

Call for Papers

The Language of a Pandemic: COVID-19 discursive practice and social change

Thematic issue of "Language, Discourse, & Society", a journal published by Research Committee 25 "Language and Society" of the International Sociological Association, ISSN: 2239-4192, indexed in ERIH Plus. Guest Editor: Maud Mazaniello-Chézol (Maud Mazaniello-Chezol, McGill University)

This thematic issue of *Language, Discourse & Society* seeks to investigate discourses related to the current pandemic of coronavirus disease (COVID). As such, we aim to tackle how COVID-19's language is shaping society and how society constitutes the pandemic language, especially how it may transform social norms.

The pandemic of COVID-19 disrupted the social order with sudden changes, affecting the neoliberal system on multiple levels (OECD, 2020). From the disease outbreak news to the declaration of the COVID-19 pandemic from the World Health Organization and the associated decisions such as borders' restrictions or confinement/quarantine, new challenges emerged bringing the dominant economic system's limitations out into the light (Nunes, 2020; Saad-Filho, 2020).

Leading to rapid changes in most areas of society, at the macro, meso, micro or individual levels, social functioning was revisited by the performance of a series of new governmental and institutional measures. In doing so, institutional discourse rapidly changed, investing the social realm with new claims, calling upon individuals' behavioral change. Distinguishing services as "essential" or "non-essential", re-ordering priorities, demonstrating violence to apply these priorities, the language shift inherently questioned the dominant ideology. For example, the weight put on healthcare systems and thereby healthcare workers and users has triggered governmental and social responses challenging social values, norms and ethics (e.g., Ortega & Orsini, 2020). Also, while new rituals emerged to thank healthcare workforce in some part of the world (e.g., showing gratefulness with images at the window, regular applause), some works seemed to be newly recognized. The notion of being or staying at 'home' took several dimensions whether people had a safe place to call 'home' (e.g., Black, Indigenous, and People Of Color, stateless persons, refugees, homeless persons), or people were in situation of vulnerability (e.g., in case of domestic violence, abuse, isolation).

COVID-19 reaffirmed the intersections between health and race, gender, and class-based inequalities. It thus highlighted existing social injustice, shedding light on systemic racism. These inequalities translate in several forms and raise how societal fissures along the lines of race, indigeneity, class, gender, immigration, and citizenship statuses are being revealed by the pandemic to be prevailing social determinants of health.

For this issue, we are looking for papers exploring the language of and on COVID-19 and intersecting events. We especially invite research that addresses how/if the language of the pandemic created discourses around systemic oppression related to intersecting identities of race, indigeneity, class, gender, immigration, and citizenship statuses. In this vein, we may question how institutions' discourses operationalize the pandemic, from its beginning to envisioning a post-COVID-19 era; to what extent these discourses affect human rights principles such as equality and non-discrimination; how the language of the pandemic sheds light to the social structure; how controversies around preventive practices and related regulations on social organization (e.g., #stayathome, social distancing, handmade masks) arise and how do they translate in society; or how stakeholders take part in the pandemic management, including research.

Considering the vast array of sources and questions we may discuss in this thematic issue, papers specifically drawing on government and institutions' discourses, international relations or healthcare systems restructuring, social movements, social organization of confinement, health and illness representation, healthcare workforce role negotiation, or professional identity are encouraged. Rooted in interdisciplinarity (e.g., sociolinguistics, sociology, linguistics anthropology, semantics, political science, communications, education, public health), the articles will study the language of and on COVID-19 as a mode of action, uncovering the "pervasive connections between language structure and social structure" (Fowler & Kress, 1979). Authors are invited to present their work through the lens of critical theory (e.g., neocolonialism, feminism, ecocriticism, intersectionality, critical race theory) (e.g., Crenshaw, 1989; Buell, 1998), however, any theoretical approach is welcomed and will be considered.

Submission can be done in English, Spanish and French.

Please follow the author guidelines indicated at the following URL, which includes a template for formatting: <https://www.language-and-society.org/language-discourse-society/instructions/>

IMPORTANT DATES

Call for papers	July 2020
Due date for submission	December 2020
Feedback from reviewers	February 2021
Submission of revised articles	April 2021
Issue in press	June 2021
Issue printed	December 2021

This thematic issue will be published in December 2021.

SUBMISSION TO BE DONE ONLINE AT:

<http://www.languageandsociety.org/language-discourse-society/submit-paper/>

The contact email of the guest-editor for any query is: maud.mazaniello-chezol@mail.mcgill.ca

References

Buell, L. (1998). Toxic discourse. *Critical inquiry*, 24(3), 639-665.

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- Nunes, J. (2020). The COVID-19 pandemic: securitization, neoliberal crisis, and global vulnerabilization. *Cadernos de Saúde Pública*, 36, e00063120.
- OECD (2020). The territorial impact of COVID-19: Managing the crisis across levels of government.
- Ortega, F., & Orsini, M. (2020). Governing COVID-19 without government in Brazil: Ignorance, neoliberal authoritarianism, and the collapse of public health leadership. *Global public health*, 1-21.
- | Saad-Filho, A. (2020). From COVID-19 to the End of Neoliberalism. *Critical Sociology*.



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This is also an opportunity to remind all potential authors that *Language, Discourse & Society* accepts submissions all year long for its non-thematic section.