

CV Florian Coulmas

January 2016

current



Faculty of Social Sciences
IN-EAST Institute of East Asian Studies Univer-
sity of Duisburg-Essen
47057 Duisburg, Germany
http://www.dijtokyo.org/about_us/florian_coulmas

EDUCATION

- 1980 University of Düsseldorf, Habilitation, *venia legendi*
(qualification of full professor) General Linguistics
- 1977 University of Bielefeld, Dr. phil. General Linguistics
- 1974/75 Free University of Berlin
- 1974 Free University of Berlin, M. A. Linguistics and Sociology
- 1972/73 Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio
- 1969/70 Sorbonne, Paris
- 1968/69 Free University of Berlin

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 2015 - Senior Professor, IN-EAST, Institute of East Asian Studies,
University Duisburg-Essen
- 2004-2014 Director, Deutsches Institut für Japanstudien, Tokyo
- 1999 - Professor of Japanese Studies, Institute of East Asian Studies,
University Duisburg-Essen
- 1987-1999 Chuo University, Tokyo, Professor of Sociology of Language
- 1995 University of New Mexico, Albuquerque Visiting
Professor Summer
- 1994/95 Institute of Advanced Study, Berlin, Fellow
- 1986/87 Georgetown University, Washington, DC, Visiting Professor
1984/85 Gakushuin University, Tokyo, Visiting Professor
- 1981-83 The National Language Research Institute, Tokyo, Researcher
and Lecturer
- 1979-87 University of Düsseldorf, Assistant Professor, Professor
- 1977-78 University of Bielefeld, Assistant Professor
- 1975 – 77 Hiroshima University, Lecturer

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

- 1999 Editorial board Current Issues in Language Planning
- 1997 Editorial board Written Language and Literacy
- 1994 Fellow Institute of Advanced Studies Berlin
- 1988 Editorial board Journal of Asian Pacific Communication
- 1986 Associate editor International Journal of the Sociology of Language
- 1984 Editorial board Journal of Psycholinguistic Research
- 1983 Heisenberg-Fellow of Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft
- 1982 Japan Foundation Publication Grant
- 1981 Editorial board Journal of Pragmatics
- 1980 Fellow of Alexander Humboldt Foundation and Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS)
- 1974 Ph.D. scholarship, Free University of Berlin

MEMBERSHIP IN PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

- Linguistic Society of America
- Nihon gengo gakkai (Japanese Society of Linguistics)
- Gesellschaft fuer Angewandte Linguistik (German Association of Applied Linguistics)

RESEARCH INTERESTS

My research activities involve three major endeavours:

- (a) Writing, its linguistics and ethnography
- (b) Japanese society and culture
- (c) Language planning and policy

Although these areas seem to be unrelated, this is not really the case. The manifestation of language in speech and print, the function of writing for language standardization, the segmentation of linguistic units, and the question of how these modes of language representation interact and are put to use in different linguistic and cultural settings pose interrelated questions.

Writing is a means of representing language, but it also exercises an influence on its development and on the way speakers perceive, conceptualize, and use their language. So far we know little about the differences between spoken and written language as well as those between written and unwritten languages.

My work is an attempt to find new and productive ways to view some of the problems in question.

In addition to my work in Sociolinguistics, I have developed an interest in demography in recent years, as I directed a major research project about population ageing and decline, at the German Institute for Japanese Studies. This unprecedented population change affects virtually all spheres of life, including language and its evolution. The assumption, so far largely unchallenged in variationist linguistics, that historical language change occurs in a stable population can no longer be taken for granted if, as is true of Japan, a population doubles its life expectancy within a mere century. What this implies for language change is an under-researched question of theoretical significance to which I have devoted some attention of late and intend to do more research about in future.

TEACHING

My primary fields of specialization, Sociolinguistics and General Linguistics, offer students a perspective on language that is constructive and useful, focussing as they do, both on the social context of languages as an instrument of interaction and on the universal conditions of language as a symbolic system. While the focus of my research is in Sociolinguistics, I have taught courses in other areas as well, particularly Writing Systems, Pragmatics, Lexicography, Language and Culture, History of Linguistics, Japanese Grammar.

I have been involved in classroom teaching in a number of different institutions. I have taught courses at Bielefeld University, Essen University, Düsseldorf University, Duisburg University, all in FRG, as well as at Hiroshima University, Gakushuin University, Saitama University, Chuo University, the University of Tokyo and at the National Language Research Institute in Tokyo. For two years I taught in the Linguistics Department of Georgetown University, Washington D.C.

**RECENT
BOOKS**

2016 Guardians of Language. Twenty Voices through History. Oxford:
Oxford University Press.

2014 Tokio. Vom Glück urbanen Lebens. Munich: C.H.Beck.

2013 Writing and Society. An Introduction. Cambridge, New York:
Cambridge University Press.

2011 (jointly with Judith Stalpers) Fukushima. Vom Erdbeben zur atomaren
Katastrophe. Munich: C.H.Beck.

2010 Die Illusion vom Glück. Japan und der Westen. Zurich: Verlag Neue
Zürcher Zeitung.

2011 (jointly edited with Ralph Lützel) Imploding populations in Japan and
Germany. A Comparison. Leiden, Boston: Brill.

Founding Editor: Contemporary Japan. Journal of the German Institute for
Japanese Studies (<http://www.contemporary-japan.org/>)

Associate Editor: International Journal of the Sociology of Language
(<http://www.degruyter.com/view/j/ijsl>)