

SONYA RAO

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APPOINTMENTS

ABF/NSF Post-Doctoral Fellow in Law and Inequality

American Bar Foundation

Fall 2023 –Summer 2024

ABF/AccessLex Institute Postdoctoral Fellow in Legal and Higher Education

American Bar Foundation

Fall 2021 –Summer 2023

EDUCATION

Ph.D., University of California, Los Angeles

Spring 2021

Department of Anthropology

Dissertation Title: *Privatizing Language Work: Interpreters and Access in Los Angeles Immigration Court*

Dissertation Committee: Paul Kroskrity (Chair), Jessica Cattelino, Norma Mendoza-Denton, Ingrid Eagly

M.A., University of California, Los Angeles

Spring 2015

Department of Anthropology

Thesis Title: *Language Futures from Uprooted Pasts: Emergent Language Activism in the Mayan Diaspora of the United States*

B.A., Connecticut College

Spring 2013

Self-Design Major: Post-Colonial Studies and Linguistic Anthropology

Minor: Sociology

Honors Thesis: *Halq'eméylem Language Revitalization: Tracing Ideologies in Hybridity*

SELECTED FELLOWSHIPS AND GRANTS

National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant,
Law and Social Sciences Program

Fall 2016

UC Consortium on Social Science and the Law Summer Fellowship

Spring 2017

UCLA Bedari Kindness Institute Graduate Summer Fellowship

Summer 2020

UCLA Graduate Research Mentorship

Fall 2016

UCLA Graduate Summer Research Mentorship

Summer 2015

PUBLICATIONS

Published Work

Kunreuther, Laura, and **Sonya Rao**. "The Invisible Labor and Ethics of Interpreting." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 52 (2023): 239-256.

Rao, Sonya. "Linguistic Lives as Working Lives: Conducting Lingual Life Histories for the Labor Movement." *Journal of Anthropological Research* 77.1 (2021): 52-66.

Required reading in Language and Power, UCSB Sociology Professor Jessica Lopez Espino, Winter 2024.

Rao, Sonya and Edwin Everhart. "Lingual Life Histories: Introduction to the Special Issue." *Journal of Anthropological Research* 77.1 (2021): 10-15.

Rao, Sonya. "Communicating in Times of Crisis." *Anthropology News*, August 16, 2018. DOI: 10.1111/AN.947.

Conditionally Accepted

"Linguistic Dimensions of the Crimmigration Regime: Language Ideological Working Conditions in Immigration Court." *Political and Legal Anthropology Review*, conditionally accepted January 11, 2024.

In preparation

Privatizing Language Work: Interpreter Labor and Access to Justice in Immigration Court. Prospectus for book manuscript available upon request.

"Gender Justice is Language Justice: Intersectional Interpreter Challenges to Ethnolinguistic Lawfare in the United States." Manuscript in preparation for Gender and ethnolinguistic lawfare special issue of JUST: Journal of Language Rights and Minorities, Revista de Drets Lingüístics i Minories.

SELECTED SCHOLARLY PRESENTATIONS

Panels Organized

Redefining the Language Professional: Shifting Duties and Changing Institutional Climates
Panel Chair, Co-Organized with Edwin Everhart Fall 2019
American Anthropological Association Meeting, Vancouver, Canada

Language and Life History: Linguistic Resistance, Resilience, and Adaptation
Panel Co-Chair, Co-Organized with Edwin Everhart Fall 2018
American Anthropological Association Meeting, San Jose, California.

Invited Speaker

"The Labor Politics of Embodied Communication Work"

Invited Speaker

Spring 2024

Semiotics Workshop 2023-24 Embodiment & Semiotic Mediation.

University of Chicago, Faculty Sponsors: Susan Gal, Kamala Russell, Terra Edwards, and E. Summerson Carr

"Texts that Govern Speech: Language Ideologies of Statute, Policy and Recommendations for Legal Interpretation and Translation"

Invited Speaker

Spring 2022

The Translation Symposium at Bard College, Bard College, New York.

"Invisible Linguistic Labor in Moments of Calm and Crisis: Los Angeles Immigration Court and Beyond."

Robert and Mabel Groseclose Endowed Lecturer and Guest Instructor

Fall 2018

Whitman College, Walla Walla, Washington

National and International Conferences

"Professional Solidarity Between Language and Legal Professionals in Courts"

Panelist

Spring 2024

American Bar Association Conference on Language, Justice, and Technology,

Seattle University School of Law, Seattle, Washington

"A Public Good and a Lost Commons: U.S. Immigration Court Interpreters' Challenge to Privatizing Communication"

Panelist

Fall 2023

American Anthropological Association Meeting, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

"What is being 'Accessed' in Language Access?: Quality Communication as a Public Good Over Language as a Private Object"

Panelist

Fall 2022

American Anthropological Association Meeting, Seattle, Washington

"Privatized Language Services in U.S. Immigration Courts: Motivations for the Failure to Communicate"

Panelist

Summer 2022

Law and Society Association Meeting, Lisbon, Portugal.

"Teaching Quality Communication: The Need for Professional Solidarity Between Legal Professionals and Interpreters in the United States"

Invited Panelist

Spring 2022

Reimagining Justice: From Ideas to Impact, Chicago, IL.

"Handling Requests for Emergency Language Services Ethically Professional Tools for Scholars in the Legal Arena."

Workshop Leader

Spring 2022

Society for Linguistic Anthropology Meeting, Boulder, Colorado.

"Privatized Language Services in Immigration Courts: The Disproportionate Harms on Indigenous Migrants."

Panelist, Indigenous Languages and Migration Spring 2022

Society for Linguistic Anthropology Meeting, Boulder, Colorado.

"A History of Misunderstanding: Structural Forces on Communication on Video-Conferencing Detained Hearings."

Panelist Spring 2020

Law and Society Association Meetings, Denver, CO (canceled).

"Language Ideological Regimes as Working Conditions: Evidence from Los Angeles Immigration Court."

Chair and Panelist Fall 2019

American Anthropology Association Meeting, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

"Language Access in Immigration Courts: Ensuring Dignity for Language Workers and Litigants."

Panelist Spring 2019

Law and Society Association Meeting, Washington, D.C.

"Handling Requests for Emergency Language Services Ethically: Professionalism for Linguists in the Legal Arena."

Panelist Spring 2019

Georgetown University Roundtable: Linguistics and the Public Good, Washington, D.C.

"Contributions of Life History to the Study of Linguistic Labor."

Panel Organizer, Co-Chair and Panelist Fall 2018

American Anthropological Association Meeting, San Jose, CA.

Internal Invited Presentations

"Learning Cultural Humility for Language Justice: The Present and Future of Teaching to Work Across Languages in Law School Clinics."

Invited Speaker Fall 2023

New York Chapter of the American Bar Foundation.

"The Crisis in the U.S. Immigration Adjudication System"

Invited Panelist Spring 2023

New York Chapter of the American Bar Foundation.

"Learning the Mechanics of Compassion: Cross-Linguistic Training in Clinical Legal Education."

Invited Speaker Fall 2021

Fellows Research Advisory Committee of the American Bar Foundation Meeting

Workshops

"A History of Misunderstanding: Barriers to Communication in a Hausa Speaker's Asylum Hearings."

Selected Workshop Participant Summer 2022

Law and Society Association Early Career Workshop.

"Language Ideological Regimes as Working Conditions in Los Angeles Immigration Court."

Selected Workshop Participant Fall 2021

New Directions in Law and Society: A Graduate Student and Junior Scholar Workshop.

Workshop hosted by UMass Amherst Center for Justice, Law and Societies

"Externalities of Privatized Language Services and Organized Responses: U.S. Immigration Court Interpreters 2015-2018."

Selected Workshop Participant

Law and Society Association Meetings,

Spring 2020

online workshop hosted by Migration and Citizenship Interest Group.

ACADEMIC SERVICE

Peer Reviewer

Political and Legal Anthropology Review

Spring 2023

Law and Social Inquiry

Fall 2022,

Winter 2024

Law and Social Inquiry Editorial Committee

Associate Editor

Fall 2022- Present

American Bar Foundation Doctoral Fellows Alumni Conference

Chair

Fall 2023

American Bar Foundation Speaker Series Programming Committee

Co-Chair

Fall 2021- Winter 2022

Rights, Rules and Rhetoric: Exploring Language for and about Migrants in Australia, Europe and North America

Invited Facilitator

Fall 2020

Society for Linguistic Anthropology 2020 Meeting

Steering Committee Member

Fall 2019

Mellon Mays Professional Network, Los Angeles

Regional Organizer

Spring 2015-Spring 2018

University of California Advocacy Day, California State Capitol, Sacramento

UCLA Graduate Student Delegate

Spring 2017

Department of Anthropology Eight-Year Review Committee, University of California, Los Angeles

Graduate Student Representative
2016

Winter 2015- Spring

Department of Anthropology Diversity Committee, University of California, Los Angeles

Graduate Student Representative

Fall 2014- Spring 2015

PUBLIC SERVICE AND PRESENTATIONS

American Bar Association Standards for Language Access in Courts Revision Advisory Committee Member	Fall 2023- present
<u>American Bar Foundation Featured Researcher</u>	Fall 2023
Appleseed Immigration Report Advisory Committee Committee Member	Spring 2023- present
<i>"Advance Translation: Collaboration Across Languages to Achieve Greater Equity"</i> Invited Moderator	Spring 2023
<i>"Multicultural Cities Require Multilingual Research: A Language Justice Informed Approach to the New York City Housing Vacancy Survey"</i> Invited Moderator	Spring 2023
<i>"The Crisis in U.S. Immigration Adjudication"</i> Invited Panelist <i>Webinar of the American Bar Foundation National Fellows</i>	Spring 2023
<i>"Language Justice: Practicing the Mechanics of Compassion Across Languages."</i> Invited Speaker State of Michigan Justice for All Commission Meeting	Fall 2021

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Lecturer , UCLA Department of Anthropology Culture and Communication Language and Identity	Summer 2016 Summer 2019
Teaching Fellow , UCLA Department of Anthropology Language and Youth Subcultures Gender and Language in Society Anthropology of Food Ethnography of Communication Culture and Communication Evolution of Language	Fall 2017- Spring 2019
Teaching Associate , UCLA Department of Anthropology Language and Culture Culture in Society Culture and Communication	Fall 2015- Spring 2016
Teaching Assistant , UCLA Department of Anthropology	Fall 2014- Spring 2015

Culture and Communication
 Human Evolution
 Culture and Communication

Invited Guest Lecturer

"Ethnographic Observations and Participatory Research: Language Access Research in Los Angeles Courts"
 UCLA Public Policy, Interdisciplinary Research Methods Fall 2022

"Collecting Fieldnotes in Courtroom Settings"
 UCLA Department of Anthropology, Field Methods in Cultural Anthropology
 and Field Methods in Linguistic Anthropology Spring 2019

"Conducting Linguistic Life Histories of Language Workers"
 UCLA Department of Anthropology, Language and Identity Fall 2018

"Politics of Youth and Childhood"
 UCLA Department of Anthropology, Language and Youth Subculture Fall 2017

"Moving from Observation to Analysis: Observational Data"
 UCLA Department of Anthropology, Language and Youth Subculture Fall 2017

"Handling a Corpus of Ethnographic Data"
 UCLA Department of Anthropology, Methods in Anthropology Summer 2016

"Language Rights in the Here and Now."
 UCLA Department of Anthropology, Language in Culture Summer 2015

"Building Lasting Partnerships with Native Communities of Southern New England."
 Connecticut College, Center for the Study of Race and Ethnicity Seminar Fall 2015

Course Reader, UCLA Department of Anthropology Fall 2014- Summer 2018
 Culture and Communication
 Language in Culture
 Citizenship and Migration
 Human Evolution
 Language and Identity

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

American Anthropological Association
 Law and Society Association

MENTORSHIP EXPERIENCE

Supervisor, Masters' Student Research Assistantship Summer 2023- present

Program Mentor, ABF Summer Internship Program (SURF)	Summer 2023
Letters of Recommendation, Various Professional Degrees	Fall 2015-2023
Graduate Mentor, Undergraduate Research Center Mellon Mays Undergraduate Intensive Writing and Research Training Program	Summer 2016

REFERENCES

Paul Kroskrity, Professor of Anthropology, UCLA

paulvk@ucla.edu

Jessica Cattelino, Professor Anthropology, UCLA

jesscatt@anthro.ucla.edu

Elizabeth Mertz, Research Professor, the American Bar Foundation

emertz@abfn.org