

Language is ...

- A repository of past gender ideological practices
- A resource for the production and reproduction of the gender order
- A resource for the performance of (new) gendered identities

Note that change is fundamental in all cases

So our question is how does change come about?

Beyond face-to-face face

- Our attention to each other's meanings and interpretations creates an intersubjective space in which convention eventually gets laid down.
- This intersubjective space extends beyond individual interactions to the networks of interactions, and into non face-to-face interactions (including the telephone, internet, written media, entertainment media...)

Performativity

- Performative speech act: a speech act that enacts what it names (“I now pronounce you husband and wife”)

AUSTIN, J.L. 1962. How to do things with words. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gender as performativity

- Gender exists only in the reiterated *doing*.
- Gender is constructed through repeated performances of e.g. “femininity” and “masculinity”.
- In other words, if we didn’t do gender, it wouldn’t exist.

BUTLER, JUDITH. 1990. Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity. New York: Routledge.

and 1993. Bodies that matter: Routledge.

Back to Face

- When we present a face, we have some assumptions about how it will be interpreted and how much/in what ways it will be supported.
- In general, we want people to interpret our performances in the way we intend. So we use resources that we know people will recognize - we try to make our performances *legible*.

Legibility and iterability

- We engage repeatedly in these performances. (I repeatedly use the public toilet labeled “women” rather than the one labeled “men” or the outdoors).
- This could mean we always do what’s expected - that we reproduce the status quo.
- It could also mean that we do something (even slightly) unexpected - that we push the envelope (even unintentionally). But note it’s legibility that makes change possible.

Inoue's magazine readers -

- The dialogue in novels and magazines laid down the original (complex) meanings of “teyo-dawa” speech.
- The magazine readers made teyo-dawa speech “real” by engaging in stylized performances of it (from writing in to the magazines, to playing Barbies, to talking to the boss, to talking to one's friends...)

Power lies in meaning-making rights:

- The ability to get one's perspective (ideology) embedded in the language (e.g. the lexicon)
- The right to get one's perspective into the discourse:
 - access to situations, activities, speech acts, the floor, attention, repeatability
- The ability to use legitimated varieties, styles
- The ability to define the above

What would it take for your meaning of *hook up* to catch on with the older generation?

- Or ... what did it take for pejorative meanings of *hussy* to take over?
- ... and what does it mean for a meaning to take over?

Suppose two interlocutors begin with different meanings?

- What makes one interlocutor accommodate to the other?
- Then what does it take for that meaning to travel beyond that particular situation?
- How do things make it into the dominant discourse?

Convention and language use

Moving around in the world doesn't just come naturally.

- How do you know how to walk down the street without bumping into people?
- How do you know when and how to greet someone?