FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Research Master in Cognitive Science and Humanities: Language, Communication and Organization
2013-2014

Instructors:

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1.- Description, motivations and aims

The history of the relationship between language and social psychology can be considered fickle and misleading to an observer. The meaning of the relationship between language and social psychology depends on the perspective from which it is viewed. Twenty years ago students of linguistics and social psychology had completely different interests of study. Nowadays, however, this situation has changed. Linguists aim at searching for the language "beyond the sentence" and social psychologists search for the "social dimensions". These flows of interests have created reciprocal exchanges leading social psychologists to focus on the social psychological dynamics of language in communication and linguists to work about the pragmatic dynamics.

In order to transmit such paradigmatic changes, the course aims at analysing three dynamic trends namely, the meta-theoretical paradigms, the exchanges between linguistics and social psychology and the emergence of new theoretical research programs. First, a brief history of social psychology is presented, mainly focusing on its history, definitions and methods. Second, the paradigmatic change from the new standard of science to the new view of science is analysed in a recursive way. Third, the exchange between linguistics and social psychology is presented by considering outcome of the "search for beyond the sentence" in linguistics and the "search for the social context" in social psychology.

In the present course, concrete instances of the study of language use are presented. Specifically, the course firstly presents language use at a collective level, focusing on how reality is represented in order to cope with new and threatening phenomena. Moreover, the course also considers language use at an interpersonal level. Language use is viewed as social action, as a goal directed action, and as requiring coordination and negotiation between speakers.

2.- Tentative Course Schedule

1. Social psychology and language. The collective/ social level
    a. Social psychology. Remarks on history, definition, methods
    b. Meta-theory
    c. Social norms and influence
    d. The social self
    e. Social prejudice

2. Social psychology and language. The interpersonal level
    a. Language use as social behavior
    b. Language use, thought and culture
    c. Language use and social cognition
    d. Language use and social identity
    e. Language use and interpersonal relations
3. Social psychology and language use. Specific instances
    a. Hypocrisy theory program
    b. Social norms program
    c. Social self program
    d. Linguistic category model program
    e. Communication accommodation theory program
    f. Politeness theory program

3.- Requirements and Evaluation

Requirements of the course are: a) to participate on topics of discussion during the lectures, b) to make four brief presentations and c) to write an intervention program (4-5 pages long)

Students have available all the materials used during lectures on Moodle.

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