



# GUEST LECTURE

**Cece Cutler**  
**City University of New York**

## EMBODIED STYLES AND AFFECT IN SOCIOLINGUISTICS

Wednesday, 5<sup>th</sup> April 2023  
16.15 - 17.45, F - 123  
University of Bern

The idea of the 'habitus' as embodied forms of accumulated cultural capital is one of Bourdieu's most influential concepts. It refers to the deeply ingrained habits, skills, and dispositions that we possess due to our life experiences, and which reproduce the social structure. But this is perhaps a very static way of viewing embodiment. More recent work frames embodiment as something much more agentive and flexible and inseparable from affect (Pratt 2021, de Certeau 1984). Affect can be described as the outward expression of subjective feelings and emotions. Citing Goffman (1978), Pratt (2021) writes that it is impossible to make an utterance that is devoid of some kind of perceivable affect. Indeed, as she observes, "Affect courses through the interactional moments wherein we produce and interpret stylistic variation, and in doing so it constitutes and reflects both conventionalized displays of emotion as well as the ideological rendering of styles and personae (2). In this talk, I explore the intersection of embodied and linguistic displays of affect in metadiscursive and metapragmatic comments about New York City English from YouTube. New Yorkers have been described as using a "high energy speech style" characterized by frequent interruptions, high-pitch, machine-gun style questioning, incessant talking, sudden change of topics, and complaining (Tannen 1981; 2005). In the paper, I show how the New York City conversational style gets iconically linked to particular kinds of affective display and personae.

Cecelia Cutler is Professor of Linguistics at Lehman College and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. She is currently serving as Executive Officer (Chair) of the PhD/MA Program in Linguistics at the CUNY Graduate Center. Her work centers on language and identity, language in digital media, and language attitudes and ideologies. Her recent published work has appeared in *American Speech*, *Language Variation and Change*, and *World Englishes*. Recent volumes include *Multilingual Youth Practices in Computer-Mediated Communication* (2018), co-edited with Unn Røyneland (Cambridge University Press) and *Digital Orality* co-edited with May Ahmar and Soubeika Bahri (2022) (Palgrave).