THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE FOR CHINESE STUDIES

How Language Informs Society: Dialect Variation in Beijing

Friday, February 5, 2016

4:00—5:30 pm

Hagerty Hall, Room 062

1775 College Road

Hui Zhao (Annette Zhao)

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Visiting Scholar at The Ohio State University

Abstract: The post-reform Chinese society is a fascinating site for sociolinguists interested in the relationship between language variation and its boarder social environment. Started in the 1970s, the market economy reform has brought about changes to the tightly-controlled socialist society, especially in terms of class stratification (Lu, 2002) and gender equality (Huang, 2008; Zuo, 2003). This, in turn, has influenced people's linguistic practice and more importantly, how language can be used not only to reflect social structures but also to actively construct social identity. For instance, in the capital city of Beijing, research has shown that this talk, Zhao will focus on demonstrating how the variation in their language production and perception can inform us about the increasingly classed and gendered modern Chinese society.

Bio: Hui Zhao (Annette Zhao) is a PhD student at Queen Mary University of London and current visiting scholar in the Department of East Asian Languages and Literature at The Ohio State University. Zhao's principal research interest lies in the sociolinguistics of Mandarin Chinese—how and why speakers vary in their language use and what language variation tells us about the changing society in China. Her PhD research investigates how young adults in Beijing use local and 'standard' features to negotiate their social identities and gender roles in an increasingly socially-stratified Chinese society. Zhao is particularly interested in phonetic/phonological variation but her doctoral project also investigates lexical and syntactic features. She also find the perception of language (variation) interesting, both as an independent discipline (perceptual dialectology) and as a method to better understand the production of language variation. Zhao's MA dissertation explores the perception of Neutral Tone in Mandarin Chinese while her current project studies the perception and production of Beijing dialect features.

Free and Open to the Public

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