

Onomastics Online
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Names as resources for identity construction

Abstract: This lecture discusses the multiple ways in which names can function as resources for identity construction. Basing on a social semiotic approach (Halliday 1978, Kress 2000), the use of linguistic resources – such as names – always constitute an act of will and mirrors the speaker's interest in a given situation. Furthermore, meaning making is considered a social project, highly influenced by the social contexts in which individuals produce and interpret meaning. As a result, names can function as resources for construction of various kinds of meanings – one of these being “identity”. This lecture will apply a social constructionist approach to identity (Bucholtz & Hall 2005, de Fina et al. 2006), recognizing that identity is a complex concept that people continuously *do* or *create* through participation in social interaction and meaning making in varying contexts of life. From this perspective, names and naming becomes resources for the expression and negotiation of meanings related to who I am, who they are and how we are related to each other (cf. Chrysoschoou 2003). The lecture will present a social semiotic approach to name and identity, relate this to some other main approaches in the field (Alford 1988, vom Bruck and Bodenhorn 2006, Longobardi 2006, Borg 2017), and use some of my own empirical research data regarding parental name giving (Aldrin 2017), self-referencing online names (Aldrin 2019) and textbook name coinages (Aldrin 2021, Aldrin work in progress) in order to discuss various perspectives on names as resources for identity construction.

References:

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Link to the Zoom Meeting:

<https://tuni.zoom.us/j/64438496192?pwd=TUNMN0dPa0NDbmtGaElkemRoMGVjQT09>

Meeting ID: 644 3849 6192

Passcode: 748712