about the prejudices of linguistic communities? How can jokes help us unveil and interpret the values implicit in cultural hierarchies? In this light, jokes will be treated as a means of resistance for groups across languages that ironically accept or disparage certain widespread discourses.