As long argued by Bourdieu, the transgression of disciplinary boundaries is a prerequisite for scientific advance. Such transgression implies for scholars both a reflexive stance on their discipline’s working assumptions or paradigms and a move forward towards new ways of thinking, for example, an engagement with unknown theoretical tools. The transgressive nature of such intellectual endeavors lies in the fact that they uncover the ideological and therefore arbitrary nature of disciplinary boundaries.

In my presentation, I take up the notion of CONVERSATION, as articulated in the presentation of the panel, to engage in a dialogue with two anthropologists on the subject matter of their recent book on economic ethnography. I reflect on the necessary conditions for an interdisciplinary dialogue and on the possible outcomes of the latter. I ask: What are the potentialities, benefits, or limitations of such a dialogue for parties and their respective disciplines?

My reasons for engaging in this dialogue are threefold: 1) our shared interdisciplinary approach to economic issues; 2) our ethnographic perspectives on the nature of data and on where empiricism drives the choice of research questions; and 3) my questioning as a linguist ethnographer whose research questions on economy are driven by issues related to language, about which the authors are curiously silent. In my dialogue with them, I want to understand the reasons for this silence: is it a deliberate, theoretically and methodologically driven omission? Or is this neglected dimension a consequence of disciplinary boundaries they have not considered bridging? If yes, why would linguistics be such an unbridgeable boundary to them? Do linguists’ research questions and analyses appear to be irrelevant to their understanding of economic practices? If yes, what kind of linguistic data or analyses would be useful to them?

Keywords: transgression, interdisciplinary dialogue, disciplinary boundaries.