

**Exploring the phenomenology of shopping as social practice:
An inquiry into the multimodal and linguistic repertoires in markets in Sydney**

Western Sydney University

Dariusz Izadi

Markets and ethnic shops are sites where strangers of highly diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds interact on a daily basis. They are focal intersections in the global mobility of people, services, and goods in contemporary societies. Such sites are marked by an increasing multiplicity—not simply of ethnicity, but of scale, flow, and space. Markets are spaces of sociability: spaces which mediate and redistribute goods and practices, be those physical (such as food or packages) or in the form of information exchange (such as food recipes or just generally socialising into ways of doing things). They also represent a significant public and social space for rubbing along and for mediating differences.

While markets and ethnic shops are sites where linguistic practices and mediational means (cultural tools) are constantly under negotiation (as participants with new repertoires as well as other semiotic resources including objects come into contact due to increased mobility), little research beyond the generic structure of interactions has been carried out into language use in these venues. By exploring a busy marketplace in Sydney, known as Parklea Markets, the talk delves into the chains of meaning that go into moments of shopping. By applying a nexus analysis and mediated discourse analysis (Scollon & Scollon, 2004) and by drawing upon complex forms of linguistic (or semiotic) ethnography as a research tool, the talk aims to explore how semiotic resources, products, and space are intertwined and interwoven in the process of cultural and interactional exchange. Central to the talk is the way mediational means (Scollon, 2001) such as credit cards and coloured plastic bags come together as part of semiotic assemblages of material (Izadi, 2020; Pennycook & Otsuji, 2015) and semiotic resources as languages, goods and participants (dis)assemble at particular moments. Getting a sense of these mundane everyday interactions will reveal how national and international structures, discourses, and politics filter down to the local level, and how they impact upon and are negotiated by everyday diverse actors in their relationships to one another.

References

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