

Linguistic Intervention

Bielefeld 12.-13.7.2024

A research workshop with

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**UNIVERSITÄT
BIELEFELD**
Fakultät für
Geschichtswissenschaft,
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<https://tinyurl.com/lingen24>

Research Workshop

Linguistic Interventions – Philosophical and Empirical Perspectives

Bielefeld University, July 12–13 2024

organized by Steffen Koch & Christian Nimtz

please register via email to [cnimtz\[at\]uni-bielefeld.de](mailto:cnimtz[at]uni-bielefeld.de)

The General Idea

Contemporary philosophers often argue that it is not enough to analyze or describe our current conceptual and linguistic tools; instead, we should also seek to critically evaluate and actively change them. This methodological turn in philosophy coincides with an increased focus on language in the public sphere, where discussions about gendered language, sexual harassment, our societal naming practices, or how we should refer to categories such as race and gender are regularly combined with linguistic interventions: active attempts to change our linguistic practices. Linguistic interveners share the assumption that improving language will reap cognitive and practical benefits: the development of better theories, more accurate inferential patterns, overcoming hermeneutic injustices, advance social emancipation, etc.

But for linguistic interventions to have positive effects, say, on our theorizing or social relations, two conditions must be met: (A) changes at the linguistic level (e.g. how we use a word) must reliably and specifically affect people's noncommunicative behavior (e.g., what inferences they are disposed to draw) (efficacy); (B) it must be feasible to actually bring about the changes in our linguistic practices that linguistic interveners intend (feasibility). In spite of their centrality, efficacy and feasibility are underexplored in the literature. Just as linguistic intervention more broadly, they are rarely made the explicit focus of philosophical theorizing.

This international workshop marks a first attempt to establish and explore linguistic intervention as a philosophical topic of its own right, and it will do so with a focus on efficacy and feasibility. The workshop will take a thoroughly interdisciplinary perspective. We take it that any serious philosophical theorizing about linguistic intervention needs to be informed by work in the empirical sciences. So, our workshop brings together philosophers working in the philosophy of language, social philosophy, and the philosophy of mind, with empirical researchers from cognitive psychology and cognitive science. In doing so, it provides a unique opportunity for cross-pollination on the ins and outs of linguistic interventions.

Workshop Schedule

(titles may be subject to change)

conference venue for all talks: Bielefeld University, X building, room X-A2-103

Friday, July 12			Saturday, July 13		
0	9:30- 10:00	Introduction	5	10:00 – 11:30	DELIA BELLERI – Conceptual Engineering, Implementation, and Metalinguistic Awareness
1	10:00 – 11:30	GARY LUPYAN – Does it matter if something has a name?			
2	11:45 – 1:15	ELEONORE NEUFELD – Generics, Asymmetry, and Strategic Speech	6	11:45 – 1:15	FRITZ GÜNTHER – The selection and consequences of concept labels
		Lunch break			Lunch break
3	2:30 – 4:00	CHRISTIAN NIMTZ – Linguistic interventions through social norm change	7	2:30 – 4:00	STEFFEN KOCH – Ameliorative Projects, Psychological Essentialism, and the Power of Nouns
4	4:15 – 5:45	LEDA BERIO – Resisting gender narratives: training attention through language			
	7:00	Conference Dinner			Optional sightseeing