

The Halliday Centre for Intelligent Applications of Language Studies (HCLS)

Seminar Title: Ideology: its history in language and in the social sciences

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Date: 3 December 2018 (Monday)
Time: 2:30 pm – 3:45 pm
Venue: B7603, 7/F, Lift 3, Blue Zone
Yeung Kin Man Academic Building
City University of Hong Kong

ABSTRACT:

In this paper, I want to discuss both the history of ideology as a semiotic phenomenon, and its history as a concept in the social sciences. In the first part of my talk, I will argue, following Vološinov (1929), that language is always ideological, and that, following Halliday (e.g. 2003), the ideological efficacy of language is a function of its architecture, ie, of its metafunctional, realizational and stratificational complexity. These features of language emerge as part of the extended moment in our evolutionary history which can be considered the “semiotic big-bang” (Lukin, in press). I will also consider the reasons why it has been argued that the modern period has witnessed a rise in the proliferation and power of ideology (Malešević 2010, 2017).

In the second half, I turn to a history of the study of ideology, which turns out to be tied up with the history of linguistic relativity. Though this idea is typically associated with Whorf and linguistic debates in the 20th century, its lineage goes back to Condillac’s *Essay on the Origin of Human Knowledge*, which presents the first coherent account of the sign-mediated nature of sensory experience (Aarslef, 1982). From Condillac, Enlightenment philosopher Destutt de Tracy took his concept of the study of ideas, for which he coined the term “idéologie”. I conclude with a brief overview of how different linguistic schools approach the study of ideology.

BIO-SKETCH:

Annabelle Lukin is Associate Professor in Linguistics at Macquarie University, Sydney. Her research interests include ideology, the text-in-context relation, political and media discourse, and stylistics. She is author of a new book about to be released, titled *War and its Ideologies: A Social-Semiotic Theory and Description* (with Springer).

All are welcome. No registration required