

The Center for Multilingual & Intercultural Communication

The MIC Distinguished Lecture Series

Symbolic Power and Conversational Inequality in Intercultural Communication

Thursday, September 19, 2019, 11:30 am – 12:45 pm
Wang Center Lecture Hall 1

Symbolic power (a term first introduced by Bourdieu, 1979) never plays itself out more strongly than in daily conversations, in which not only turns-at-talk are exchanged and vied for but also subject positions, identities, authenticity and legitimacy (Bucholtz & Hall 2005). This talk draws on findings from a special issue that examines multiple faces of symbolic power and conversation inequality (Zhu Hua & Kramsch, 2016) and aims to understand some of the myths and realities in the field of intercultural communication, in particular, power and language. Through examining everyday conversational interactions such as “where are you really from?”, it investigates the following key questions: (i) How is symbolic power defined and constituted in intercultural communication?; (ii) How does power inequality impact the way language is used?; (iii) What is the most appropriate research approach to studying the workings of power in intercultural communication?



Zhu Hua

Zhu Hua is Professor of Applied Linguistics and Communication and Assistant Dean for Postgraduate Research in Birkbeck College, University of London. Her main research interests span across multilingual and intercultural communication and child language. Among her recent publications are *Exploring Intercultural Communication: Language in Action* (2019 Routledge, 2nd edition); *Translating Culture in Global Times* (2019, a special issue of Applied Linguistics, with Claire Kramsch); *Multilingual, Multisensory, and Multimodal Repertoires in Corner Shops, Streets and Market* (2017, a special issue of Social Semiotics, with Emi Otsuji and Alastair Pennycook). She is Forum and Book Reviews Editor of *Applied Linguistics* (Oxford University Press).

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