

Call for Chapters: “Language and Identity in Antiquity”

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This multilingual volume seeks to explore the relationship(s) between language(s) and identity(/ies) for individuals and groups of people (of any size and shape) in the polities bordering on the Mediterranean Sea and their neighbours in antiquity and beyond. Since correlations between language and identity are prone to changing diachronically and being highly variable synchronically, we have chosen a purposefully wide timeframe of between 2000 BCE and 1000 CE.

We want to move away from deterministic discourses such as ‘one language – one nation’ or ‘multilingualism as a problem’ which no longer reflect our understanding of language in society. Rather, we view identity as ‘multifaceted, fluid and dynamic, and thus constantly being constructed and (re)negotiated, and as both an individual and social phenomenon’ (Bennett and Fisher 2022: 16). This approach reflects, broadly speaking, a post-structuralist idea of identity: As a semiotic system, language is, on the one hand, a tool to construct identity, and, on the other hand, one of many emblems of identity choice (cf. Halliday and Webster 2007: 255). However, not all language choices are intentional and not all identity cues are interpreted by one’s environment in the intended way (cf. Block 2022: 187; Foucault 1981). While production and perception experiments, interviews assessing attitudes, and longitudinal studies are possible for modern spoken languages, these approaches and the type and detail of information they provide are often lacking for corpus languages.

Questions of interest include the following, where ‘language choices’ refer both to choosing between what is usually termed languages as well as between varieties of the same language:

- How and/or why **can** language choices reflect identity choices? What factors impact? What types of identities can be reflected?
- To what extent **does** context influence language and identity choices? Are there synchronic and/or diachronic correlations? Are there systems adopted by individuals and/or groups that regulate this?
- To what extent do language choices **not** reflect identity choices (e.g. in the sense of Labov’s indicators)? What identities are imposed on language users due to their language choices (cf. Block 2022; Duff 2022)?
- What aspects of language are manipulated in order to reflect identity choices? Are any aspects immune? Are any aspects specifically prone to it?

We are particularly interested in contributions that

- showcase interdisciplinary approaches;
- are data-driven and adhere to the [FAIR](#) use of data;
- connect past and present theories with a clear vision or in an established framework;
- include non-Indo-European language data.

Expressions of interest (in English, French, German or Italian), including an abstract not exceeding 500 words (excl. references), should be sent to Robin Meyer (robin.meyer@unil.ch) by 30 August 2024. Final and complete drafts of the chapters accepted will be expected for submission by 25 April 2025. The editors intend to publish the volume in Open Access.

References

Ayres-Bennett, Wendy, and Fisher, Linda (eds). *Multilingualism and Identity: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022.

Block, David. "Seeking Methodological Rigour in Language and Identity Research: Applying a Version of Positioning Theory to a Research Interview Excerpt". In: Ayres-Bennett, Wendy, and Fisher, Linda (eds), *Multilingualism and Identity: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022, pp. 181–200.

Duff, Patricia. "Multilingualism(s), Globalization and Identity: Learning 'Chinese' as an Additional Language". In: Ayres-Bennett, Wendy, and Fisher, Linda (eds), *Multilingualism and Identity: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022, pp. 261–279.

Foucault, Michel. "The order of discourse". In: Young, Robert (ed.), *Untying the text: A post-structuralist reader*. London: Routledge, 1981, pp. 51–78.

Halliday, Michael, and Webster, Jonathan. *Language and Society*. London: Bloomsbury, 2007.