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The ongoing languaging revolution and more. Special Issue 2023 Introduction

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About a decade ago Hadrian Lankiewicz, "The notion of languaging has recently become quite popular and applied in many disciplines from philosophy (Maturana 1988, 1995), across psychotherapy (Hall 1996; Lenchuk and Swain 2010; Swain and Lapkin 2011) to linguistics (Lado 1979; Mignolo 1996; Jørgensen 2010; Juffermans 2011) and language learning and teaching (Swain 2005; Swain 2006; Swain and Lapkin 1998; 2002; 2006). Be it philosophy or linguistics, the basis of the concept rests on the assumption that language is a way of cognising, making personal sense of the world, becoming conscious of oneself and a means of identification (cf. Lenchuk and Swain 2010)." (Lankiewicz 2014: 1-2).

I believe that the popularity of the term *languaging* is a very important indication of a sea change in communicative, cognitive or entire human sciences. It is far more significant than any of the previous twists and turns – linguistic, pragmatic, rhetoric etc. In fact, we live through not just a *Languaging turn* but a genuine *Languaging Revolution* that started two or three decades ago.

The moment of Languaging Revolution is aptly summed up by one of the authors of this special issue Stephen Cowley, "Following repeated returns (see Cowley 2019), languaging entered the academy toward the end of the last century. Its adoption is due to, above all, Sellars (see 1960; Seiberth 2021), Becker (1991), Maturana (see 1983, 2002; Raimondi 2019), and Swain (see Swain and Lapkin 2011). All oppose the language myth – languaging needs no codes or telemetation. As Becker suggests, "There is no such thing as language, only continual languaging, an activity of human beings in the world" (Becker 1991: 34). While perspectives vary, languaging acts as a symbiosis of two "orders" (Cowley 2017; Love 2004, 2017)" (Cowley, 2023).

I can only approve the genealogical reconstruction undertaken by Stephen Cowley starting with Richard Malcaster (1582) and particularly highlight the roles of Peter Daughty (1972; 1979), M.A.K. Halliday (1975; 1985), Anton (Pete) Becker (1991), Nigel Love (2004; 2007; 2017) and Stephen Cowley (2005; 2019; 2023) himself. I have to mention, of course, publications by Boris Gasparov (1996), Alexander Kravchenko (2011), Anton Markoš (2011; 2017), Sive Vork Steffensen (2009; 2013), Jens Normann Jørgensen (2010), Stephen Cowley and Annelise Kuhle (2020), Vincenzo Raimondi (2014; 2019), Paul Thiboult (2019; 2022), Rasmus Gahrn-Andersen (2019), Jens Normann Jørgensen and Janus Spindler Møller (2014), Sive Vork Steffensen and Stephen Cowley (2021), Nikolai Rozov (2021; 2022; 2023) and many others.

The fact is that originally exceptional languaging studies have moved from the peripheries of linguistics, cognitive science, semiotics, education and language teaching to the core of the respective disciplines and now are shifting to the very heart of life and human sciences with a promise of becoming their integrators. They are coupled with other ground-breaking notions like "4E" (Paul Thibault aptly adds up "9Es of languaging"), distributed language and consciousness (languaging and thinking ?), extended human ecology etc.

The authors of the current issue introduce new aspects of the Languaging Revolution. One of the most prolific and sweeping promoters of languaging opens up our common drive by a call for radicalizing radical linguistics and insists on the need to overcome the language–practice divide. In his article Rasmus Gahrn-Andersen thematizes the language – practice divide which, in various forms, is posited by proponents of radical linguistics. He further traces the divide back to Saussure's *Course*,

and argues for withholding this divide. More specifically he unfolds his criticism of Saussure's account on the difference and similarities between the general phenomenon of language and the practice of a chess game, arguing that there are no grounds for assuming that the two differ in kind, let alone are essentially reducible to their synchronous elements. Finally, Rasmus Gahrn-Andersen shifts towards exploring the interplay of language and practice by stressing the enlanguaged nature of practical doings and how they emerge from basic cognitive attitudes.

Paul John Thibault refocus our revolutionary vision on virtualities of languaging. His point of departure is the widespread idea that the term *virtual reality* refers to a form of surrogate or substitute reality. In his view languaging is not a surrogate reality. It is deeply enmeshed in and constitutive of the reality that we live in. Drawing on Henri Bergson (1911/1986), Gilbert Simondon (1989, 1995), and Gilles Deleuze (2004/1968; Deleuze & Guattari, 1980, 2004/1980) he insists that the virtual is a modality of existence that is part of and immanent in reality. It is not a copy or imitation of reality. What is called *virtual* on this view is quite authentic and its effects are pragmatically "real". It is a modality of existence that has actual effects and genuine consequences.

The conceptual-ideational structures of a language (and concepts more generally) are forms of activity that are compressed by a particular linguistic or other semiotic structure such as visual images. They are more than formal structures. The word *banana* is a form of incipient activity that is compressed, informationally, in the linguistic pattern. Bananas are instantiated in the many forms of social activities and practices involved in the growing, harvesting, distribution, storage, transportation, buying and selling, and uses and consumption of bananas in a wide range of activities and practices of different kinds. The word *banana* is an artefact that is nonetheless a compressed form of activity. Forms of activity embed artefacts in them as affordances for producing human action. Utterances have the functional capacity – the second-order affordance potential — to direct attention to and to provide indications as to the affordance potentials of first-order 'objects' and 'events.'

Paul Thibault insists that words do not correspond to the fixed essences of things. Instead, they serve to set up interactive stances between selves and environmental phenomena—stances that provide second-order linguistic information about some aspect of the affordance potentials of the first-order experiential topology that provides the current locus of attention. In so focusing and coordinating attention, they draw value from the self into the affordances so indicated. Calling something a 'lemon' rather than a 'banana' is to indicate something about its affordance potential and therefore how it can or might be interacted with. Finally, Thibault claims that an important aspect of the functional capacities of utterances is to provide functional information about the aspects of experience that language differentiates and

how the given aspect so differentiated can affect us just as we can affect it when self-co-articulates with the affordance potentials of its environment.

Mikhail Ilyin reinterprets languaging within a broader context of information processes and transformation including sensing, thinking, making choices, learning etc. Ilyin outlines interpretations of respective transformations and processes from Aristotle, Descartes and Kant to Russell, Wittgenstein, Austin and theoreticians of ongoing cognitive and languaging revolutions. With all the crucial importance of distinguishing substance (energy-matter resources of continuance) and its form (modes of subsistence) the rigid opposing of the ultimate substance/form abstractions provokes conceptual impediments that result into notorious pseudo-Cartesian mind-body problem. It is possible to overcome it by refocusing on actual middle ground integral developments including actual psychosomatic and mental processes, human communicative interactions and their pragmatic activities. A promising way to do that is to develop intellectual instruments similar to accommodating Hjelmslevean distinction of content and expression planes or relatively integral substance-form complexes.

The article suggests a range of instrumentalities to methodologically reinterpret actual middle ground practices of languaging and language games. To that effect it suggests a few complementary ways of their embedding and enacting, particularly new modes and procedures to conceptualize prerequisites and outcomes, externalities and affordances of the matching middle ground practices.

Stephen J. Cowley and Marie-Theres Fester-Seeger address r*e-evoking* to track how languaging enacts human social intelligence. Turning from linguistic tradition, they reduce language to neither abstracta nor form. Instead they see it as human activity. In this perspective languaging arises as people co-act and direct attention in an enlanguaged world. Given their embodiment, people use languaging to evoke absent others in a flow of action, feeling, judgment, and attitudes. Although based in organism-environment coupling, languaging is also diachronic in that it re-evokes the absent. As a result people use emplaced activity to enact practices, events, situations, artifacts in their enlanguaged worlds. The authors conclude that people reach beyond the body as they re-evoke the absent by languaging or, by definition, "activity in which wordings play a part." As we will show, absent people are evoked by *othering*. In common domains (e.g. a school), social habits generate dispositions during a history of co-acting that, later, can re-evoke absent others and past selves. Having begun with a literary example, we later turn to a detailed case study to show *how* a narrator brings feeling to languaging (in this case, frustration) as she re-evokes other people as they are for her. In conclusion, we suggest that radical embodiment demands extension to include how human practices link coupling with social intelligence as people channel what they do with the help of languaging.

The ongoing languaging revolution and more

Olga Iriskhanova, Maria Kiose, Anna Leonteva and Olga Agafonova address multimodal languaging and particularly reifying profiles in speech and gesture. Their paper explores multimodal languaging of objects and words as an encultured practice further manifested in the adults' speech and gesture behavior. In the study, speech and gesture distribution serves to identify the reification image-schemas developed and used by adults to enact objects and words multimodally. They report the results of the experiment where the participants explained the difference between close synonyms, enacting them as either objects or words in speech and gesture. The basic claim of the study is that speech and gesture patterns as second-order language reflect the way these patterns were acquired in developing the knowledge of objects and words as objects of reference in reification image-schemas.

Their research team found that i) object reification occurs twice more often; ii) enacting objects and words is affected by the same image-schemas expressed in speech and gesture types, still there are differences in their distribution which are significant in speech. This observation evidences that both gesture-specific and language-specific notions are part of languaging. Overall, the study shows that reification image-schemas allow to speak of languaging as a multimodal phenomenon since the speech and gesture patterns invariably present the way of packaging the shared idea of objects of reference.

Our selection of contributions wraps up with a genuinely revolutionary move to new frontiers and dimensions of languaging. Eugenia Demuro and Laura Gurney turn to nonhumans and question their ability to speak. In their article they address posthumanism as a way to theorise and articulate what *language(s)/languaging* is (or may be) for nonhuman animals. This is investigated via various concepts brought together: we turn to the ontological turn in anthropology to expand on what language is, or might be, amongst humans, and then discuss *Umwelt* and *languaging* as two possible modes of exploring ontologies and biosemiosis among nonhumans. The dialogue between posthumanism and biosemiosis is so far absent in the field of critical language studies. The aim, thus, is to contribute to the nascent field of posthumanist applied linguistics by tentatively linking discrete fields of enquiry for a productive exchange across disciplines, and to further the discussion of how nonhuman language is (or may be) ontologized.

This article concludes the current issue of LF, but our efforts are still pending. Rasmus Gahrn-Andersen who opens up our present collection is now working on a new one focussed on enlanguaged practices, specifically on languaging, semiosis and the radical human ecology. The revolution continues…

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