CFP AAA 2016

Organizers: Jocelyn Ahlers, CSU San Marcos; Judy Pine, Western Washington University

Discussant: Jillian Cavanaugh, Brooklyn College

Working title: Unexpected Tensions: Unintended Consequences of Standardization as Evidence of Underlying Ideological Stress

Language standardization, as a tool intended to unify, instead makes visible fault lines within the community of practice to whom standardization is applied. Tracing these fault lines, we can discover significant political tension not anticipated or addressed by standardization projects. This process takes place at multiple levels, such that the pathologizing of "vocal fry" in the speech of young women (Blum 2016; Reynolds 2015) is related to the shaping of Muslim practice by Indonesian language policy at the national level (Fogg 2016), and links debates over which or how many dialects of Scots Gaelic should be included in formal education (Costa 2015) with the impact of orthographic choices as part of the standardization process (Hillewaert 2015; Jaffe et al 2012; Romaine 2002)

The struggles which emerge from the process of standardization are often reflective and constitutive of broader power struggles and compromises. The persistent affective association of language with identity (Fishman 2001), strengthened and reinforced by the development of the modern nation state, in conjunction with a monoglot "standard" (Silverstein 1996) results in concern over standard language for state and for state-less languages alike.  In this panel, we explore the discourses which form at these sites of struggle, consider the basis of claims being asserted, the semiotic ideologies within which these struggles take place, and the forms of fractal recursivity and erasure which emerge from deliberate efforts to create homogenous iconic forms.

We invite proposals which respond to the following (or related) questions. Whose voice is written into standardized language, and whose voices are written over? In what areas of discourse do these debates play out? What counts as evidence of standard versus non-standard language use, and what are the consequences of deploying particular varieties of language in particular contexts?

Please submit your 250 word abstract to Jocelyn Ahlers <jahlers@csusm.edu> and Judy Pine <judy.pine@wwu.edu> NLT April 8th.