

Plenary 3: Dr. J Calder (University Colorado Boulder)

What can examining understudied populations show us about social meaning?

Indexicality is a theoretical framework used by sociolinguists and linguistic anthropologists to talk about social meaning. Originally coined by Charles Sanders Peirce (1895), indexicality refers to a co-occurrence relationship between a sign and an object, such that the sign comes to be associated with, and index, the object. In this talk, I explore the ways indexicality has been theorized in sociolinguistics, and how researching under-represented communities can enrich our theoretical understanding of the phenomenon. Through case studies of communities that investigate the articulation of identity among racial and gender minorities, I argue that bringing intersectional analysis to the study of social meaning is necessary for the explanatory accuracy we strive for as sociolinguists.