

Language, Discourse and Gender Identity

Identities are constituted and reconstituted by language, which gives the illusion that linguistic organization reflects a definitive sense of belonging in a neatly structured world. Since mid-twentieth century, however, language has increasingly started to be suspected, as its neutrality has constantly been under attack by theoreticians who see it as reflecting and strengthening hierarchical social orders that oppress certain groups and individuals that fall outside the established norms. Gender scholars, especially, now approach language as a “discourse” that either fits or subverts the aims of patriarchy. They claim that gender discourse has been barely unalterable for centuries, when subversion was fairly easy to silence and invisibilize. But in the last half century gender discourse acquired a name and a presence and marked the way for minorized groups to form and voice their different identities and in Bronwyn Davies’s words “multiple ways of being.” (1990:502)

The current Messenger issue will concentrate on both the role of language in creating gendered identities and alternative “discourses” that envisage the existence and possibility of plural and variable existences and worlds that challenge traditional sexed and gendered polarities.

Issue co-editors

Dr. Isil Bas, Istanbul Kultur University, Istanbul (Turkey)

Dr. Maria Socorro Suarez Lafuente, University of Oviedo, Oviedo (Spain)