Approaches to Digital Discourse Analysis – ADDA 2
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1. Plenary talks

**Moral indignation, moral panics, social regulation, and online shaming**

Pilar Garcés-Conejos Blitvich – *University of North Carolina at Charlotte*

The aim of this presentation is to provide a better understanding of the proliferation of online shaming. Online shaming, cyber public shaming, online firestorms (Boudana, 2014; Gao, 2015; Ronson, 2016) have been the subject of interdisciplinary studies, the results of which have offered significant insights into this phenomenon. With very few exceptions (Johnen, Jungbult & Ziegele, 2017), these studies have taken a theoretical, macro-level approach. However, digital discourse analysis and netnographic approaches may shed more light on online shaming by helping us get “into the smart mob” (Rheinhold, 2007). With this in mind, seven recent cases of online shaming in the US have been analyzed, along with a sizeable amount of user-generated comments these triggered. Results show that conceptualizing online shaming along the lines of moral indignation/outrage (Ranulf, 1938; Barbalet, 2000), moral panics (Cohen, 1973; Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 1994; Hier, 2018; Ingraham & Reeves, 2016), and social regulation (Hier, 2016) helps us to better understand the motivations and goals of the digilantes or moral entrepreneurs (Cheong & Gong, 2010; Nhan, Huey & Broll, 2015) that expose those cases and/or participate in their online dissemination. Further, online shaming seems to be inextricably linked to the socio-cultural context in which it takes place regarding the deviant behavior that needs to be exposed and punished (see also Gao & Stanyer, 2014).

**References**


Emerging Sociotechnical Imaginaries of Digital Touch for Remote Personal Communication
Carey Jewitt – University College London

Drawing on the IN-TOUCH project, a five-year ERC Award, I will explore emergent discourses and socio-technical imaginaries of digital touch for remote communication in personal relationships. I will present findings from a series of rapid prototyping workshops with apprentice professionals embedded in the ongoing global production of future sociotechnical imaginaries. These will center on a multimodal and multisensorial analysis of the workshop participants’ social and cultural conceptualization and exploration of remote digital touch communication organized around six analytical themes: Digital touch materiality, affordances & interfaces; Temporality of touch; Embodied and emplaced touch; Social and cultural touch norms; Tactile records and traces; and Ethics of remote personal touch communication. I will use these themes to interrogate participants’ past, present and future visions of remote digital touch communication, and how they interconnect to contribute to understand the emerging imaginary of digital touch prior to its future solidification into material political formations: the possibilities and challenges, continuities and changes, and potential directions.
Genres of disclosure, legibility, and the future of digital surveillance

Rodney H. Jones – University of Reading

In this talk I will discuss the importance of textuality in processes of surveillance in general, and, in particular, in digital surveillance. Historically, surveillance has been supported by a range of discursive practices designed to facilitate the entextualization of people’s actions, thoughts, communications and intentions in ways that make them somehow ‘legible’ (Scott, 1999) to the agents of surveillance, whether they be the church, the state, private corporations or individuals. Much of the disciplining power of surveillance, in fact, derives from the power to entextualize and recontextualize human experience (Bauman & Briggs, 1990). Often these processes have involved inciting people to entextualize their own inner thoughts and intentions though engaging with what Palen and Dourish (2003) call ‘genres of disclosure’, ways of text making based on socially recognized and regularly reproduced patterns of revelation: for example engaging in religious rituals of confession, filling out government forms, talking to psychologists or counselors, and sharing information about oneself on social media sites. Genres of disclosure enforce certain social expectations of participants about what they should reveal, when and to whom. The power of such genres is not just that they compel people to reveal personal information, but that they channel them into particular forms of entextualization, particular ways of rendering information that are most useful for those who have deployed these genres. In this way, genres of disclosure serve not just to ‘expose’ social actors, but also to, in many ways, to constitute them (Scollon, 2005).

Genres of disclosure used in digital surveillance, while sharing some similarities with analogue genres of disclosure, are also unique in a number of ways. Genres such as chat platforms, search engines, shopping sites, and social media sites, like older genres of disclosure, are designed to reproduce particular configurations of people, technology and practice that yield identifiable and socially meaningful forms of interaction and information disclosure. The main difference is that digital genres of disclosure rely less on the texts that people create and more on the interactional ‘residue’ (or metadata) they leave behind when creating these texts.

At the conclusion of the talk I will consider the future of genres of disclosure in digital environments, especially those that engage users in more multimodal forms of communication (such as Instagram and FaceTime), considering how visuality contributes to the development of new generic conventions and complicates algorithmic efforts to ‘read’ user generated texts.
References


Enhancing social presence through textual action
Tuija Virtanen – Åbo Akademi University

Much of computer-mediated communication (CMC) relies on frequent postings of ‘small texts’, accessible to large numbers of users. At the same time, easy navigation through links to other texts and other platforms employed in parallel, is a fundamental characteristic of current Interactive Multimodal Platforms (IMPs; Herring 2018). In this talk, I will investigate digital ‘microtextuality’ in a multimodal environment that manifests a high degree of ‘context collapse’ (Marwick & boyd 2010), by exploring recreational tweets posted as ‘original’ messages which do not explicitly link to other messages or constitute replies to other users. The focus is on the uses of self-referential third-person constructions in the dramatic present, such as *jumps up and down*, which have turned rhizomatic across modes of CMC and appear to be thriving in the era of IMPs as well. Exploring metapragmatic traces of the processes of users enhancing their social presence through text, my concern will be with their textual enactment of virtual action and emotion, their creation of disembodied online personae by externalizing and reassuming the self in such textual action, as well as the textual silence that they choose to present as salient in the written part of their messages. Findings suggest the presence of both everyday creativity and rapid conventionalization of such textual means, play and playfulness, and explicit efforts to engage in digital face-work, in particular through self-deprecating humour.

References
2. Software demonstration

Collaborative exploration of rich corpus data
using immersive virtual reality and non-immersive technologies

Nico Reski, Aris Alissandrakis, and Jukka Tyrkkö – Linnaeus University, Sweden

In recent years, large textual data sets, comprising many data points and rich metadata, have become a common object of investigation and analysis. Information Visualization and Visual Analytics provide practical tools for visual data analysis, most commonly as interactive two-dimensional (2D) visualizations that are displayed through normal computer monitors. At the same time, display technologies have evolved rapidly over the past decade. In particular, emerging technologies such as virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), or mixed reality (MR) have become affordable and more user-friendly (LaValle 2016). Under the banner of “Immersive Analytics”, researchers started to explore the novel application of such immersive technologies for the purpose of data analysis (Marriott et al. 2018).

By using immersive technologies, researchers hope to increase motivation and user engagement for the overall data analysis activity as well as providing different perspectives on the data. This can be particularly helpful in the case of exploratory data analysis, when the researcher attempts to identify interesting points or anomalies in the data without prior knowledge of what exactly they are searching for. Furthermore, the data analysis process often involves the collaborative sharing of information and knowledge between multiple users for the goal of interpreting and making sense of the explored data together (Isenberg et al. 2011). However, immersive technologies such as VR are often rather single user-centric experiences, where one user is wearing a head-mounted display (HMD) device and is thus visually isolated from the real-world surroundings. Consequently, new tools and approaches for co-located, synchronous collaboration in such immersive data analysis scenarios are needed.

In this software demonstration, we present our developed VR system that enables two users to explore data at the same time, one inside an immersive VR environment, and one outside VR using a non-immersive companion application. The context of this demonstrated data analysis activity is centered around the exploration of the language variability in tweets from the perspectives of multilingualism and sociolinguistics (see, e.g. Coats 2017 and Grieve et al.
2017). Our primary data come from the the Nordic Tweet Stream (NTS) corpus (Laitinen et al. 2018, Tyrkkö 2018), and the immersive VR application visualizes in three dimensions (3D) the clustered Twitter traffic within the Nordic region as stacked cuboids according to their geospatial position, where each stack represents a color-coded language share (Alissandrakis et al. 2018). Through the utilization of 3D gestural input, the VR user can interact with the data using hand postures and gestures in order to move through the virtual 3D space, select clusters and display more detailed information, and to navigate through time (Reski and Alissandrakis 2019) (https://vrxar.lnu.se/apps/odxvrxnts-360/). A non-immersive companion application, running in a normal web browser, presents an overview map of the Nordic region as well as other supplemental information about the data that are more suitable to be displayed using non-immersive technologies.

We will present two complementary applications, each with a different objective within the collaborative data analysis framework. The design and implementation of certain connectivity and collaboration features within these applications facilitate the co-located, synchronous exploration and sensemaking. For instance, the VR user’s position and orientation are displayed and updated in real-time within the overview map of the non-immersive application. The other way around, the selected cluster of the non-immersive user is also highlighted for the user in VR. Initial tests with pairs of language students validated the proof-of-concept of the developed collaborative system and encourage the conduction of further future investigations in this direction.

References


3. Description of panels

Panel: Being influential in the digital sphere:
Communication practices of social media influencers and opinion leaders
Lotta Lehti – University of Helsinki
Albin Wagener – University of Nantes/ Campus Tech
Ana-Maria Cozma – University of Turku

Social media communication is characterized by comments and reactions to content posted by other users. However, social media also features leaders who not only react but also proactively produce and publish content with which they gather a large following and influence others. Abidin (2015) defines social media influencers as “everyday, ordinary Internet users who accumulate a relatively large following on blogs and social media through the textual and visual narration of their personal lives and lifestyles, engage with their following in digital and physical spaces, and monetise their following by integrating ‘advertorials’ into their blog or social media posts”. In addition to these influencers who narrate and monetise their personal lives and lifestyles, this panel also examines another type of leaders, namely opinion leaders. Huffaker (2010: 594) defines online leaders as “those who have the ability to trigger feedback, spark conversations within the community, or even shape the way that other members of a group ‘talk’ about a ‘topic’”.

In this panel, the focus is not on the differences between influencers and opinion leaders but on what they have in common: the ability to be influential. We ask, for example, how does influence emerge in the dynamic interdiscursive space of the digital sphere (Garric & Longhi 2013), where internet users are constantly interacting with one another? Further, how do influential leaders produce discourses related to the values and ideologies they rely on, consciously or not? These values trigger representations that may have pragmatic effects on the audience (Kopytowska 2015), even leading to manipulation. Such effects are also obviously linked to the very constraints and affordances of digital communication devices and networks. Finally, such circulation of information and discourses are also rooted in the strong logic of communities (Meinhof & Galasinski 2005) which can be found online, specifically. The communication practices of influencers and opinion leaders are
explored in this panel in relation to a variety of social media platforms (Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, Change.org, online magazine) and from the points of view of cognition and affect, rhetoric, argumentation, discursive legitimation, narrativity and community building.

References
Jihadist propaganda and counter-narrative:  
The rivalry between two influential discourses on the Internet

Panel: Being influential in the digital sphere: Communication practices of social media influencers and opinion leaders

Laura Ascone, Laurène Renaut & Julien Longhi – Université de Cergy-Pontoise

The recent terrorist attacks have led researchers to investigate the strategies to be adopted to counter online jihadist propaganda. This research examines both online French jihadist propaganda and French counter-narratives. In a language-based “argumentative war” (Angenot, 2008) both emotions and the relation between the speaker’s community and the other are crucial. Therefore, this study focuses on three points: the way the speaker represents and relates to the other, the speech acts allowing the speaker to act on the other and/or on the discourse’s addressee, and the role played by emotions (Lombardi, 2015).

On the one hand, this research was conducted on Dar al-Islam, the Islamic State’s French online magazine as well as on a corpus of tweets spreading jihadist ideology. On the other hand, we examined a heterogeneous corpus of three different counter-narratives. The first sub-corpus consisted of the articles and videos produced by the French government as part of its stopdjihadisme campaign; the second sub-corpus included a memorial discourse composed of both the profiles the newspaper Le Monde draw of the victims of the Paris and Nice terrorist attacks, and four songs produced in reaction to the recent attacks that hit France; the third sub-corpus consisted of the discourse of six jihadist repentants. By comparing these discourses, our goal was to determine the rhetorical strategies adopted to either spread jihadist ideology or counter jihadist propaganda.

A quanti-qualitative approach was adopted to examine both the general features and the specificities of these discourses. On the one hand, the software Tropes and its scenario Emotaix were employed to investigate the discourse from a semantico-pragmatic perspective as well as to analyse the expression of emotions. On the other hand, the qualitative analysis allowed to examine features that might have passed unnoticed. This study revealed that the different discourses show crucial differences in the way the speaker represents the other, in the way he acts on it through language, and in the role played by emotions.
References


Influencers: the New Public Intellectuals of the Digital Sphere?
Panel: Being influential in the digital sphere: Communication practices of social media influencers and opinion leaders
Camelia Cusnir – University of Bucharest

In the context of the redefinition of the public sphere by the new technologies, users are becoming co-producers of content, and barriers between the producer and the consumer of the information are often vanishing. Thus new concepts are emerging, such as Manuel Castells’ “mass self-communication” (2005), the „prosumer” (Jenkins, 2004), the „produsage” (Brins, 2006, 2009) or “Wikinomics” (Tapscott & Williams, 2006). All these theories are taking into account users participation and their engagement in production and consumption of the online information.

From this users-producers category, a sub-category is emerging, identified as “influencers”, usually authors of blogs or users of social networks who enjoy a large popularity and become models for their followers who tend to imitate their behaviour, to adopt their values and their interests and to respond/interact with the content these influencers produce. Abidin defines influencers as “one form of micro-celebrity who accumulate a following on blogs and social media through textual and visual narrations of their personal everyday lives upon which advertorials for products and services are premised” (Abidin, 2016, p. 86). Bartholomew (2011 apud. Drula, 2014, p. 84) defines “influence” or “to be influenced” as “effecting change in another person’s attitudes, opinions, beliefs and behavior”.

Using as research field the Romanian digital public sphere (and, in perspective a French-Romanian comparative approach), I intend to determine the legitimation strategies these influencers are using in order to mobilize their communities and I’m particularly interested to analyze, using discourse analysis, by what verbal and visual means do these influencers and opinion leaders create credibility, trust and reliability.

As my past researches were focused on the Romanian public intellectuals’ presence in the media and, consequently, on their adaptation in the digital environment, I’m particularly interested to
respond to these questions: is there a new generation of opinion leaders emerging in the digital sphere and replacing the tradition public intellectuals?

References
“LET'S MAKE WISDOM GO VIRAL TOGETHER!”:
DIGITAL INFLUENCERS AND THE POWER OF PROXIMITY

Panel: Being influential in the digital sphere: Communication practices of social media influencers and opinion leaders

Monika Kopytowska – University of Lodz

The objective of the present paper is to present a new perspective on the discursive and cognitive mechanisms behind the cognitive-affective appeal underlining the social impact of digital influencers. Drawing on the insights from Deictic Space Theory (Chilton 2005, 2010, 2014) and its recent development in the form of Media Proximization Approach proposed by Kopytowska (2013, 2014, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c, 2018), along with Searle’s theory of social ontology (1995, 2006, 2010) and perspectives on mediatization (Hjarvard 2008, 2013; Hepp 2013), we will demonstrate how by positioning themselves vis-à-vis others within media space and making selected aspects of reality discussed more salient, digital influencers create bonds with members of the audience and create their online visibility. According to Urry (2002), who sees all interactions as complex combinations of proximity and distance, or absence and presence, people aim for proximity within three dimensions: with other people in face-to-face interactions; with unique locations in face-to-place interactions; and with special events in face-to-moment interactions. Boden and Molotch (1994: 258, 277) refer to it as “compulsion of proximity”. Cyberspace, thanks to its semiotic potential, provides its users with a possibility to satisfy this compulsion, thereby offering a chance for “mediated experience” defined by Giddens as “the involvement of spatially/temporally distant influences with human sensory experience” (1991: 243) or “the intrusion of distant events into everyday consciousness” (1991: 189). We thus argue that what is a key factor in digital influencers’ discursive construction and self-creation are distance-related operations – the process of proximization – involving temporal, spatial, axiological, epistemic and emotional dimensions of distance and various verbal and visual strategies used to reduce this distance. Data-wise, we will discuss the content posted by Jay Shetty – an award winning inspirational storyteller and viral content creator – on his YouTube channel, along with comments following these videos. Since launching his video channel in 2016, Jay’s videos have attracted over 1 billion views and gained over 3 million followers globally. By identifying and analyzing proximization triggers and mechanisms, we will try to explain the phenomenon of
his popularity and impact and thus contribute to the discussion on “modus operandi” of public influencers.

References


Influential circulation of arguments: a case study of an online petition

Panel: Being influential in the digital sphere: Communication practices of social media influencers and opinion leaders

Lotta Lehti – University of Helsinki
Ana-Maria Cozma – University of Turku

This paper investigates opinion leaders in the digital agora, i.e. in “the multiple spaces in which Internet users can relatively freely discuss various topics related to socio-political domains of society” (Johansson & al. 2017: 1). We focus on one recent event in the French digital agora, namely the discussion following the resignation of the French Minister of Ecology, Nicolas Hulot on the 28th of August 2018. Hulot is a highly popular figure, an environmental activist turned into Minister, whose resignation generated a lot of reactions in social media and also in the streets. In this paper we analyse one prominent reaction, namely an online petition (https://www.change.org/p/nicolas-hulot-non-monsieur-hulot-vous-n-etes-pas-seul) in support of Nicolas Hulot, created by an active citizen, Mathieu Hestin, who thus became an opinion leader.

According to Boure & Bousquet (2011), an online petition is a socio-technical interactive device for mediating intentions, discourses, practices and interpretations. In our case study, we analyse the ways in which different arguments and positions are circulated and modified in the actual petition text written by Hestin, its updates, the comments on the petition site as well as in the declaration of resignation by Hulot himself. Preliminary results indicate that the circulation of arguments and expressions of support create and reinforce a collective enterprise within a large audience but excluding certain actors, such as lobbyists and political parties.

References


Semantic Vacuity and Online Popularity in Professional Networks: Being a Digital Influencer on LinkedIn

Panel: Being influential in the digital sphere: Communication practices of social media influencers and opinion leaders

Albin Wagener – Campus Tech
Julien Longhi – Université de Cergy-Pontoise

The increasing proliferation of digital influencers on social media is not only linked to networks like Instagram or Facebook, but also invades professional communities in a pervasive manner. The aim of this presentation will be to analyze how LinkedIn has become an interesting playground for digital influencers, based on self-presentation (Chiang & Suen 2015), the cult of professional success in business (Utz 2016) and the permitted roleplays in online identities (Van Dijck 2013). We will perform a case study analysis based on the articles and posts of Gregory Logan, a Swiss influencer who mostly writes in French and reaches a large audience in the French speaking community on LinkedIn. This study is based on corpus analysis interweaving articles and comments, conducted with Iramuteq, in order to reach the complexity of interdiscourse (Garric & Longhi 2013) as well as the originality of online narrativity (Longhi 2018) and the way it is getting intertwined with the building of online communities (Wagener 2014) and the production of interconnected discourses of influence (Wagener 2016).

References


Utz, S. (2016). « Is LinkedIn making you more successful? The informational benefits derived from public social media », New Media & Society, 18 (11), 2685-2702.


Panel: Digital discourses of wellbeing
Milla Luodonpää-Manni & Attila Krizsan – University of Turku

Digital Discourse is seen to play a key role in current sociocultural practices by having an influence on the inequalities of communities or the building, maintenance and access to social networks (cf. Thurlow and Mroczek 2011). This role is often neglected in the planning and organization of social and health services or when making decisions on environmental issues. For instance, alienating administrative language – partly resulting from the properties of the digital technologies used for creating administrative texts – leads to under usage of public services which contributes to the exclusion of young people from the job market (cf. Tiililä 2017). Therefore, there is need for further research on the significance of technology for communities, groups or individual users, the social meanings that are produced by the use of this technology and the sociocultural practices related to these (cf. Georgakopoulou 2003, 2006).

In this panel we approach the sociocultural aspects of societies with a focus on wellbeing. We invite papers that examine the role of and agency through digital discourses for the wellbeing of societies. Such relevance could be seen for example in the roles digital discourses play in identity formation, health, schooling, culture and diversity, social relationships, social participation, access to goods, resources and power, and the relationship between the society and the environment. However, we welcome papers related to other types of connections between digital discourses and wellbeing in our societies as well. Methodologically, the panel is not restricted to special fields but multi- and transdisciplinary methods are encouraged.

References


One of the main threats to the wellbeing in Finland is the increasingly unequal distribution of wealth, resulting into the polarization of social groups. The latter could be reduced through respectful dialogue between different poles. The varied platforms of social media offer an opportunity for such dialogue but as is well known, this opportunity is seldom seized. This paper describes how the unequal access to goods is discussed in the digital sphere, focusing on the pole of poverty.

The analysis is conducted through Corpus-Assisted Discourse Study (CADS), which combines quantitative methods and qualitative discourse analysis (cf. e.g. Partington et al. 2013). The quantitative analysis is done with topic modeling, an unsupervised machine learning method to explore large volumes of unlabeled text (e.g. Rehurek & Sojka 2010). The data consist of Suomi24 Corpus (Aller Media 2014), in this study comments published on Suomi24 forum in 2014. First, we extracted the comments with the lemma köyhä ‘poor’ or its near synonyms, which resulted in a corpus of 32,407 comments. Second, to build the topic model solution, we used structural topic modeling implemented in R (package stm). A solution with 46 Topics was estimated to have the best fit. In the qualitative analysis, we study the 25 keywords associated with these Topics. The keywords form semantic fields reflecting discourses associated with poverty.

The analysis of the Topics reveals that religion, social inequality and politics are the most interesting discourses in the data and are chosen for a closer analysis. Many of the comments also contain moralizing discourse, even hate speech, and confrontation between the rich and the poor.

References

Wellbeing in bioethics debate. The topic of ‘automata meant to improve health care’ in the context of an online democratic consultation

Panel: Digital discourses of wellbeing
Ana-Maria Cozma – University of Turku

Respect of autonomy, nonmaleficence, beneficence and justice are the four principles guiding bioethics. These principles imply wellbeing, but wellbeing per se (which is determined by individual interests) is not necessarily a major concern when faced with bioethical issues (which affect not only individuals but the whole humankind). However, during open debates such as the French National Consultations on Bioethics (January 18th - April 30th 2018), to which any individual can participate, we can expect more stress to be put on wellbeing.

This paper examines the online discussions regarding one main topic of the French national consultations, namely ‘How should automata be integrated into medicine in order to improve treatment and health care?’. 4,514 participants added their own proposals and commented or voted for the existing ones. The analysed corpus comprises 238 proposals and the ensuing comments. The analysis aims to show to what extent and under what form wellbeing is discussed by the participants.

The discourse analysis undertaken in this paper will be carried out within the framework of the Semantics of Argumentative Possibilities (SAP) and of the Frame Semantics. ‘Wellbeing’ belongs to the cognitive frame Experiencer and interferes with other frames in the health care domain (i.e. Patient). Thus, even though the word ‘wellbeing’ is not used, its cognitive frames can be present in the discussions. The various frame elements will be searched for in the corpus and will be summarised according to the associative perspective of the SAP theory: they will either lead to or be entailed from ‘wellbeing’ (being listened to>wellbeing; wellbeing>feeling of satisfaction). Negation and antonyms will also be taken into account as particular types of associations that indicate absence of wellbeing or non-standard forms of wellbeing (in the case of expressions such as ‘robots instead of nursing staff’ or ‘dehumanised nursing’).

References


“I’ve been married for 30 odd years and the sex is crap”:
Risk, health and identity in an online sex work forum
Panel: Digital discourses of wellbeing
Robert Lawson, Pelham Carter, Matt Gee, Harkeeret Lally & Hollie McIlhone – Birmingham City University

While the analysis of online forums has a long history within Computer Mediated Communication research (Herring et al. 2002; Preece & Maloney-Krichmar 2005), it is only recently that the linguistic construction of sexuality and desire has been investigated in online contexts. Such work, however, has tended to focus on LGBTQ communities, public discourse of sexual relationships, and practices in sexualized communication (Motschenbacher 2018: 149), while discourses of heterosexual desires and behaviours, especially those which might be considered taboo, transgressive, or legally questionable, have been less explored (Baker 2018: 263).

In this paper, we address this gap in the literature through an interdisciplinary corpus linguistic analysis of an online forum where sex workers and male clients (colloquially known as ‘punters’) share advice, reviews, and experiences with one another, establishing a socially marginal community where the disclosure of sexual desires, behaviours, and proclivities is an expected part of the interactional landscape.

Drawing on a corpus of 255,891 posts (16,472,006 words) collected from the forum, we focus on the kinds of identities that ‘punters’ construct and how discourses of risk and health are negotiated. In particular, we consider motivations for punting, how risk is normalised by ‘punters,’ and how the transgression of social norms related to monogamy is rationalised. Our findings suggest that the view of ‘punters’ as embodying ‘consumer masculinity’ or ‘fragile masculinity (cf. Joseph & Black 2012) does not capture the full complexity of sex work interactions and that a corpus linguistic analysis can uncover more nuance than relying on questionnaires or partial interview data. We finally consider the implications this work has for collaborative approaches to digital discourse analysis.

References


Multimodal illness narratives on Instagram

Panel: Digital discourses of wellbeing

Ida Melander – Örebro University

Emerging forms of digital storytelling call for approaches that capture the use and function of narratives in online contexts (Page 2018; Bamberg & Georgakopoulou 2008). Narratives relating to illness and health have traditionally been approached through patient records or researcher-elicited interviews. However, the changes in the way we seek information about health, and the emergence of health discussion forums and social media have promoted everyday storytelling practices about health and illness.

The paper explores the construction of illness through narratives on an Instagram account where five women suffering from endometriosis tell their stories in order to raise awareness. Despite its high prevalence, this chronic disease is still surprisingly unknown. Several symptoms are also similar to what is regarded as a ‘normal’ part of female life (e.g. painful menstruations). This leads to normalization of the problems and causes a diagnostic delay. The multimodal affordances of the social media format, as well as the co-tellership on the account, where several posters share the space but tell their story in separate textual units, create an interesting form of storytelling in relation to developing uses of digital illness narratives.

The multimodal analysis will show how illness narratives can function as a device with “potential to construct and transform the self […] and create counter-narratives about illness and recovery”(Thompson 2012:88). Adopting a discourse analytical perspective, the analysis points to the positioning of the individual in relation to the disease and the actions that are accomplished. What particular discourses and identities do the narratives index (cf. Kiesling 2006), and how and through which resources is this indexical work accomplished?

References


Thompson, Riki. 2012. Screwed up, but working on it: (Dis)ordering the self through e-stories. *Narrative Inquiry* 22. 86-104.
The (French) Vaccine Debate: Hyperlinking Emotions
Panel: Digital discourses of wellbeing
Fabienne Baider – University of Cyprus

On 4 July 2017, French Health Minister Agnès Buzin announced that from 2018 eleven vaccines would be compulsory for all infants during their first two years of life.¹ This measure was declared as ‘incidental’; not quite so incidental was the response from French parents, based on our reading of comments posted on an online forum. Our presentation explores the dynamics of online exchanges between pro- and anti-vacciners (totaling 40,000 words or so for all conversations)² in which there is a genuine debate over the merits of the measure. Specifically we focus on features of social media that can heighten emotions such as anxiety (anti-vaccine group) and contempt (pro-vaccine group). Our methodology includes: first, assessment of the conversation frames using corpus analysis tools (Antconc software) to identify the most salient words (Giora 2003); second, focusing on threads containing these salient words we analyse how the semantic prosody of these lexical items (Bednarek 2008) may be (partially) achieved via typical social media properties such as ‘likes’ or hyperlinks. The latter feature is a particularly potent tool: using hyperlinks a writer can ‘construct’ another’s identity/viewpoint. Thus in a heated debate the opponent can be characterized as an ignorant fool or a heartless being (Seargeant and Tagg 2014), without the need to say so explicitly. Our presentation will focus on this use of hyperlinking, insofar as it enables: (1) the anti-vaccine group to heighten the anxiety and fear felt on their side (danger of the vaccination, possible corruption, etc.); (2) the pro-vaccine group to trigger the emotion of contempt for the other side, referring, for instance, to conspiracies theories.

References

1 http://www.lemonde.fr/sante/article/2017/07/05/la-loi-pour-rendre-onze-vaccins-obligatoires-sera-examinee-avant-la-fin-de-l-annee_5156364_1651302.html
2 Forum on Le Monde, on Doctissimo, and on a discussion forum not specialised on medical issues
4. Individual abstracts

Response cries as a resource to imitate and invite a shared viewing experience in an asynchronously organized interactional space
Elisabeth Andersen – University of Southern Denmark

Participation in multiparty interaction on YouTube occurs in several levels: the video interaction, the viewing and interpretation of the video, and the possibility to comment the video (Dynel, 2014). Similar participation frameworks can be found on other online platforms as videos can be uploaded to platforms as Facebook and may be commented on. Public service corporations in Denmark distribute videos on such platforms to promote TV or radio programs.

This paper investigates one such instance in which a video clip from a radio studio showing two hosts broadcasting has been uploaded to Facebook. The clip becomes highly emotional as one of the hosts starts crying and humorous as the other host laughs at her. This video has more than 22,000 comments.

The paper focuses on the formatting and functions of the comments; it analyses how users construct what may be called “response cries”, i.e. “exclamatory interjections which are not full-fledged words” (Goffman, 1978, p. 800) using words and written imitations of sounds ritually used as response cries in speech, and emojis. The paper also investigates how response cries are combined with tags, small stories (Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008) such as anecdotes etc. in order to create (illusions of) shared intimate spaces for sharing what is constructed as impulsive reactions to actions in the video.

The paper argues that response cries have several functions as they are constructed as reactions and thereby tie the comments to the original video and create a sense of immediacy, co-presence and alignment, and, combined with tags, small stories etc., invite reactions in the form of comments from tagged friends or other users who might join in. Finally, the paper discusses the use of (emotional and intimate) videos on social media platforms to promote media
broadcasting in terms of how users end up participating in the promotion of the program through their comments.

References
Tutorials and Discussions in Social Media Platforms for Makers:
Learning, Community and Ideology
Hassan Atifi & Michel Marcoccia – Tech-CICO / University of Technology, Troyes

This presentation focuses on the role of tutorials and discussions in mechanisms of collaborative learning, community building and sharing ideological values in the context of the "Maker Culture". The "Maker Culture" is a contemporary social movement derived from the “Do It Yourself” culture that brings together persons (the Makers) who manufacture objects, transmit their methods to peers and, most often, provide access to tools allowing this fabrication (Hatch, 2014). This “Maker Culture” manifests in various cooperative activities that can take place in physical spaces (fablabs, makerspaces) or digital spaces (online collaborative spaces, social media and tutorial exchange platforms). Our research fits in the field of computer-mediated discourse analysis, especially pragmatics of CMC (Herring, Stein, Virtanen, 2013). It consists in analyzing the exchanges between users of social media platforms for Makers. The corpus consists of tutorials (text, photos or videos) and discussions from two different platforms: "Oui Are Makers" (https://ouiaremakers.com/), a French-speaking social network and Futuremag (http://www.futuremag.fr) a YouTube channel. We analyze the sequence of activities supported by this platform: sharing and commenting tutorials. The semio-pragmatic analysis of the tutorials allows identifying the script followed by the Makers and their verbal and visual rhetoric. The discussions are analyzed by describing the activities achieved in comments (assess, complete, challenge, compliment, etc.) and in follow-ups (thank, add information, etc.). These analyses highlights the three dimensions of this “Makers' rhetoric” (Berrebi-Hoffmann et al., 2018): collaborative learning, community building and commitment to the ideological and political values of the Maker Culture.

References
Emoji Use in Intercultural WhatsApp Exchanges
Bethany Aull – Universidad de Sevilla

Electronically-mediated communication (EMC) through new media, such as mobile messaging applications like WhatsApp, has been noted as a site of significant relational work (Locher & Watts, 2005). Relational activity such as phatic and polite communication enables users to forge and foster social relationships. This ad hoc facework is of particular importance in intercultural exchanges where the participants bring relatively different sets of pragmatic knowledge and medium-related expectations.

While most EMC research has focused on verbal realizations of interpersonal work, inter- and intracultural interactants also make use of nonverbal behavior: in written mediums, for instance, users employ emojis and typographic elements for primarily relational goals (e.g. Kulkarni, 2014; Schandorf, 2012). Nonverbal modes may be particularly relevant to intercultural digital communication because they constitute strategies for overcoming languacultural differences. Nevertheless this potentially revealing aspect of EMC remains largely unexamined in intercultural pragmatics.

This presentation explores relational uses of emojis in a corpus of 20 triadic WhatsApp exchanges between Spanish-L1 speakers and English-L1 speakers studying in Spain. Close-up conversation analyses look at how/to what extent the participants used emojis for social alignment, while quantitative analyses consider possible patterns within and across the groups. These initial findings suggest that emojis offer specialized, nuanced tools for intercultural relational work.

References
Discourse markers in Italian TripAdvisor reviews
Linda Badan & Irene Cenni – Ghent University

In this paper we propose a quantitative and qualitative linguistic analysis of discourse markers in Italian reviews in a corpus taken from TripAdvisor. The corpus consists of 200 negative hotel reviews written in Italian by travelers who rated negatively their travel experience. Notice that this type of analysis has been carried out only marginally and mainly on English data (Vásquez 2014; Smakman 2015).

Touristic reviews are generally classified as an emerging written digital genre (De Ascaniis & Gretzel 2013; Bolton et al. 2013), however it has been recently noticed that reviewers may use a number of expressions and linguistic elements proper of spoken language (Vásquez 2014; 2015, Jakic et al. 2017).

Taking the recent findings mentioned above as starting point, we aim at:

I. Exploring whether Italian reviewers effectively use any specific items typical of spoken language. In particular, we concentrate our investigation on discourse markers, which are commonly defined as distinctive traits of oral communication;

II. Elaborating a taxonomy of the discourse markers detected in the reviews, on the basis of the linguistic classification proposed by Bazzanella (2005 and subsequent work);

III. Showing that the major percentage (59.6%) of discourse markers in the corpus investigated is composed by modulation mechanisms, i.e. markers with an interactional function to express a higher grade of precision in the communicative effectiveness. In particular, offering a detailed analysis of the use and function of these discourse markers, we illustrate how these linguistic elements in touristic reviews are crucial to the expressive use of Italian language in digital written texts.

References


Online evaluations of conflict and impoliteness in newspaper comments
Patricia Bou-Franch – IULMA-Universitat de València

This presentation investigates evaluations of conflict and impoliteness in online discourse, as these provide windows into moral judgement. The role of evaluation in affiliation and community-building processes is an emergent area in social media research (Zappavigna, 2017). Further, pragmatic approaches to evaluation are currently paying increasing attention to its interconnections with morality and (im)politeness (Haugh 2015, Kádár & Haugh 2013, Kádár & Márquez Reiter 2015), although pragmatic research in this area has only recently started looking at technology-mediated interactions (but see Parvaresh & Tayebi 2018, Sinkeviciute, 2018).

To carry out this research a corpus of users’ newspaper comments (n = 400) was compiled and analysed. The data were produced in response to news reports of a sports controversy between tennis player Serena Williams and Chair Umpire Carlos Ramos during the Women’s final of the US Open of 2018. During the match, Serena Williams was penalised for a number of code violations, including verbal abuse. In the course of the hostile interactions, Williams claimed that gender was a determining factor behind the umpire’s behaviour towards her. This controversy was widely reported in the news, and triggered user-generated commentaries in social media.

The analysis draws from prior work on impoliteness, gender and conflict digital commenting (Angouri & Tseliga, 2010; Bou-Franch, 2013; Bou-Franch & Garcés-Conejos Blitvich, 2014a,b; Garcés-Conejos Blitvich, 2010, 2018; Herring, 2000; Lorenzo-Dus et al., 2011, Neurauter-Kessels 2011). The comments that contained evaluations of the sport controversy were selected for thematic analysis (Braun et al 2019) in order to identify the grounds for such evaluations. The coding of comments revealed positive and negative evaluations of sports norms, of the behaviours of the people involved in the conflict, as well as appeals to what each of them should have done differently, i.e. moral appeals. Conflict-related evaluative comments were subsequently analysed to unveil discursive patterns at the micro level of interaction (Garcés-Conejos Blitvich, 2018, Sinkeviciute, 2018). The results were discussed in terms of the functionality of evaluations as interpersonal resources.
References

Angouri & Tseliga, 2010; Angouri, Jo, and Theodora Tseliga. 2010 ““You Have No Idea What You are Talking About!” From e-disagreement to e-impoliteness in two online fora.” Journal of Politeness Research 6, 57-82.


Twitter has recently become a very usual means of political address. It has also been employed to conduct political campaigns, as well as to make official declarations (OTT, 2017). In spite of the limitations in the message length, tweets allow for real time responses to major events. They are also straightforward and concise, despite the limitations in the message length (280 characters maximum). In contemporary times, Tweets have also been used to help politicians reinforce and promote their public images among their voters. This was the case of Brazil, where tweets were highly used in 2018 Presidential Campaign. Assuming that hashtags can act as strategies for achieving meaning (SCOTT, 2015) and for image projection (OLIVEIRA and CARNEIRO, 2018), the aim of this paper is to analyze how hashtags were used in Twitter during the 2018 Presidential Run in Brazil. The theoretical framework of impoliteness presented in Culpeper (2005, 2017) served as the foundation for data analysis, once most of the tweets found were aggressive and aimed at causing offense to political opponents and to their supporters. We also relied on Scott (2015) and on Ott (2017) framework for the pragmatic analysis of hashtags in online discourse while we expanded their analysis to the political scene. In order to do this, 2000 tweets containing hashtags and posted by the 10 presidential candidates were collected, together with their respective responses to them. The data collection was carried daily from September 6th to October 6th. The hashtags were then manually categorized and analyzed. In general, the results showed that hashtags were mostly used as strategies to intensify the rejection to a candidate. Tweeters typically posted messages containing alleged supportive hashtags, which were, in fact, addressed to the candidate’s opponents. We also found hashtags containing offensive language, which was used to attack a candidate’s proposal or point of view by means of a reply to their tweet. It can be argued that the hashtags analyzed here served as discursive strategies to severely attack political opponents, while offering support to an opponent. More particularly, our findings showed that hashtags were used to cause offense and to convey both affiliation and political rejection during the presidential campaign in Brazil.

References

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Several events demonstrated the recent surge of populism, such as the “Brexit”, Donald Trump’s election and the growth of numerous European populist parties. Therefore, a considerable amount of literature has been published on populism, often highlighting the role that social media have played in its rise and the benefits that populists receive from using them. However, few studies have analysed the relationship between populism and social media on a linguistic perspective (Engesser et al. 2017).

This study examines the language of four European populist politicians (Luigi Di Maio, Matteo Salvini, Marine Le Pen and Nigel Farage) and three control politicians (Matteo Renzi, François Hollande and David Cameron) on Facebook. The idea is to understand whether some of the peculiar features of the populist style, such as emotionalization, intensifications and simplistic rhetoric (Canovan 1999; Kramer 2014), favour the spread of their discourse on social media. The methodology combines the Appraisal framework (Martin & White 2005) with linear mixed models (Bates et al. 2015) to measure the effects that “populist” linguistic features may have on message popularity.

Results should show a positive correlation between the presence of the analysed features and the number of reactions, comments and shares of the messages. Moreover, it would also be interesting to observe how the post popularity of reference politicians interacts with the presence of linguistic elements related to populist style.

References


Social media use in the underprivileged areas of Cape Town.

Precarity, mobility, and sharing economy

Nadine Chariatte – University of Cape Town

The aim of this study is to show how residents of the underprivileged areas of Cape Town use social media. These underprivileged areas lie on the margins of Cape Town and were created during apartheid to relocate those population groups classified as “non-white”. The marginalised parts of the city still suffer, to a varying degree, from a lack of infrastructure, poverty and crime. Despite the destitution, social media use is relatively widespread in these parts of Cape Town. However, the use differs widely from that in more affluent societies. This paper draws on extensive material collected on diverse social media platforms and ethnographic fieldwork in the underprivileged parts of Cape Town. The data has been analysed within a framework of digital discourse and multimodality. Results show that limited access to social media due to the exorbitant prices of data and devices in South Africa, and poor and unequal infrastructure across Cape Town lead to creative solutions: Feature phones are predominantly used. The lite versions of social media platforms are very popular. Several members of the community share phones. The more mobile residents upload posts for others when they go to the city centre/locations with WiFi infrastructure. Posts are made in the name of groups of people. Posts get offline diffusion by means of children who are sent from house to house with a mobile phone to show these posts around. Teenagers re-enact visual content (memes, gifs) to entertain others. “Professional” social media users offer their services to those semi- or illiterate or with only an occasional need for social media use. On premises with better reception and/or stable electricity mobile phone hangouts are organised. Thus, social media use in the underprivileged areas of Cape Town is heavily shaped by patterns of precarity, mobility and a sharing economy. These particularities have created specific spaces, roles and trades that enable and facilitate the social media use for an increasing share of the population of Cape Town.
Public representations of the Hong Kong ‘fake ABC’ discourse in social media

Dennis Chau – The Open University of Hong Kong

Recent years have seen the increasing use of the term ‘fake ABC’ in the Hong Kong media. The term is used to denote a person who attempts to act and talk like an American-born Chinese but may not necessarily possess native-like English proficiency. The term is perceived negatively in society and used in linguistic ridicule in Hong Kong (Jenks & Lee, 2016). This identity is often associated with other derogatory labels such as ‘Kong Girl’, a negative Hong Kong female stereotype, and ‘JM tone’, a term mocking the language of Janice Man, a local actress who is regarded as a prototypical fake ABC. Drawing on posts and comments from a public Facebook page claiming to be a ‘source of celebrity news and gossip’ run by King Jer, an internet celebrity, this paper aims to investigate how the poster and commenters discursively co-construct the ‘fake ABC’ identity using the affordances of social media, in this case Facebook. It also explores how their discourse reveals broader language ideologies about English in Hong Kong. For the purpose of this exploratory study, over 3,000 comments to posts mocking the local actress using ‘JM tone’ (JM being an initialism for ‘Janice Man’, the actress in question) were collected. These comments were studied to obtain an initial picture of how the commenters react to the posts and the phenomenon. Fake ABC’s linguistic features characterized by the commenters were analyzed. I will first discuss how the poster and commenters collaboratively construct the identity with a similar set of practices such as highlighting the phonetic quality of certain English words with letter repetition (e.g. *younnnnng, perrrrfect*) and deliberately explaining the meaning of ‘simple’ English words in Chinese. The discussion will also be tied into Irvine and Gal’s (2000) notions of iconization, fractal recursivity, and erasure, processes through which the poster and commenters differentiate linguistically between themselves and ‘fake ABCs’. Finally, I will argue that Facebook, a social network site featuring conviviality (Tagg, Seargeant, & Brown, 2017), contributes significantly to the stigmatization and enregisterment of this emerging ‘fake ABC’ code (Agha, 2007).

References


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Year after year, American cultural icon Beyoncé is accused of “breaking the internet” when users of social networking sites (SNS) flood social media with posts about her. In their digital discourse practices, SNS users increasingly utilize multiple communicative modes as part of their digital repertoires, incorporating linguistic, visual, and other semiotic elements in their mobilization of content. Despite connections between different modes and meaning-making potentials (Bourlai & Herring, 2014), multimodal meaning-making, and the links between modes, meanings, SNS platform affordances, and macro-level ideologies, remain under-researched. In this paper, I directly address this gap. Motivated by Beyoncé’s ubiquitous social media presence, and attention to issues like gender and racial justice, motherhood, and celebrity, I investigate Beyoncé as the embodied site of American cultural discourses. That is, I utilize a micro-level multimodal discourse analysis (Jewitt, 2016) of 25 posts from Twitter, Tumblr, and Pinterest; I culled these from my larger digital discourse analytic project examining multimodal meaning making in 300 Beyoncé-related tweets, posts, and pins. Adopting a social semiotic theoretical approach informed by black feminisms and critical race theory, I question how micro-semiotic features connect to gender ideologies. By examining links between multimodal texts, meanings, modes, and platform affordances in the multiple layers of discursive context, I argue that users reenactuate Beyoncé such that she means much more than just “Beyoncé.” Ultimately, I argue through deep analysis of such posts, Beyoncé indexes different types of engenderment and racialization, as well as competing gender tropes and discourses.

References
I’m not who I seem to be’: Coming out of frontstage stylization on YouTube

Jan Chovanec – Masaryk University

The monologic nature of many communicative arrangements on YouTube, as well as their innovative participation structures (Dynel 2014), open up new possibilities for pragmatic research of online genres and digital culture (Johansson 2017: 191). This situation partly results from the fact that YouTube has enabled ordinary individuals – unlike traditional media channels – to ‘broadcast themselves’, while being in full control of all aspects of their online self-presentation. This gives rise to diverse and novel text-producing strategies (Adami 2015), and enables the rise of micro-celebrities who develop substantial online followings.

Nevertheless, similar to other mass mediated performances, self-presentation on YouTube raises questions about the users’ authenticity (Tolson 2013). Interestingly enough, this concern is not merely academic. It appears to be shared by some YouTubers themselves: after obtaining success, some online celebrities gradually grow somewhat unhappy with the identities that they project in their frontstage performances, and seek ways of redefining (or rectifying) such publicly performed selves.

In this presentation, I focus on a practice that I call the ‘coming out’ of YouTube celebrities, whereby they seek to abandon the stylized performance of their YouTube past and replace it with alternative models of self-presentation in the future. Using data from several YouTube video testimonials, I show how speakers discursively manage the act of ‘coming out of one’s frontstage performance’ and how they turn away from their earlier – presently dispreferred – public identities. While the testimonial format promises to give a glimpse of the real selves of these YouTubers, I suggest that when shedding their mask, they do not necessarily present us with a glimpse of the true backstage but, rather, with an alternative version of one’s frontstage performance.

References


To be or not to be Europe: 

identity construction in the 2019 EU elections campaign on Twitter 

Barbara De Cock & Sandrine Roginsky – Université catholique de Louvain 

Whereas initially the use of Twitter by politicians was thought to open avenues for more direct interaction with citizens, research on different elections has shown that this does not seem to be the case. Rather, self-presentation seems to be the main aim of the use of Twitter by (candidate) Members of the European Parliament (henceforth MEP). 

In this study, we will analyse the use of Twitter during the 2019 European electoral campaign by current MEPs who are running to renew their position, and compare these results with those obtained concerning the 2014 campaign (author & author 2015), in order to shed light on the evolution of the use of Twitter in this context. 

Our corpus consists of the tweets and Twitter biographies of current MEPs from Belgium, France, Spain, UK, and we will adopt a corpus-informed linguistics discourse analysis combined with methods from communication sciences. We will focus on how and to which extent MEPs construct the following aspects of their identity. (i) We look into the construction of a geographical identity, namely whether the MEP privileges references to the European, national or regional level. (ii) We focus on how the Twitter users construct their political affiliation, namely whether they construct their affiliation as that to a national/regional party, a European political group, an ideology … (iii) Finally, we will discuss how these MEPs present their work as an MEP, e.g. do they comment upon specific positions held in the European Parliament, do they comment on their realisations as an MEP. 

Ultimately, our aim is then to account for the extent to which MEPs construct their identity in the campaign as that of a Member of European Parliament oriented towards the European level, or rather adopts different strategies for identity construction. 

References 

This paper uses the case of digital political discourse practices of pre- and post coup Thailand in 2014 to demonstrate how shifts in chronotopes (socially organized timespace configurations, Blommaert, 2015) caused by recent changes in society turn affordances into constraints and how these shifts affect people’s practices and their identities. Recently, new technological tools such as smartphones and social media have created affordances for people to participate in digital political discourse practices in various modes, modalities and guises such as in the Arab Spring and the Occupy Movements (Bennet, 2012; Wolfsfeld, Segev, Sheafer, 2013; Jones & Li, 2016; Flowerdew & Jones, 2016). Thailand’s political landscape is heavily polarized with an ongoing violent struggle between the royalist affiliated yellow shirts and the urban and rural poor red shirts. In their political discourse practices, both groups use social media platforms and chat applications to comment, historicize, tag, like, and share selfies featuring objects identifying their political color such as flags, whistles, colors, signs, books. These practices serve to claim membership of a political color and support social change advocated by this group. The nature of these affordances, however, are highly contingent on chronotopes of factors such as the interaction order, discourses in place and people’s personal histories that converge at moments of action. Using Google’s omnibox search syntax, Instagram, Twitter and Facebook were searched for hashtags, trending topics and keywords in both Thai and English posted between 2014 and 2018 to find mainly visual data and accompanying subtexts used to engage in digital political practices. In the case of Thailand, tagging, commenting and sharing pictures claiming a political affiliation created affordances during the pre-coup period whereas weeks later after the coup, the same tools and practices severely constrained people’s safety and freedom of speech due to the societal changes advocated through these practices. These insights add an interesting spatial and temporal perspective to the current discussion of affordances and constraints by Gee (2014) and Jones (2016).

References


We the (connected) People. The language of populism in social media
Massimiliano Demata – University of Turin

Populism is the most important political phenomenon of the last ten years and, not surprisingly, has become a favourite area of study in Political Science, Media Studies and Discourse Studies. Much discussion has been devoted to the nature of populism itself, i.e. whether it is a “thin ideology” (Mudde 2004), a political style (Canovan 1981, Laclau 2005), a political strategy (Jansen 2011) or a political/performative style (Moffitt 2016). Populist leaders have found a favourite communication medium in social media, an environment which allows a discourse of (apparent) authenticity between the populist leader and “the people” (Demata 2018; Jacobs & Spierings 2018). However, while populism has been often discussed in terms of its verbal performances, much less attention has been devoted to the multimodal aspects of populist communication in social media.

This paper analyses how populist leaders use the affordances of social media unlike “traditional” politicians, and how certain distinctive traits of populism (e.g. the “people vs elite” dichotomy) are semioticized in multimodal texts. Starting from texts from the Brexit and Trump’s campaigns, I develop a framework which assesses the multimodal nature of populist communication in social media. This is done through a “triangulation” of Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (Machin & Mayr 2012; Machin 2016; Ledin & Machin 2017), Computer-mediated Discourse Analysis (Herring & Androutsopoulos 2015) and Political Science. This approach attempts to give new answers on the communicative and ideological appeal of populism.

References


Feminism as a source of conflict among family members:  
A case study from WhatsApp interaction  
Lucía Fernández-Amaya – Pablo de Olavide University

Spanish women made a statement on 2018’s International Women’s Day. An estimated 5.3 million women took part in a 24-hour strike at work and home and several hundred thousand women joined street protests. Social media and mobile messaging applications undoubtedly played a crucial role in spreading the word, fueling debate and encouraging participation. WhatsApp is one of the most popular platforms for online dialogue among friends and family, with 1.5 billion monthly users in the first quarter of 2018, according to the web Statista.

In this study, I analyze conflict language in a WhatsApp interaction within a Spanish family the day of the women’s protests. I apply analytical framework proposed by Bou-Franch and Garcés-Conejos Blitvich (2014) to a conversation that began at 10:37 AM on March 8 and ended at 1:47 AM on March 9. Through multimodal analysis, I considered participants’ linguistic strategies for expressing their opinions about feminism and how emojis acted as strengthening or softening hedges (Dresner & Herring 2012).

The results show that feminism emerges as a source of conflict among the family members, who engage in processes of identification and disidentification with others in the group (Bucholtz & Hall 2005; De Fina et al. 2006). Some participants’ pro-feminist views are seen negatively by others (surprisingly, not only men). This leads to conflictual discourse with a high presence of defensive and offensive strategies to express disagreement, lack of common ground, or negative evaluations.

References
Aggressiveness in a French discussion forum for youths: analyzing the participants' point of view

Nadia Gauducheau & Michel Marcoccia – Tech-CICO / Université de technologie de Troyes

Several studies have demonstrated that aggressiveness (hate message, cyberbullying) is frequent in online discussions between youths (Walker, Sockman & Koehn, 2011). The limits of these works is to be based on a normative conception of aggressiveness, which does not necessarily correspond to that of the speakers.

To exceed this limit, this paper explores the way youths perceive verbal aggression. What types of messages do they consider aggressive? What do they say about these messages? What rules or norms do they use to evaluate them? Thus, this paper deals with the issue of (im)politeness in Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) in highlighting the participants’ models of (im)politeness and the role of metapragmatics discussions in the construction of these models (Haugh, 2010).

In this research, we propose two types of analysis, which correspond to two distinct methodological frameworks: a discursive approach (Watts, 2003) and a socio-psychological approach (Wallace, 1999).

First, we propose an analysis belonging to the field of Pragmatics of Computer-Mediated Discourse (Herring, Stein & Virtanen eds., 2013) and focusing on the issue of (im)politeness in CMC (Graham, 2007; Locher, 2010). We analyze a corpus of messages from a French-speaking forum known for its aggressiveness: Blabla 18-25, a multi-thematic forum accessible on the website jeuxvideo.com. We first identify a sample of 50 messages that give rise to reactions that include metapragmatic comments about their aggressiveness. The analysis of these messages allows identifying the characteristics of these “aggressive” messages: do they contain Face-Threatening Acts? Hardeners (for example, insults)? Do they address particular topics? Etc. Moreover, the analysis of the metapragmatic comments highlights the norms used by the speakers for their evaluation: rules of politeness, general or local norms, legal framework, etc.

In a second step, we complete this analysis with an experimental study. We administer a questionnaire to young people of similar age to the users of the Blabla 18-25 forum. We submit a sample from our corpus and ask to evaluate these messages (are they scandalous, funny, etc.?). This method allows us to analyze the variability in the evaluations of behavior as polite or
impolite according to some contextual variables (gender, knowledge of the forum, digital practices).

References
Anglicisms have been used in specialized all-Italian contexts such as politics and technology for several decades (Demata, 2014). Over time, these have become established as loanwords, for reasons having to do with economy of form as well as the well-known challenges of translating non-autochthonous words while preserving their meaning. More recently, however, non-established, non-specialized English words have been turning up frequently in digital contexts, where their use does not seem justified by the aforementioned reasons. While this has been extensively studied in social media and advertising, it’s not the case with the unidirectional digital communication of online newspapers. One such context is the online version of the popular Italian language newspaper Corriere della Sera, whose headlines blend English with Italian daily and abundantly.

Drawing on the notions of English on top (Androutsopoulos, 2013), English display (Baumgardner & Brown, 2012), and English at play (Rivlina, 2013), this study analyzes a sample of Anglicisms found in the newspaper’s headlines collected every Friday over a period of three months, the start of the weekend being the time when more room seems to be allotted to leisure-related content. The study identifies morphosyntactic and semantic shift patterns while also considering the pragmatic functions and the sociocultural dynamics behind the trend. Preliminary findings suggest the phenomenon favors specific semantic domains entailing semantic shifts and follows clear syntactic patterns. Furthermore, such “spatial” (Androutsopoulos, 2013) uses of English index identification with modernity and with a cosmopolitan, dynamic identity (Androutsopoulos, 2013; Baumgardner & Brown, 2012).

References

‘Tory Bastards’, ‘Troubled pupils’ and ‘Premiership football managers’: constructing blame for child exclusion in an online comments forum

Will Gibson – UCL, IOE
Carles Roca – Universitat Pompeu Fabra

In this article we use Conversation Analysis and Membership Categorisation Analysis to analyse conversations in an online news forum in the British newspaper The Guardian. The comments thread followed an Op Ed piece that commented on the exclusion of ‘under-performing’ children in British secondary schools. Our analysis of these comments aims to contribute to existing research that has focussed on phenomena such as civility/incivility, ‘flaming’ and antagonistic talk as a feature of online communication. We argue that much research has been conducted without a detailed look at the actual practices of interaction that constitute the phenomena under investigation. Our work explores how participants constructed the categories that were used to assign moral blame to children’s exclusion. We investigate how participants negotiated categories of blame by collectively building/replacing category collections, successively expanding/alternating the descriptions of these categories across contributing turns. The analysis shows that category work is manifest in the step-by-step actions of participants and that terms such as ‘civility’ and ‘incivility’ are inadequate for capturing the nuances of action that comprise the turn-by-turn construction of meaning. This paper provides a detailed overview of our analysis and explores its implications for the theorisation and study of online communication.
Promotional discourse and production of public personal image on Instagram

Julio Hardisson Guimerà – University of Barcelona

An aspect that prototypically defines public telematic discourse –extremely relevant in social networks, is not just self-publishing (the possibility users have to publish their own contents) but also the sense of co-presence. In other words, the simulation of co-presence felt by users connected in the same platform, with the aim of re-creating a kind of shared virtual agora (Ankerson, 2015). Beyond contents themselves, we face a communicative situation characterized by a space-time disjunction. In that situation the individual has to produce a presence, or an hyperpresence, in order to identify himself, telematically, as the enunciation subject, by means of the several resources, verbal and multimodal, that the system offers.

The need to create a telematic presence implies, thus, several questions related to several levels of analysis. First of all, at a discursive and instrumental level, we could ask whether the given structure of interface, together with several mechanisms integrated in the interface, such as liking, friending, rating or sharing –all of them based in the principle of popularity (van Dijck, 2013), determine the way in which such a presence is created. Secondly, we should analyze whether the presence of such mechanisms is a response to a dominant promotional discourse in today’s consumers’ society (Wernick, 1991), a discourse that models the person’s public image according to the principles of personal branding (Lair et al, 2005) and of identity’s marketing (Bodei, 2002). In the third place, considering specific verbal and visual manifestations, we should study how the promotional discourse takes place by means of parameters (common to the advertising discourse) such as reflexivity, information’s economy, condensation, systems of connotation, performance and heterogeneity of semiotic resources implied in the elaboration of messages.

With the aim of covering the levels of analysis above mentioned, this study has chosen an interdisciplinary approach, based on the theoretical frameworks offered by Cultural Studies (Wernick, 1991; Williams, 1974), Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1995) and Semiotics (Kress, 2010; Barthes, 1997). In order to carry on the research we have gathered and analyzed a series of representative samples of the social network Instagram, mostly of the Spanish influencer Luna Miguel, aiming at undertaking a qualitative and interpretative analysis,
so as to underline the close relationships among the levels of analysis previously mentioned and the way in which the public image of the person is produced.

This study tries to show, on the one hand, the repercussions that promotional discourse has in the production of the individual presence in the social networks, by means of the several mechanisms integrated in the interface. On the other hand, it tries to show how the public image of a person is produced, by and large, by the sociotechnical system itself.

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Building solidarity online
Irina Herneaho – University of Helsinki

Various social network sites provide a range of tools for social movements across the political spectrum to promote their causes. This presentation examines the way Finnish pro-asylum seeker advocacy groups use social media to build a community based on shared values.

The paper draws on critical discourse analysis, especially the strand of social media critical discourse studies (KhosraviNik 2018). Special emphasis is placed on the way solidarity movements operating online seek to contribute to social change by contesting the dominant discourses on the so called “refugee crisis”. Linguistic phenomena linked to the rise of anti-immigration attitudes have been extensively analysed (see e.g. Richardson & Colombo 2014; Wodak 2015). In comparison, relatively little is known about the way language is used to defend immigrants’ rights.

The particular focus is on the linguistic and other semiotic resources that activists utilize in order to construct and enhance a solidarity that breaks down barriers of ethnicity and nationality, thus reinforcing the moral obligation to support the cause of asylum seekers. These resources include e.g. discursive strategies of self-presentation, expressions of emotions and attitudes, and the creation and use of hashtags. The data is produced by advocacy groups and consist of posts from activist blogs and social network sites.

The potential power of the participatory web does not reside in technological affordances per se, but rather in the ability to bring about tangible change in communities across both digital and non-digital spheres. It will be argued that reinforcing the sense of solidarity plays a key role in mobilising people to join the movement and take action both online and offline (see García Agustín 2012).

References

Animoji on the Apple iPhone X are the latest incarnation of face graphicons (Herring & Dainas, 2017) in computer-mediated discourse, but with a new twist -- rather than their expression being fixed, like emoji and stickers, users animate animoji through movements of their head, mouth, eyes, and eyebrows. Functionally, animoji constitute a repertoire of dynamic, cartoon-like avatars that one can speak through when sending asynchronous voice messages from one’s phone. In this talk, we report on a study of how mediation by animoji affects the speech that is produced. We focus on video clips of animoji that were shared publicly on YouTube and Twitter in the past year since the iPhone X debuted, analyzing them as mediated performances (Bauman, 1975).

A corpus of 261 animoji clips produced by 35 speakers was analyzed for variation in ‘keying’ features such as paralinguistic patterns of voice quality and vocalization, as well as direct and indirect references to the animoji in use and overall degree of performance. Initial findings indicate that the vast majority of clips show deviations from normal voice quality. These variations fall along a continuum from stylized English to full-blown, self-(animoji-) referential performances of cultural archetypes and media characters, some including stereotypical ethnic accents. Moreover, the use of different animoji ‘identities’ (dog, cat, robot, poop, etc.) correlates with different styles of, and intensity of, performance. Nonetheless, certain features generally characterize the animoji performances in our data, including a tendency for the speaker to use raised pitch, elongated sounds, and stylistically marked cadences. These performances invoke stereotypes of creatures, real or imagined, whose “voices” the animoji users perform, and recontextualize them for entertainment purposes. In concluding, we identify ways in which communication through animoji-like graphicons is expanding in scope (e.g. to include customizable animoji and animoji that can be used in video chat) and consider the implications of our findings for animoji-mediated communication in non-humorous, interactive contexts of use.
References


Mundane digital interaction often takes place in ‘unregulated orthographic spaces’ (Sebba, 2007: 56), likely resulting in an increase in visibility of language variation. However, we know little about how this change of visibility affects current language ideologies (i.e. beliefs about language and speakers). This study examines negotiations of language ideology in digital, everyday interaction, focusing on resistance against dominating language ideologies.

More specifically, the study explores verbal hygiene (Cameron, 2012), i.e. practices aiming at correction of someone’s language, and how people ‘reject’ these corrections in favor of their own ideas about language. These practices are seen as part of wider negotiations of language ideology and which type of language use is considered acceptable in certain social spaces. The data consist of discussions threads containing metalinguistic debates about Swedish language on the social media platforms Twitter and Jodel.

The metalinguistic discussions are analyzed in terms of stance (Du Bois and Kärkkäinen, 2012), i.e. how interlocutors value language as an object, how the participants position themselves and others, and how interlocutors relate to each other. What is of particular interest is ‘divergent alignment’ (approx. non-agreeing messages) in response to authoritarian verbal hygiene practices.

This study identifies how messages of divergent alignment are used to resist the hegemonic discourse of what constitutes proper and correct Swedish. These patterns of stance-taking are discussed in relation to the local language norms.

References
Human rights and construction of the past
in tweets of political television programs in Chile
Daniela Ibarra Herrera & Johann Unger – Lancaster University

In this study we explore interaction patterns and argumentative resources in tweets related to the representation of human rights on political television shows in Chile. The conceptualization of human rights in the Chilean context has been studied in different data types such as reports, historical textbooks and essays (Oteíza and Pinuer 2013; De Cock and Michaud 2018), but there is little if any work on social media data. Previous studies in political discourse and social media (e.g. KhosraviNik 2017) have suggested that critical discourse studies and specifically the discourse-historical approach (Reisigl and Wodak 2015) can usefully be applied in this context. We therefore seek to combine these two bodies of research by analysing interactions and semiotic resources used in 30,000 tweets relating to five Chilean political television shows broadcast during 2016. The data suggest that the violation of human rights by the civic-military dictatorship in Chile continues to be part of the national political debate, especially in relation to judicial processes and reparation policies implemented by the government. Discussion about human rights is also connected with recent events connected to indigineous Chileans and childrens’ services. Our analysis shows that in these text types various semiotic resources are strategically deployed. Viewers interact with diverse social actors on and off screen and directly address guests and political figures in their tweets, with different purposes (interaction, attacks, etc.), and resorting to multimodal resources (images and videos) and hyperlinks as a form of "evidence" through the use of topoi (argumentative shortcuts) related to history, justice and authority.

References
Subconscious attitudes towards informal digital practices on Facebook
Vanessa Isenmann – University of Iceland

The proposed paper addresses subconscious language attitudes towards digital linguistic practices in so called social network sites (SNS). More specifically, the paper discusses the results of a study on attitudes towards informal written Icelandic on Facebook.

The linguistic practices observed in SNS often challenge ideas about so called “good language” in the Icelandic speech community (cf. Árnason, 2003b; Kristinsson & Hilmarsson-Dunn, 2013; Ottósson, 1990). Communication on Facebook may include features reminiscent of informal spoken language and deviations from orthographic rules. Against this backdrop, the research project “Dulin viðhorf – Mat á óformlega málnotkun á netinu” (Subconscious attitudes – evaluations of informal language use online) examined subconscious attitudes towards such digital practices.

The study employed a semi-structured online questionnaire based on a twisted matched-guise test (cf. Zhang, 2014). Instead of recordings, informants were confronted with two written texts of the same content and were asked to rate the personal characteristics of the text’s authors on a seven-point Likert-scale (cf. Ewen & Kristiansen, 2006). In doing so, the study examined whether the use of informal features affects judgements about the author of an informal online text which mirror speaker’s hidden or subconscious attitudes towards informal digital practices. The study also addressed the question to what degree speakers approve of informal language use in digital environments and whether such linguistic practices are only accepted under certain circumstances.

References
Debating according to Matt:  
Testing a Framework for Critical Discourse Analysis on YouTube
Robin Isomaa – Åbo Akademi University

Discourse analysis is typically performed on written text or on material which can be easily translated into written text. However, not all types of material can be translated without problems; audiovisual material can be particularly difficult. This paper seeks to adapt existing frameworks for critical discourse analysis (CDA), particularly the three-dimensional approach of Norman Fairclough (1992) and the nine stages of discourse analysis by Gordon Lynch (2005), into a practical scheme which takes into account the technical aspects of video material as well as the social and economic conditions of video production and distribution on YouTube. Drawing upon previous research on YouTube (e.g. Gabriele 2016; Pihlaja 2018), this scheme takes into consideration technical decisions, such as camera positioning, editing, use of video clips and music, and set design, and relates these to what is explicitly said, as well as to the rest of the producer’s videography and to other producers in their ‘YouTube sphere’.

As a test case for this analytical scheme, this paper analyzes videos by popular atheist speaker and YouTuber Matt Dillahunty. Dillahunty is one of the hosts of the internet atheist call-in show *The Atheist Experience* and produces videos about religion and philosophy on his personal YouTube channel. The focus of this paper is on his videos about debating, particularly his ‘debate reviews’, where he reviews previous debates he has done (mostly with Christian apologists) and talks about what he did and what he could have done better. As Dillahunty is generally viewed by atheists online as a great debater, analyzing his views on debating may provide some insight into how debating and the pursuit of truth are constructed within Anglophone internet atheism.

References
This study explores two hashtags, #Thainess and #ความเป็นไทย (khwampenthai or Thainess in Thai language) used on social media platforms including: Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. The concept of Thainess has an interesting and troublesome history. The term Thainess first entered the Thai lexicon in the 19th century where it was used to promote a nationalist agenda, and to a certain degree still does, as the current military junta has used and has attempted to own Thainess for national identity purposes. In some recent work on multimodality and tourism in Thailand (Jocuns n.d) I have noted six different stances to Thainess: as a form of national identity, as popular culture, a means of the Thai-ification of non-Thai peoples of Thailand, a form of commodification, and putting a Thai spin on things including English. How Thainess emerges in hashtags on-line is slightly different to the degree that the histories of the concept are glossed over if not erased, and a new stance emerges via social media in how foreigners employ #Thainess. My analysis draws on Zappavigna’s (2018) recent discussion of hashtags, specifically the second order meanings that emerge in metadiscourse through the use of hashtags. I use mediated discourse analysis (Scollon 2001) to analyze the instances of #Thainess and #ความเป็นไทย that emerge on these different social media platforms as mediated actions. I argue that the differences between the use of the hashtags #Thainess and #ความเป็นไทย emerge as different mediated actions across platforms including: nationalism, tourism promotion as well as discrimination. I note differences in who and how these two hashtags are used cross-linguistically – both Thai and non-Thai users deploy the #Thainess hashtag whereas the Thai language version #ความเป็นไทย tends to only emerge in posts from Thai users.

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Talking with a chatbot: Interactional sequences of chatbot communication

Marjut Johansson – University of Turku

In this paper, my main aim is to study human interaction with chatbots. Chatbots are social bots, and, in the digital context, they are co-present with the human users they communicate with (see, e.g., Zhao 2003). They are software programs that can execute various tasks, ranging from consumer-related tasks to giving advice in matters such as health or social media applications (Araujo 2018: 183–184).

In this study, I am interested in chatbots that can be characterized as conversational agents and are presented as human-like, for instance, with gendered features, human names, and multimodal expressions like gaze. In the current literature, researchers in Internet technology, design, and psychology are interested in chatbots for their social presence and how they are perceived or used by human users (Papacharissi 2018; Araujo 2018). In linguistics, there are a few studies on how chatbots are used in language learning (e.g., Fryer & al. 2017).

My data will include several discussions with various chatbots who use text-based interaction. These discussions will focus on interactional turns and sequences that are built around various language activities, such as human agreement and cooperation with the chatbot versus disagreement and conflict. My theoretical and methodological approaches will be based on digital discourse analysis as well as sociopragmatics.

References


‘We’ll watch TV and do other stuff’: Influence and implicature in online sexual grooming
Anina Kinzel & Nuria Lorenzo-Dus – Swansea University

Digital influence is like gold dust: a mere 10 -20% of social media users manage to exert considerable influence over the remaining 80-90% of users (Cha et al 2010). A substantial body of research has examined digital influence in, especially, Twitter (Lorenzo-Dus & Di Cristofaro 2016; Meraz & Papacharissi 2013). In contrast, research into the semiotic construction of influence in cyber-crime environments is under-developed. Our paper addresses this knowledge imbalance by examining influence in the online sexual grooming of children. Specifically, and adopting a Corpus Assisted Discourse Studies framework, we analyse how groomers encourage their victim to view their proposed behaviour –which is morally abhorrent and illegal – in positive, trust-based terms. Our corpus consists of convicted groomers’ contribution (c. 3.5 million words) to online grooming interactions (n=633) extracted from Perverted Justice (http://www.perverted-justice.com/?con=full). Our quantitative analysis identified extremely low frequency and dispersion values for sexual terms. Our discourse analysis subsequently provided an explanation for this, namely: sexual content was regularly introduced via conversation implicature that primarily flouted the Gricean maxims of relation and manner. These results contribute to advancing academic understanding of digital influence, which in the context of online grooming has hitherto only minimally considered *implicit* sexual discourse (Chiang & Grant, 2018; Lorenzo-Dus et al., 2016). Moreover, our results are of practical relevance to the development of detection software and prevention programmes, within which our research is embedded.

References

Constructing the ‘nation’: cross-cultural observations on English and German Wikipedia entries
Sonja Kleinke & Julia Landmann – Heidelberg University

With its 441 million English-language pages and a total of 32.8 million registered Wikipedia users as of May 2018, Wikipedia has developed into the largest online encyclopaedia worldwide. Currently, Wikipedia has almost 300 language versions, most of which are not simply (bot)translations from the biggest Wikipedia (English), but have been written independently against their respective cultural and language backgrounds (Hecht & Gergle 2010, Massa & Scrinzi 2013). So far, only very few studies have dealt with systematic qualitative analyses of how complex social concepts are constructed at the micro-level of Wikipedia entries in different language versions (e.g. Callahan & Herring 2011, Bilic & Bulian 2014, Callahan 2014, Wessler et al. 2017). A comparative qualitative study on the construction of nation and Nation in the English and the German language versions revealed differences in perspectivization, e.g. in their framing at both the propositional and the social level (Fillmore 1976, Goffman 1974) as well as in terms of plexity (Kleinke & Schultz forthc.). Extending on these results, the present study focuses on the 24 entries of the ‘see also’-section of the English version and their German Wikipedia equivalents to explore if similar differences in perspectivization can be observed in the construction of related concepts. As in the previous study, the analysis will be data-driven but category-inspired, focusing on construal operations such as selective framing by accessing the concept through different domains, social framing and plexity. Thus, at the descriptive level, the study reveals cross-cultural insights as to how the complex social concept ‘nation’ is constructed collectively in the English and in the German Wikipedia communities. At the same time it further explores the potential of qualitative micro-analyses to tackle cross-cultural differences in the Wikipedia enterprise.

References


Critical digital discourse and social media content policies – the invisible hand of social media providers

Susanne Kopf – Vienna University of Economics and Business

This study addresses social media content policies as a key contextual element. Specifically, it argues that – and why – the exploration of content policies is indispensable when approaching social media and social media data from a critical perspective. In addition, using Wikipedia as a case study, this study demonstrates how Wikipedia editors (so-called ‘Wikipedians’) draw on content policies to argue for in-/exclusion of certain information, i.e. how content policies shape Wikipedia’s content.

A number of researchers have already discussed issues to consider in the context of Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) on digital discourse (e.g. KhosraviNik & Unger 2016; KhosraviNik 2017; Unger et al 2016). The scholars involved have begun to identify some contextual elements to explore when viewing social media through a CDS lens – this paper complements existing research by arguing the case for social media content policies as crucial contextual element. What is more, as Wikipedia has not received adequate research attention in CDS, this study presents a starting point towards dealing with this platform in CDS.

Drawing on Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis (CMDA) and recent developments in Social Media CDS (SM-CDS), this presentation, first, introduces social medias’ content policies as missing contextual element. Then, it argues why such policies deserve particular attention in CDS. After these theoretical considerations, I present empirical evidence to support this argument with a case study of Wikipedia and examples from a corpus spanning 15 years of Wikipedia data.

References


National Identities in the Digital Age: A Case of Global Ireland

Natalia Kovalyova – University College Dublin

As digital practices are increasingly adopted in many spheres of life -- from health apps and self-tracking to e-government, digital marketing, and new genres of interpersonal communication and public history -- critical theorists and students of discourse face multiplying challenges of explaining how power is exercised in these new contexts and how the flow of digital discourse transforms the social matrix in which participants are embedded.

This paper is particularly concerned with the formation of national identities on the digital terrain. It takes as a case study two initiatives by the Irish government: one launched in 2013 (The Gathering) and one announced in the summer of 2018 (Global Ireland) – that capitalize on the power of storytelling and a metaphor of a family (used interchangeably with a “clan” or, often, a “network”) and that encourage Irish citizens to demonstrate “what it means to be Irish” and, ultimately, exploit their family ties so that “the global Irish community can once again become connected” and Ireland’s “global footprint” become more prominent.

Examining the online materials and documentation for both projects, this study asks several specific questions: 1) What stories, events, and practices are advanced by the two initiatives as formative for the contemporary Irish? 2) What discourses shape the story of Global Ireland? 2) Who do they include and who is excluded from the Irish diaspora? Who is empowered and how is relegated to a lesser status? 3) How can the subject positions assumed by the discourse of expanding Ireland’s influence be rejected? 4) How does the digital architecture of the online portals in questions sustain or interfere with the formation of the new Irish?

The discussion will elaborate on the promises and failures of the national identity formation by digital means and will also address digital humanities methodologies in the study of national identities in the digital age.
Emerging Discourses on Different Motherhood in Russia
Svetlana Kucherenko – Higher School of Economics, Saint Petersburg

This paper aims to explore contemporary beliefs about motherhood in Russia held by a number of mothers who challenge the traditional discourse on motherhood. The dominant mothering discourse in Russia tends to posit a picture of a happy mother immersed in her family life based on child-centricism, male supremacy and self-sacrifice of mothers. This discourse has been socially constructed by generations of Russian mothers, upheld by Russian government and passed down by means of popular wisdom. The main purpose of this paper is to investigate the lived experience of Russian mothers as expressed in several internet communities hosted by the Russian social network Vkontakte (analogous to Facebook). These virtual communities clearly state that they welcome those mothers who do not espouse a blissful motherhood. The following research questions have been raised: a) what beliefs about motherhood have recently emerged in Russia as expressed by these particular virtual communities; b) what tenets of the dominant mothering discourse have been subverted by these communities and c) what role these communities play in the life of those mothers who diverge from the mainstream. My study has been carried out within classical netnography with elements of thematic analysis and qualitative discourse analysis. Although the study is still in progress, there are some preliminary findings in terms of emerging ideas and practices: a) the virtual communities provide social and psychological support for mothers, b) most mothers are stigmatised by their families for their non-conventional attitude to motherhood, c) good motherhood should not necessarily be child-centered, d) motherhood could be physically and psychologically painful, e) a negative attitude towards children and other family partners is a likely corollary of motherhood.

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Constructing #instartist: Multimodal enregisterment of micro-influencer artists on Instagram

Carmen Lee – Chinese University of Hong Kong

Visual social media such as Instagram are popular among amateur and “everyday” artists to exhibit, share, and promote their artwork due to the visual affordances and immense outreach potential of these media. A typical post of artwork on Instagram is a multimodal assemblage of an uploaded image (or video) and a caption with a maximum of 30 hashtags. On Instagram, the reputation and value of an artist are not defined by experts, but by followers’ active consumption of the posts through frequent viewing, liking, sharing, and commenting. In this talk, I present a case study of artists on Instagram and explore how they construct their #instartist identity through multimodal discourse and practices of self-curation. Drawing on the notions of enregisterment (Agha 2007, Johnstone 2016), everyday aesthetics (Saito, 2001; Zhao and Zappavigna, in press) and emerging research on digital self-curation as a new literacy practice (Potter and McDougall, 2017), this paper shows how the discourse of the everyday has become an important commodity in the world of digital exhibitionism (Munar, 2010). The main dataset comes from the Instagram accounts of two self-taught watercolor artists who started as amateurs and later earned over 10k followers and sponsors. Informed by netnography and social semiotics, this paper identifies three key features of multimodal enregisterment of an instartist voice:

(i) **focus on the everyday**: Most of the uploaded images contain a painting placed in a physical setting with everyday objects, such as a table with a paint brush and a cup of tea; the hashtags often captures the mundane and ordinariness of the artist’s life, such as #hotsummer, #onmydesk;

(ii) **genre-specific hashtags**: There is an extensive use of specific hashtags that are mostly popular among watercolor artists such as #botanicalwatercolor and #aquarelle;

(iii) **affect**: Instartists also tell affective stories about their artistic journeys so as to convey interpersonal meanings and manage their relations with followers.

These self-curation practices not only allow instartists to increase visibility (Page, 2012), they also become crucial capitals for artists to enregister and sustain their micro-influencer status. This talk will conclude by discussing the potential interdisciplinary implications of the study.
References


Hashtag functions in French language posts on Twitter and Instagram: 

a case study of #jediscajedisrien

Stephanie Lerat – Université de Lorraine

This exploratory study contributes to deepening understanding of the functions of hashtags in French language posts on two different social media platforms by focusing on #jediscajedisrien.

Je dis ça je dis rien, roughly ‘just saying’, is a playful French expression. It is used to indicate the relevance of an otherwise lackluster or even potentially offensive observation and adds humorous undertones. Frequent in spoken language, it is also present as a hashtag on social media as #jediscajedisrien, #jdiscajdisrien and #JDCJDR.

Studies of the use of hashtags on Twitter have shown that their functions largely surpass their original organizational purpose. Twitter hashtags have been analyzed from various vantage points, including their linguistic functions (Zappavigna, 2015) and stylistic functions (Scott, 2015). Hashtags are also popular on Instagram, where, as observed by Mately (2018), they can be used not only to indicate stance but also to engage in facework.

To observe the functions of #jediscajedisrien, a convivence sample of 150 publicly available tweets as well as 150 Instagram posts was collected in 2018. The linguistic and stylistic functions of the hashtag were analyzed. Consistent with previous work on hashtags, the preliminary results indicate that on both platforms #jediscajedisrien contributes mainly to interpersonal functions, such as identity construction and repair, and serves to show the relevance of a post in an otherwise ambiguous context. Interestingly, in Instagram posts, #jediscajedisrien is also used to comment on other hashtags or remarks in the same post, rather than solely referring to the content of the posted image. The findings offer further insight into previous identified functions and some novel innovations.

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“So this is how liberty dies…with thunderous applause”:
GIFs as political commentary on Tumblr
Loukia Lindholm – Åbo Akademi University

Recent research in digital communication has underlined the increasing importance of graphical elements such as emoji, images, stickers, videos, and GIFs (Graphical Interchange Formats) as central components of communication on web and mobile platforms (Herring, 2018; Herring & Dainas, 2017). Specifically, GIFs have become a key fixture of participatory digital culture and new media practices. GIFs are very short, looping animated scenes from movies or TV shows that are recontextualized and repurposed into new contexts, thereby acquiring and producing new meanings. However, the communicative functions of GIFs remain largely understudied, with a few notable exceptions that illustrate their function as reactions to a comment, image, or text, and even as conversational interaction (Bourlai & Herring, 2016; Miltner & Highfield, 2017; Petersen, 2014; Tolins & Samermit, 2016). Employing a discoursepragmatic approach, this paper aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of GIF functions by exploring their use as commentary on politics, with a focus on the current political climate in the U.S. The data consist of GIF posts in English collected from the multimodal microblogging site Tumblr. The paper provides insight into how GIFs signal ideological and political positions, especially through the recontextualization and resemiotization of popular culture.

References


This paper presents a case study of a customer service dispute caused by refusal of a Russian-speaking postal company worker to accommodate the language needs of a Ukrainian-speaking client and focuses on the image of Russia and its politics circulating in Ukraine projected onto the postal clerk and the Russian-speaking participants of the discussion as it was taken to Facebook.

This Facebook exchange study relies on the theory of Mediated Discourse (Scollon, 2002), followed by Corpus Assisted Discourse study of a small specialized corpus. At the site of engagement, a real-time confrontation is registered on a video and consequently presented to the general audience, using the mediational power of the social network, for a discussion of a public policy. This paper focuses on an interpretive analysis of a one-time social action that trigged an extensive public discussion, unfolding in real time, which in its turn reproduced social groups, their complex history, conflicting political views, and identities (Scollon, 2002, pp. 3-4).

The preliminary results of the case study reveal the current mood among Ukrainian and Russian-speaking discussants towards the imperial legacy of Russian language in Ukraine and the inconsistent use of national language in all spheres of official communication. Moreover, Russian military aggression appears to cause anxiety and overestimation of the ‘quantity and quality’ of “Russianness” and anti-Ukrainian sentiment that really exist among Ukrainian speakers of Russian. Finally, the case study reveals the tension, mistrust and misunderstanding between the language rights activists and the general public revived by the events of 2014 and exacerbated by the refusal of the government to cut all ties and break away from the imperial legacies and the “Russian World” (Kulyk, 2017).

References
This presentation discusses the results of an ethnographically based, nexus analytic (Scollon & Scollon, 2004) study of a Facebook group for sharing images from trips to national parks in Finland. With over 46,000 members, the group is the largest Finnish language Facebook group related to wilderness activities. The analysis focuses on the processes of resemiotisation occurring as the group members share their experiences in nature using the mediational means available to them in this techno-social environment (Jones & Norris, 2005). The analysis shows that the sharing practices in the group are shaped by technological and cultural aspects related to the Facebook environment, practices of digital photography and nature photography, the national parks system and Finnish cultural understandings on what nature is for and what one should do there. A significant bodily dimension is present in the interaction within the group, giving participants a strong sense of the embodied experience of being in nature.

The findings from the group are compared to the portrayal of nature found on the main online information portal on the national parks, luontoon.fi, which the Facebook group members also regularly access. Both sites bring forth similar themes of embodied activity, embodied experience, and the importance of the physical structures enabling these visits to the national parks. However, the portal page describes a mediatised (Agha, 2011), static, ideal experience of nature, while the Facebook group members are engaged in a process of remediating (Bolter & Grusin, 1999) their recent real experiences in nature. Thus, while the portal functions well as a source of information, the Facebook group provides daily inspiration and strengthens a view of the national parks as accessible for all.

References
The terrorist group under study (not named here for safety reasons) have successfully exploited numerous digital platforms for recruitment, radicalization and dissemination of propaganda (Shamieh & Szenes, 2015). Despite their online efforts being hampered by the authorities, they continue to find ways to resurface and operate. Due to the concern over their adept use of digital technologies, this research aims to shed light on this group's efforts through their online recruitment materials: videos and magazines that are hosted on and disseminated via various digital media. Specifically, we examined the ways this group talk about how they work and how people should live and see the world. In this paper, we exclusively focus on one of the salient findings pertaining to the female members of this group who are given less attention as compared to the male members due to cultural and gender restrictions (Pearson, 2018). We discuss what their roles are and how they are represented in the online materials. The analytical framework involves integrating several different approaches from critical discourse studies (CDS) and social semiotics, specifically Wodak’s (2016) discourse historical approach (DHA), and Kress and van Leuween’s (2006) grammar of visual design. The aspects that we analysed and discussed are based on the semiotic elements that emerged from a detailed qualitative analysis of the research data which include actors e.g. the group members and their perceived enemies, symbols e.g. light representing heaven, and texts e.g. Arabic as the language of inclusion. Relevant findings include the group positioning their female members as idlers, and thus what they have to do to reform themselves (e.g. to get their priorities right, such as from gossiping to supporting their ‘Jihadi’ husbands).

References
Organizational websites are examples of digital discourse that reflect the values of the organizations they represent. Several organizational websites have been studied in this context. For example, Farcaș (2016) looked at the ways in which the websites of the ministries of the Romanian Government present, communicate, and define institutional identity. A study conducted by Sillince and Brown (2009) focused on police websites and explored how multiple organizational identities are constructed through rhetoric to maintain and enhance the legitimacy claims made by the organizations. However, the websites of Academies of Sciences have not been analyzed from this perspective.

In my presentation, I will explore the invention of scientific communities as mediated by the rhetoric of digital texts—the websites for the Academies of Sciences in the United States and Sweden. Through a digital discourse analysis of these websites, I will point to the many ways in which digital discourse reflects the practices and labor of these communities as they relate to: 1) promoting public policy, 2) popularizing scientific knowledge among the general public, 3) fostering an internal community of practitioners, and 4) adding to the scholarly body of knowledge within the sciences.

References
From “woke” to “uncomfy”:
Indexing youthfulness in political-ethical discourse on Tumblr
Michelle Morgenstern – University of Virginia

Tumblr.com has received considerably less scholarly attention than its social media contemporaries, Facebook and Twitter (Attu and Terras 2017). However, in the folk geography of the internet, the platform is widely recognized as a site where people come to take up and enact political-ethical sentiments oriented around issues of social justice (Massanari 2017). The small, but growing, literature about Tumblr echoes this, describing the site as home to various feminist, anti-racist, and LGBTQ projects and communities (Dame 2016; Kohnen 2018; Renninger 2015). In this paper, I attend to the linguistic practices of Tumblr bloggers who credit the platform with shaping their beliefs about what it means to be and do good in the world.

Political-ethical practice on Tumblr flourishes alongside a context of linguistic play — one which consistently incorporates a “creative appropriation, adaptation, and transformation of real, imagined, and fictional voices” (Vasquez and Creel 2017). From 2013-2018, I conducted online ethnography among a network of 208 bloggers under the age of 35. During this time, I collected approximately 8,000 individual posts that included political-ethical arguments. I draw on this corpus to examine how these bloggers voice and leverage the figure of a/the “youth” in their political-ethical discourse. I suggest that these Tumblr bloggers deploy linguistic styles, registers, and typographies that index “youthfulness” and that, in this context, this youthful voice works to position themselves and others as moral authorities. Further, I argue that the particular qualities of youthfulness indexed are not static, but have shifted to accommodate new political-ethical projects and paradigms over time. The emergence of these new political-ethical projects have gone largely unremarked upon on account of the fact that, lexically, the relevant moral categories and sentiments remain unchanged. However, by examining how the linguistic construction of the figure of a/the “youth” has changed over time, we are given insight into what is ultimately a very significant shift in the prevailing political-ethical practices, stances, and motivations among Tumblr users and, potentially, the political-ethical landscape of young Americans more broadly.
References
Virtual Exchange (VE) is a form of technology-enabled and instructor-facilitated collaboration between students, who are geographically separated and/or come from different cultures (O’Dowd 2018). In 2018 spring, a short-term VE project was arranged between the University of Jyväskylä, Finland and the University of Pardubice, Czech Republic. This included Finnish and Czech students (n = 12 + 12) with a diverse level of language proficiency collaborating on a task through different channels. In the end, two videoconference sessions (60 min. each) were organized during which the students discussed their findings in their pre-designated small groups. The sessions were video recorded in both universities. After completing all the tasks, the students filled in an online feedback questionnaire about their experiences during the project.

This paper focuses on one aspect of the study: the space-making practices of both the Czech and Finnish students during the videoconferences and the ways in which availability to the remote peers is displayed (e.g. Luff et al. 2016). Stemming from the questionnaire answers of some students, i.e. their feelings of exclusion in particular, the aim is to analyze on a micro-level how verbal and embodied resources can be used to create a communal atmosphere and a sense of a shared interactional space (see Oittinen, 2018). The preliminary findings highlight the importance of embodied behavior, such as gestures and movement, and show how multimodal resources can sometimes contribute to alliance building in only one location and thus promote aspects of inclusion/exclusion. This study is beneficial for both further research on multimodal practices in video-conferences and development of future virtual exchange projects in education.

References

### #DontGiveItAShit: classism, ideology and aggressive behavior on Brazilian Twitter

Ana Larissa Oliveira & Marisa Carneiro  
– Federal University of Minas Gerais

Hashtags are ubiquitous in the interpersonal spaces of Twitter, as well as in the debates on many different fields. A hashtag usually encourages people to start discussions about a proposed topic. The number of responses co-occurring with a given hashtag represents the attention drawn to a given topic, to which respondents actively reply (Godin et al, 2013). Taking the framework of impoliteness into account (Culpepper (2005, 2017), the aim of this paper is to analyze how hashtags employed by Brazilian tweeters can act as strategies of second-order impoliteness. The tenor of the notion of impoliteness, as it is also claimed in this paper, is social interaction and the immediate context. For Culpepper (2005), impoliteness is put to rise when the speaker communicates face attack intentionally; when the hearer perceives and/or constructs behavior as intentionally face-attacking; or when there is a combination of both (Culpeper & Hardaker, 2017). In order to carry the research, 400 tweets containing hashtags, collected from November 2017 to August 2018, were analyzed. In order to be primarily categorized as impolite and/or aggressive, the hashtag needed to contain offensive and/or taboo words, such as *fuck, asshole, bitch, shithole*, as discussed in Oliveira and Carneiro (2018) data analysis. In addition, hashtags containing *no, out of neveragain* were also included, since they proved to be frequent in the data analyzed. After the data collection, the posts were manually analyzed and the strategies of impoliteness were identified. The content analysis suggested that hashtags acted as strategies of impoliteness, allowing for offensive meanings to be communicated in accordance with the speed-up demands of digital communication. More particularly, the hashtags analyzed here displayed derogatory and impolite language uses, notably very prominent in Brazilian social media. They were also associated with linguistic manifestations of ideology and classism (HAGUH, 2013; KIENPOINTNER & STOPFNER, 2017) in that they displayed disdainful and scornful language employed to ridicule and to negatively address low-income classes, Brazilian politicians, as well as the press.
References


Emojis as strategies of repair in apologies for refusals: a study of WhatsApp threads with Brazilian Internet users
Ana Larissa Oliveira & Gustavo Cunha – Federal University of Minas Gerais

Emoticons and emojis are commonly associated with the expression of emotions. At the same time, they can work as contextual clues, serving as a guide to help readers identify the illocutionary force of a speech act (Herring & Dresner 2012, Avelar, 2018). From this viewpoint, the aim of this study was to investigate how emojis were employed in apologies and in repairs in WhatsApp text messages, exchanged by Brazilian Internet users. Apologies were regarded as particularly intriguing as they often encompassed FTAs (face threatening acts, Brown and Levinson, 1987) and also because they demanded repairs (Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 2001, 2006; Leech, 2014; Meier, 1995). Taking this framework into consideration, 432 threads containing emojis were collected from a WhatsApp chat group, formed by speakers of Brazilian Portuguese (Avelar, 2018). The threads with emojis were manually identified and the apologies following refusals were analyzed together with the sequences of repairs that they elicited. In our findings, apologies and repairs following refusals were described as complex speech events, adding up to the findings of (Pavalanathan & Eisenstein, 2015, Lakoff, 2001). Our data also showed that emojis acted as inferential clues (Herring & Dresner, 2012), as well as elements that facilitated the formation of implicated conclusions within the scope of social media (Wilson & Sperber, 2012). While they did that, emojis were also identified as “external modifiers”, since they were not inserted in the central speech acts. Furthermore, we found that emojis were highly employed to restore the public image of a speaker, following a refusal. They were also used to express embarrassment and discomfort, after the violation of a social norm (for example, the refusal). In this sense, emojis played a very important proxemic role, once they replaced intonation and facial expressions, which are common in face-to-face interaction in order to express intimacy, affection and deference.

References


Twitter in H2020 websites: A pragmatic study of scientific research groups networking
Daniel Pascual – University of Zaragoza

Scientific research groups tend to disseminate their results by using a variety of different digital genres and media, and usually employing English to reach a wider audience. Social media seem to play a significant role in such dissemination and in the impact these results have in society. In this context, Twitter has been found to be particularly prominent for the scientific discourse community, as scientists’ tweets normally highlight their everyday research practices and conundrums (Kuteeva, 2016). This pragmatic study aims to analyse the use H2020 European scientific research groups make of Twitter as a social network, to create their e-visibility and develop their digital identities and relationships (Veletsianos, 2016). To do so, 30 H2020 projects have been selected. Their websites have first been explored, to focus on the range of social networks available in each project –where Twitter stands out, as well as on how these social media are displayed, and subsequently publicised, within the framework of the project websites that host them. Then, a number of corpus-driven pragmatic strategies have been identified and explored in the project Twitter accounts in the belief that these strategies reinforce the creation of social groupings and their social identity (Merchant, 2006). Thus, they are also thought to reflect the bidirectional relation between websites and Twitter, considering hyperlinking as a resource that fosters intertextuality and a “navigating mode” for the audience. Preliminary results show that the most prominent pragmatic strategies in the digital context under analysis comprise self-praise, announcing events and presenting output. Prototypical lexico-grammatical and discursive realizations have also been accounted for. This pragmatic analysis will lead to better understand how international scientific research groups participate in, and exploit, global digital communication, and how this may affect their e-visibility.

References
Spanish YouTubers’ and their audience’s affective features in address practices
Sanna Pelttari – University of Turku

This presentation discusses Spanish YouTubers’ and their audience’s affective features when addressing each other.

The impact of social media on the language practices of its users is shown in numerous studies. However, the great majority focuses on written language (Johansson, 2017), and this is also the case of many studies related to the YouTube sphere concerning, for example, users’ comments and so-called massive polylogues (Bou-Franch & Garcés-Conejos Blitvich, 2014). Meanwhile, YouTubers’ linguistic features are still relatively seldom explored (Beers Fägersten, 2017; Frobenius, 2014; Rego Rey & Romero-Rodríguez, 2016).

Address practices are understood here as traditional modes of address (or greetings) (e.g., Clyne et al., 2009), and they include 1) those turns in which YouTubers explicitly address the audience in their videos, and 2) responses in the comment section in which YouTubers themselves are addressed. The emphasis is on the affective elements of the language, but rather than underlining the genuineness of emotion, the focus is on the discursive and the intentional practices of affectivity (e.g., Bednarek, 2008; Caffi & Janney, 1994).

The corpus consists of 30 YouTube videos of 30 Spanish YouTubers who participated in 2017 in the community-driven event and a massive gathering of Youtubers, Tubecon, in Madrid, and of the comments of these videos. This reference framework allows to study, e.g. with tools of grounded theory and qualitative content analysis, a digital community of creators within its wide heterogeneity, where the polyphony of the Youtubers’ generation is properly manifested.

Combining YouTubers’ and their audience’s address practices and emotive communication introduces new insights into address practices and affectivity of the interaction between these content creators and those who comment the videos. Furthermore, it contributes to a better understanding of the bond between them, which can be gleaned from the corpus presented above.
References


Language mixing practices as establishers of in-group identity on WhatsApp:

A case study

Carmen Pérez-Sabater – Universitat Politècnica de València

Traditionally, language mixing practices have been studied in conversation, mainly among bilingual populations. These practices have recently attracted the attention of academia analysing computer-mediated discourse, although still not much has been said about them and even less in non-Anglophone fora. The purpose of this study is to attend to this scarcity by examining language alternation and code-switching on WhatsApp. Specifically, this presentation proposal analyses everyday online interactions of multilingual communities formed by participants fluent in Catalan, English, and Spanish. By means of discourse centred online ethnography (Androutsopoulos, 2008), we see that English is basically used for language play and for fun; it is the indexing mechanism par excellence of the community as in Tsiplakou (2009), whereas Catalan and Spanish are the matrix codes, their use depending on the addressee or the author. Unlike other CMC studies, in these WhatsApp chats most participants use Catalan and Spanish indistinctly, despite the fact that participants are adults that were not schooled in Catalan and thus are not fully confident in writing the language, afraid of making mistakes seen by the whole group. The study concludes that this playful use of different languages clearly serves to create informality, familiarity, and solidarity. Here, distinct group identity is established through language alternation practices that are different from those of other online families. Finally, in line with previous research, it is important to say that there is no doubt that online communication favours the blurring of styles, registers, and genres (Author et al., 2010). Multilingualism is only one facet of the overall heteroglossic character of the medium (Leppänen & Peuronen, 2012), which serves in this case to establish distinct in-group identity.

References


Teenagers participate in social networks to extend friendships and to be a part of public life (boyd, 2014), as shown in many studies carried out mostly within the field of media and cultural studies in the context of the USA. To broaden the scope of the topic, we draw on a discourse-centred online ethnographic approach (Androutsopoulos, 2008) to examine how teenage friendship is constructed on Instagram by means of certain digital literacy practices and multimodal resources. To this effect, we analyse a data set collected over a period of one year, which consists of posts (including photos, captions and comments), stories (photos and videos that have a life span of twenty-four hours) and interviews with four teenagers from Barcelona (Spain). The findings show that participants engage in digital literacy practices such as posting birthday wishes to friends; asking friends for collaboration to select photos of oneself to post them on one’s personal profile; declaring friendship; announcing new posts on the Instagram stories to ask for comments and likes; and tagging friends on pictures of oneself. We argue that, through these practices, teenagers mobilize linguistic and other semiotic resources as means for constructing friendship, conceived as a particular way of building connectedness (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000).

References


Conceptual Representation and Positioning of Women in Digitalized Fashion Discourse
Kateryna Pilyarchuk – University of Klagenfurt

Fashion discourse has been largely ignored in the academia despite its potential power to influence people’s tastes, buying choices, and self-perception. This project undertakes analysis of online versions of glossy magazines and blogs to shed light onto how fashion discourse conceptually shapes gender and constructs the concept of female beauty. I argue that the digitalized world of *Vogue* and *Harper’s Bazaar* as well as Instagram has transformed the way in which women engage with fashion and blurred the boundary between fashion experts and readers.

On one hand, women in general and female celebrities in particular are passively positioned by fashion discourse in a variety of ways. On the other hand, Instagram allows for an average person to be empowered to position herself actively (cf. Edley 2001), constructing own identity, taking a stance regarding social issues, and engaging in a discussion with others in the comments.

My research relies on Barthes’ (1967) study of the fashion system, Edley’s (2001) discussion of discursive psychology, and Lakoff and Johnson’s (1980) approach to conceptual metaphor. The centrals goals are to show 1) how fashion discourse positions women conceptually, as realized in online fashion magazines *Vogue* and *Harper’s Bazaar* (the US versions) and selected Instagram blogs, and 2) explain how this positioning has changed in the digitalized era (cf. e.g., Rocamora 2016).

This is part of a PhD project, which is at the beginning stage. The researcher does not dispose of a ready-to-present pool of data. However, the design of the empirical study revolving around the above-mentioned goals will be explained as well.

References

Pragmatic functions of hashtags in Finnish Instagram use
Jutta Rosenberg – Åbo Akademi University

A vital part of the discourse on many of the social media platforms are hashtags. Originally developed on Twitter as a tool to gather updates on the same topic or theme, different uses of the hashtag have since evolved. Today hashtags are used, for instance, to guide readers’ interpretations of the updates (Scott 2015). While much of the existing research on hashtags has focused on Twitter (e.g. Scott 2015; Zappavigna 2018), the present study analyzes the use of hashtags on Instagram. Since Instagram is a photo-sharing platform, the discourse on the platform differs from that on Twitter. The discourse on Twitter is more social and conversational (Lee 2018) whereas Instagram is more user-focused (Bryant & Sheldon 2016). Further, previous studies have predominantly examined hashtag use in English. This study constitutes the first scholarly account of the pragmatic functions of the hashtag on the Finnish Instagram.

The aim is to explore hashtags in Finnish Instagram users’ updates, focusing on their pragmatic functions. The material consists of 1,500 updates by Finnish Instagram users which include hashtags, posted on open personal Instagram accounts during 2017. The results show that hashtags are used in the Finnish updates to display emotions, as metacommentary to the images and updates, to provide context and to lead the interpretation of readers, as well as to show social involvement and activism. Hashtags are also used to provide additional information and for humorous purposes. The study has implications for the understanding of the social use of hashtags as manifest in Finnish.

References
Men will be Men? Masculinities at Display in the Facebook Communication Practices of Pakistani Men
Rauha Salam – University of Jyväskylä

In the past decade, the popularization of social media in Pakistan has emerged as a significant and influential means through which people, especially youngsters, communicate with each other. In the context of the present article, social media has also offered a medium of communication that transgresses the traditional manner of gendered social interactions thereby complicating the notion of masculinity especially when considered against the country’s socio-cultural and religious background. Facebook forms the prime social media platform in Pakistan, which allows its users a place where they can express themselves through various semiotic means, such as profile picture, cover photos, visuals, gifs and audios. As a result, Facebook has evolved into a place where gendered identities are constantly (re)negotiated. By making use of Multimodal Discourse Analysis as proposed by Jones (2005, 2015) and Kress and Leeuwen (2006), I aimed to explore the ways in which Pakistani men construct their gendered identities multimodally in their Facebook posts. I analyzed 300 posts by Pakistani men and particularly paid attention to how they mobilize both visual and linguistic resources, and how these are interconnected in the communication of specific meanings. The analysis of my data documented the complex and multifaceted nature of masculinity in Pakistan. The results showed that Pakistani men by making use of Facebook, on one hand, are reproducing the prevalent cultural models of masculinity. On the other hand, there are instances in the data that show a digression from the standard norms and there is a (re)negotiation of the traditional patriarchal representations.

References
This presentation is part of ongoing research that aims to discover how domain-specific information is requested on online discussion boards and what kind of responses the requests get. The opening message defines, in principle, the topic of the message thread. However, as the conversation in the message thread progresses the original topic can end up in a disintegrated state in which part of the messages strays off topic. Therefore, responses may not reflect the original question and no longer be relevant to the initial discussion.

The aim of this presentation is to analyze the irrelevant responses in discussion threads. Empirical data from the study was gathered from two Finnish discussion boards, Lampopumput.info (“heatpumps.info”) and Suomi24.fi (“Finland24”). The data consists of 40 message threads including 764 messages that concerned domestic heating—specifically heat pumps.

The data was classified according to the relevance of the message. I used the Gricean maxim of relevance, which is one of the conversational elements outlined by Grice belonging to the Cooperative Principle (CP) theory (see Grice 1989: 26–27) for the basis of classification. Following the maxims of cooperative communication is important, particularly when the situation is task focused and the goal of communication is to be informative. Thus, being relevant requires communicators and recipients to maintain the awareness for example of the context and the circumstances of the discourse and communicator’s communicative intent or purpose. (Herring 2013)

In this presentation, I will present the results from the analysis of irrelevant responses, the different categories that they can be classified and the relative frequencies of the instances in the each category. In total, the analysis covers 264 irrelevant messages from 35 different message threads.

References
An Analysis of Digital Discourse on Migration
Helene Schmolz – University of Passau

The role media play in influencing opinions has been much discussed in the past. In this context, different topics, such as the use of stereotypes for minorities or ideological implications, have been addressed, and more recently more and more the question of how refugees are represented (e.g. Baker, Gabrielatos & McEnery 2013, among many others). However, the recent events where large groups of refugees headed to the north of Europe are only one type of movements of people. Furthermore, we should not forget that migratory movements have at all times been present, i.e. since human beings existed. From this point of view, the proposed paper addresses migration from a broad perspective, including various types of movement that are (or are not) addressed in online newspapers, i.e. not only refugees and immigration, but also emigration, labour migration etc.

In particular, the paper investigates online newspaper articles from Great Britain, the USA and Australia, as they are all English-speaking countries. The first country is, historically, a typical emigration country, the last two are immigration countries and so it is interesting in how far differences occur regarding the coverage of migration. We focus on quality newspapers that have a large readership and can be accessed online for free. Thus, our corpus consists of news articles from the Guardian (UK version), the USA today, and the Sydney Morning Herald. The articles were collected in August, 2016, resulting in about 680 articles with about half a million of words.

We use corpus linguistic tools for determining frequencies of words and word clusters (e.g. different terms used for migrating people, frequency of terms for regions/nationalities and religious terms, differences of occurrences in terms of age and gender), and (critical) discourse analysis for taking a closer look at language and images as well as at examining their multimodal aspects (text-image relations). We analyse the images used in the news articles (e.g. following a SFL-approach by Caple 2013), and account for intra- and intersemiotic relations, in particular between images themselves, and between text and image(s) (e.g. Machin & Mayr 2012; Bateman 2014).

Findings suggest that images on migration are selecting rather stereotypical aspects, i.e. articles would be less stereotypical without images. Consequently, an analysis of text AND images offer valuable insights of how readers are informed about migration issues (e.g. what is
understood by a ‘migrant,’ how are they represented verbally and visually, what characteristics are mentioned/shown e.g. nationality and cultural symbols, gender-related aspects etc., and how do such issues contradict each other in text and images or get reinforced and expanded?). Variations across countries are addressed, and the cultural context is also taken into account. Additionally, the influential potential of the digital nature of such news articles (versus traditional print newspapers) is discussed.

References
The meaning of LOL: functions of LOL in YouTube comments
Celia Schneebeli – *University of Burgundy*

LOL may be one of the most popular elements of internet slang. It is generally taken to be the acronym of ‘laughing out loud’, but it has come to live a life of its own in language as an interjection. It is even described as such by the Oxford English Dictionary, which takes LOL to be an “exclamation” (the OED uses ‘exclamation’ as a synonym of ‘interjection’) “used to draw attention to a joke or amusing statement, or to express amusement”. American linguist John McWhorter notices this ambivalent function of LOL in a TED conference: “[I]f you text now, […], you'll notice that LOL does not mean laughing out loud anymore. It's evolved into something that is much subtle.” (McWhorter: 2013). For him, LOL is also “a marker of empathy”, “a marker of accommodation.”

While LOL is mentioned in many papers, few linguists have tried to explore its functions. What this paper is aimed at is then to provide a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the functions of LOL in comments posted in reaction to a YouTube video (“The big day is finally here”, posted on the channel Miranda Sings). YouTube comments, which are primarily posted in order to react, that is express one’s feelings, are a relevant choice to study LOL. The study will more precisely use discourse analysis to focus on its context of use. For instance, it will take into account whether LOL is sentence-initial or sentence-final. It will also focus on other elements such as the co-presence of other modalities (emoticons, emoji, punctuation…) and possible differences linked to capitalization of the acronym.

References
Memes have become a vital mode of interaction on social media, allowing contributions of a diverse set of social actors. This paper examines the discursive construction and negotiation of identities through code-switching (CS) in a bilingual online context. Focusing on the functional characteristics of CS (cf. Bailey 2000), the analysis is based on a dataset consisting of English-Spanish memes with the hashtag #hispanicsbelike. Thematically, the memes and their comments thus revolve around stereotypes related to living in a bicultural context. (cf. Spira et.al. 2002).

This study is particularly interested in the strategic use of CS in thematic memes which reinforce a bilingual identity on a group level (Kleinke et al. 2018), paying special attention to the complex set of motivations and discursive functions of CS (Gumperz 1977) in an online community of practice (Eckert 2006).

Employing Myers-Scotton’s (2006) Matrix Language Frame Model and Bucholtz & Hall’s (2005) notion of identity as a dynamic and interactive concept, this explorative case study demonstrates how CS in memes is used as a creative tool to trigger recurring CS in responses and to reinforce ingroup solidarity.

References


With more people and companies using the internet every day and with the number of ways in which users can create and consume content also growing year-on-year, the battle for the attention of consumers intensifies. So-called ‘click bait’ is online content that is designed to entice a reader to click on a link, and it generally exploits what is known as the ‘curiosity gap’. The clickbait headlines provide the reader with just enough information to pique their interest and prompt them to click on the link to read more. Examples of typical clickbait headlines are given in (1) to (3).

(1) 12 mind-blowing ways to eat polenta.
(2) 17 Gifts Only Grammar Nerds Will Appreciate.
(3) How Well Do You Know The Ninja Turtles?

Drawing on a corpus of click-bait headlines (Chakraborty 2016) and using ideas from the relevance-theoretic pragmatic framework (Sperber & Wilson, 1986/95), this paper examines some of the techniques used in clickbait headlines. According to relevance theory, we pay attention to inputs that are most likely to provide us with cognitive effects – that is, we pay attention to inputs that are likely to cause us to update our assumptions about the world. Clickbait headlines encourage a reader to click on the link with a promise of rich cognitive effects. Furthermore, they use a range of linguistic and pragmatic techniques to convince the reader that the cognitive effects on offer will be more rewarding than whatever else he may be attending to at that time. In short, clickbait headlines promise relevance.

References
Interventions in discussion-forum interaction

Sanna-Kaisa Tanskanen & Ulla Tuomarla – University of Helsinki

In this paper we propose a continuum-based approach to analysing interventions in discussion forum interaction. Using data from English and Finnish forums, we examine instances in which one of the participants intervenes in the ongoing interaction with a message that, for example, attempts to terminate a heated discussion or conflict between other participants (cf. Arendholz 2013: 235) or steer the discussion in a new direction. Despite the now rather active research on discussion forums (reviewed in Arendholz 2017), such interventions have not yet received much attention.

At one end of the continuum we find authentic interventions, such as ”Why not call it a tie?” and ”Can you both please stop arguing and end this here”. Rather than actually managing to end a conflict, such interventions are often followed by further arguments and conflictual utterances, as the participants enter into a debate over who said what and why the conflict cannot be resolved. This finding is in line with earlier research, which has found compromise nonexistent and both assent and third-party intervention rare as ways of successfully resolving conflict in online polylogues. Withdrawal from the interaction is most often the strategy of choice for ending a conflict (Bou-Franch & Garcés-Conejos Blitvich 2014).

In addition to comments that can be considered authentic in their intention to resolve a conflict or at least ameliorate a heated discussion, our material includes cases which are situated towards the other end of the continuum and which we call mock interventions. Rather than solving anything the participant adds a note of irony or parody to the discussion by mimicking an intervention. The existence of such cases shows that intervention as a strategy is familiar to discussion forum participants, regardless of its limited success in resolving conflicts.

References
Drawing on a discursive approach to legitimation (Van Leeuwen, 2007), a discursive and interactional analysis was carried out to find out which (de)legitimation strategies companies and customers use to (de)legitimize themselves or the other party in private and public CMC communication, and what the interactional dynamics are in terms of (de)legitimation. An English-language data set of 150 e-mails (company replies to complaints) and 300 related Facebook comments was collected on the public Facebook pages of several large UK companies from four industries.

Based on a move analysis, we found that companies seek legitimacy in e-mail replies to customers by addressing four levels: they justify their decision (e.g. does the customer receive a reimbursement), by referring to policies; they aim to show the human qualities and service recovery efforts of their agents; they want to convey a sense of legitimating the customer’s complaint by using empathic sentences; and they stress that they are a professional organization investing in high quality services.

However, some customers remain dissatisfied – even after this extensive use of rhetorical legitimation strategies – and confront the company on its public Facebook page. We found that customers try to delegitimate companies by attacking the pragmatic legitimacy of the company’s decision, the moral legitimacy of the company, and the agent’s language skills. When responding publicly to these attacks, a shift can be observed in the companies’ use of legitimation strategies: they mainly show their human side by focusing on the human qualities and efforts of the agents and by legitimating the customer’s negative experience. Companies seem to be reluctant to be publicly transparent about the transactional side of complaint handling. This strategy seems to silence the public discussion, but it comes with the disadvantage that there is a lack of public evidence of successful complaint handling. Readers might assume that the company’s request to deal with the complaint in private is merely a smokescreen for not solving the complaint, which equally poses a threat to a company’s legitimacy.
References
Social Media and Language Hegemony
Ilona Vandergriff – San Francisco State University

Technologically-mediated communication provides anytime-access to a wide range of online spaces for second-language (L2) interaction with native speakers. These online connections allow people to learn, practice and use the L2 in naturalistic settings. Yet digital practice shows that L2 participation is often not equitable, even when L2 users have sufficient proficiency and full access (e.g., Hanna & De Nooey, 2003; Vandergriff, 2016).

In the proposed presentation, I consider the ways in which digital practices often constrain opportunities for L2 participants. The corpus I analyze includes more than 4000 comments on a 256-word Reddit post. In the post, the English-as-a-foreign-language user complains that he finds it difficult to get uptake because “grammar nazis” correct even minor errors but ignore the posts’ content. The negotiation of community norms that ensues provides a window on language ideologies and hegemonic practices.

Using Bucholtz and Hall’s 2005 framework for analyzing the discursive construction of L2 identity, I ask the following research questions:

1. How are L2 users positioned by L1 users in ways that either grant or reject claims to equitable participation?
2. How do L2 users ratify other-positioning, how do they challenge or contest it?

Based on my findings, I argue that a better understanding of discursive practices in online spaces is critical as multilingual users will be challenged to use their L2 resources to gain access to, understand, challenge, and transform spaces that sustain hegemonic practices.

References
Discourse analytic studies have examined various phenomena on Twitter, ranging from business responses to customer complaints (Page, 2014), to everyday users’ metapragmatic practices (Bridges, 2017). However, to date, little research has addressed non-serious uses of the popular microblogging site. Novelty accounts have existed on Twitter for over a decade, and as Highfield (2016) has shown, they are often used to communicate opinions about current events in a highly entertaining fashion.

In this presentation, I show how two popular novelty Twitter accounts (KimKierkeggardashian and ShitAcademicsSay) blend different social voices (Gee, 2011) to generate texts that are creative (Jones, 2012) and often humorous. Drawing on Bakhtin’s (1981) related notions of polyphony and heteroglossia, I consider a subset of data from one year’s worth of tweets from both accounts. I provide a detailed microanalysis of selected tweets, which reveals how intertextual references are used to represent different voices within a single text. Adopting a contrastive case study approach enables me to show how the author of ShitAcademicsSay relies primarily on a strategy of blending written academic registers with language from popular internet memes, whereas the author of KimKierkeggardashian tends to reuse actual language from a celebrity Twitter account (i.e., that of Kardashian West) and blends those self-promotional discourses with a highly restricted lexicon used to index late philosopher, Søren Kirkegaard. My analysis shows how authors of non-serious Twitter accounts play with various personae (real and imagined) in creating amusing storylines, typically by juxtaposing two or more voices which are sociohistorically, thematically or morally discontiguous.

References


Digi-talk: A Danger to Orthography?
The Impact of Digital Discourse on Dutch Youths’ School Writing

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Today’s youths are avid users of computer-mediated communication (CMC). In their informal digital discourse, they use a language variant called ‘digi-talk’. Many parents fear that digi-talk harms youths’ literacy skills or formal writings, e.g. at school (Spooren 2009; Verheijen 2013). We conducted two large-scale studies to discover if such worries are justified with respect to orthography. The first study measured youths’ \( (N = 338) \) use of written CMC through extensive surveys. In the second study \( (N = 408) \), half of the participants were primed with CMC, specifically WhatsApp, while the other half performed a non-CMC related control task. All participants wrote school texts: essays in the survey study, stories in the experimental study. The 746 school writings were manually analysed for three kinds of orthographic ‘deviations’: misspellings, textisms, and non-standard orthographic details (punctuation, capitalisation, spacing, diacritics). We calculated the relative frequency of these features to the total number of words per school text. Perhaps surprisingly, fewer spelling errors were found in the school writings of (a) youths who were primed with WhatsApp immediately before writing a story in the experiment, than youths in the control groups, especially for adolescents, as well as (b) youths who reported owning smartphones in the survey, than youths who owned old-fashioned or no mobile phones. Yet more textisms occurred in the essays of youths who reported using predictive and corrective dictionaries in CMC, than in those of youths who did not. Dutch youths’ CMC and smartphone use were thus positively related to their orthographic performance in school writings, in terms of fewer spelling errors, but their use of auto-correction and auto-completion were negatively related, evident from more textisms. This suggests that digi-talk is not dangerous to orthography, as long as youths formulate their own words and sentences rather than passively rely on word predictors and correctors.

References
Collective complaining as sociality and digital activism The case of #MuckyMerton
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Complaints, described as occurring when a speaker expects a favorable event to occur, and instead his/her expectations are somehow violated (Olshtain & Weinbach 1987: 195), have been analysed from a speech act perspective in relation to a levels of directness and indirectness (e.g. House & Kasper 1981). More recent research on online complaints describes them as third party indirect speech acts often occurring as part of a speech act set (Vásquez 2011). Yet, studies that explore complaints in digital contexts are still very scarce. The present study attempts to fill this gap by exploring online complaints against the London Borough of Merton. Taking as a starting point the hashtag #MuckyMerton, we propose the notion of ‘collective complaining’ as a means of shifting attention away from the individual complainer towards a collectivity of complainers. We are interested in exploring the interactional work that enables the formation of collective complaining, mapping out frameworks of participation and attack against individual stakeholders and the Local Council. We examine the linguistic and semiotic realisations of complaints, focusing on the role of multimodal resources as evidence that trigger social action, further exploring intersections between online and offline contexts. Finally, inspired by Ahmed’s (2018) most recent work, we are interested in exploring the potentiality of complaints as a vehicle for the performance of social activism against institutions and we open up the discussion to the linguistics of digital social mobilizing ‘from below’.

References
Authenticity and norms in online language
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The focus in this presentation is on grammatical norms. It has been argued that online language has non-standard norms compared to formal written language, which entails it is inappropriate to use online language in education contexts (see Mishan, 2004, for example). It has also been reported in the media, for example, that online forms are getting used in more formal essays by schoolchildren, such as acronyms and emojis.

Because textchat, in particular, is considered an informal written register, the question arises what grammatical norms are considered appropriate in online and offline communication by learners of English, and are norms much more fluid now, with what can be considered informal norms appropriate in formal registers? The following questions are the focus of this study:

- How do the students rate examples of non-standard usage of English, such as a lack of -s forms for subject-verb agreement?
- Are these examples rated as intelligible?
- Are these examples seen as acceptable in written and spoken language?
- Are these examples seen as grammatically correct in written and spoken language?

Following Ren et al. (2016), a series of example sentences have been given in a questionnaire, and the informants were asked to rate the sentences for intelligibility, acceptability in written and spoken contexts, and finally grammatical correctness in written and spoken contexts. The results demonstrated that non-standard forms were generally ungrammatical in formal written language. Informants found these forms to be acceptable in informal usage but that they would not use them themselves. This suggests learners are more accepting of others’ non-standard language than their own non-standard usage (cf. Zeiss, 2010). Certain examples of non-standard native usage like the invariant tag question (isn’t it?) are considered ungrammatical in all contexts, suggesting a need for awareness of non-standard native norms among learners.

References

“Political correctness” in a right-wing Facebook group in Sweden: 
On the micro-level doing of political participation in digitally mediated publics
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After a prominent role in public debate in the 1990s (cf. Suhr & Johnson, 2003), the concept Political Correctness (PC) arguably has a new salience today in debates on all levels concerning digitally mediated social justice activism, the entrenchment of nationalist, populist and “Alt-Right” movements, and related developments across the Western world. This paper presents findings from an ongoing study of explicit mentions of PC in discourse (‘PC-phrases’) in informal social media discourse. Specifically, the study combines methods from corpus linguistics and ethnomethodologically informed microanalysis to investigate discourse featuring PC-phrases in public posts to a right wing-oriented Facebook group, Stå upp för Sverige (‘Stand up for Sweden’). This group was initially formed as a public support group for a Swedish police investigator who made headlines by posting xenophobic remarks in social media, and later transformed into a more general site for nationalist and socially conservative rhetoric. The study presented here focuses on the role of PC-phrases in this group in discursively constructing a populist narrative of resistance. Through the concept of PC, members of the group construe posts and/or shared news articles and opinion pieces that express anti-immigrant, anti-feminist, anti-social justice, and related sentiments as constituting resistance against an entrenched and hegemonic politically correct cultural elite. The broader aim of the study is to provide a sociolinguistic window on the everyday doing of political participation as well as on negotiations of values, identities, and norms of language and participation in social media. Thus, beyond mapping the discursive articulations and functions of PC-phrases themselves, the project will have implications for how we understand the conditions of political discourse and engagement in today’s mediated publics (Baym & boyd, 2012).

References
No weeds in gardening discussion forums: Conviviality and benevolent boasting
Brita Wårvik – Åbo Akademi University

The great variety of CMC genres display a diversity of interactional patterns ranging from monologic web pages and message boards to more dialogic, or polylogic chats, comments sections, and discussion forums, varying in tone from friendly and co-operative to aggressive and antagonistic (cf. Fritz 2017). Many studies of coherence in CMD have focussed on discourse on controversial topics, which are likely to more easily promote active antagonistic interaction, whereas fewer have been interested in non-controversial topics, which can be assumed to be favourable to convivial kinds of interaction (cf. Varis & Blommaert 2015). Patterns of topic development have turned out to vary according to topic choice and platform affordances: more topical coherence on serious topics and more focus on the global topic on newer platforms (e.g. Herring 2013, Lambiase 2010). Of the various combinations of topics, affordances, and tones, this study selects a non-controversial, recreational topic, an asynchronous, older type of platform, and a convivial tone and examines topical coherence patterns in a sample of threads from discussion forums on gardening. The focus is on the role of the initial post in global topic management. While conversational patterns can occasionally be found in the sample, most threads do not form such interactive sequences, but instead the posts in them tend to follow the kind of “limited topical development” (Herring 2013: 13) more typical of newer platforms.

References
The university homepage as a cross-cultural digital practice
Diana Yankova & Andrei Andreev – New Bulgarian University

With the advent and rapid development of technology, digitalization has rendered fuzzy the boundaries between traditional ‘paper’ discourse and modern ‘digital’ forms of interaction, and has engendered novel genre types, or new uses of language. The gamut of social and professional practices conducted online has expanded immensely, which has called for elaborating a more innovative approach to the study of the changing digital reality of communicating. The digital environment presents serious challenges to currently accepted concepts of genre, text, text type, context, interaction, intertextuality, interdiscursivity, meaning creation, among others. These recent developments have brought about a shift in the application of discourse analysis, a reconceptualization and integration of perspectives, highlighting the fact that traditional approaches alone cannot account for explaining the intricacies of digital communication.

In this vein, we have chosen to analyse the web-mediated homepage as a genre with a specific form and content since it is not fully replicated beyond online communication (as opposed to other text types, such as reviews, brochures, etc.). The methodology adopted will be that of Askehave and Nielsen (2005), who have proposed a two-dimensional model of genre analysis that is an extended version of the now classic, traditional genre analysis, elaborated by Swales (1990), and further developed by Bhatia (1993). The model takes into account the communicative purpose and the functional units (moves) of the genre of the homepage both in the reading mode and in the navigating mode. A comparative study is carried out on two university homepages: that of New Bulgarian University (Bulgaria) and of York University (UK). The focus is on the cross-cultural differences that are encoded in the way the information is structured, exploring how multimodal interaction and communication unfolds beyond language.

References

Mediated sport is a crucial site where gender ideologies and power relations are repeatedly constructed and contested (Messner, 2013). The last few decades have seen female athletes continue to be trivialized and rendered invisible on traditional media platforms such as newspaper and television. Nonetheless, the new media represents a potential site that accommodates other voices and alternative gender representations. In investigating such digital discourses, it is argued that a multimodal perspective contributes significantly to meaning-making and the manifestation of gender power relations.

This study examines how female and male professional tennis players are represented by four groups of participants: a) tournament organizers; b) sports news outlets; c) tennis players; and d) the public. The dataset, which consists of texts, images and videos, was assembled during the 2018 Wimbledon Championships from three social networking platforms including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. A multimodal corpus of approximately five million words, 1,200 photographs and 150 videos was built. Data were analyzed using a corpus-assisted critical discourse analytic approach, integrating corpus tools (such as frequency lists, keywords, concordances and collocations) into Fairclough’s (1995) sociocultural approach to critical discourse analysis. Kress & Van Leeuwen’s (2006) visual grammar and Goffman’s (1969) theorization of self-presentation were also drawn on.

The findings suggest that while some female players actively dispute the gendered other-representations by portraying themselves with a distinct set of discourses (e.g. strong and powerful, working mum), other social media users including male players and the public do not necessarily align with their positions. This study therefore demonstrates how gender power relations in sport are simultaneously reproduced and challenged on the digital platform. It also illustrates how various modal resources in addition to text are used in the meaning-making process amid the rapidly changing mediascape.

References


“This is really skr~” - Pragmatic adoptions of a hip-hop term by Chinese netizens
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Over the past decade, a plethora of research have been conducted focusing on language use and plays by Chinese netizens (e.g., Chen, 2014; Zhang, 2015). It is argued that Chinese netizens are notably creative in terms of adopting various linguistic features and communicative strategies via digital space such as social networking sites, etc. These linguistic practices are further complicated with the spread of popular culture and grassroot literacy (e.g., Wang et al, 2016), which remain relatively under-researched. Continuing this strand of research, this study investigates the pragmatic adoptions of “skr”, an expression created through American hip-hop culture but recontextualized and utilized by Chinese netizens. The expression has enjoyed a wide popularity of applications since it was used by a famous Chinese singer, Kris Wu, and generated wide discussions on what the term means and how it should be used, leading to various literacy practices with “skr” for different meanings and functions.

Data were collected from Weibo, the most popular Chinese micro-blogging site among users in China and its diaspora. Using the key word search feature, I collected all blog postings containing “skr” from the top five pages each day, five days a week. In one month, a total of 1,896 postings containing “skr” were sampled. Specifically, I analyzed the linguistic structures and functions of the focal expression. The result shows that Weibo users adopt phonetic, metalinguistic and symbolic features of “skr” and its expansions for various pragmatic purposes, including intensification, complementaries, appreciation, discourse marker, filler words and so forth. The study shows that Weibo users demonstrate remarkable linguistic creativity in their adoptions of hip-hop content, while incorporating pragmatic functions for digital communication. The utilization of “skr” also showcases a typical relocalization of hip-hop content accompanied by its multi-layered complexity and indexicality in meaning making.

References
Contemporary online literacy – a matter of IT security?
Dominik Baumgarten – Humboldt - University of Berlin

Contemporary literacy utilizes digital technology to present its narratives. Especially online communication formats such as webpages and social media come into play for the purpose of displaying and advertising the individual novels.

In 2013, German Rohde created his fictional character Renate Bergmann on Twitter. Becoming quite popular soon after the release of the account, Rohde built his first novel – also under the now well-known pseudonym. This career of a literary character and its online development on a social media platform represent the influence of online media on current authorship. Cathy’s Book, on the other hand, a sponsoring-based American novel, creates a work complex that holds accounts on Facebook, Twitter, MySpace and YouTube and further web presentations. The possibility of online-interaction between the reader and literary fiction either fosters a (fictional) digital discourse between the reader and a literary character of their choice or literally visualizes these characters – e.g. on Instagram.

In contrast, the same genre of contemporary novels often deals with issues of online communication and IT security. German publication The three !!!, a teenage detective novel series, addresses topics such as cyber stalking, virtual harassment and other online crimes. In adult literature, Elsberg’s Blackout simulates the dangers of an interconnected world in case of a central cyberattack.

The planned talk aims to address the contradiction of simultaneously critiquing the dangers of online activity and issues of IT security while at the same time utilizing these technologies and media for the purpose of advertising the same critical texts. In comparison to the carefree utilization of online tools on the media level (e.g. in case of online advertising), novels may indeed deal with the societal and technological issues thereof and therefore contribute to current digital discourse analysis.
References
Online grooming is a communicative process comprising three phases: access, approach and entrapment. Each phase comprises identifiable processes and strategies (Lorenzo-Dus et al., 2016). This study linguistically analyses child victims’ own accounts of being groomed online. The importance of exploring how grooming operates in a computer-mediated context is increasingly recognised (Black et al., 2015). However, research into the victims’ perspective of online grooming remains scarce, often focusing on risk and vulnerability factors (Kloess et al., 2014).

This study adopts a multi-methods approach. Firstly, Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis (Herring & Androutsopoulos, 2015) is used to explore children’s discourse when relaying to counsellors their experience of being groomed online. My work interrogates the complex ways children construct identities within previously identified grooming entrapment discourse (Lorenzo-Dus et al., 2016), with a particular focus on displays of resilience and resistance. Secondly, Action Research is deployed to apply findings for social care practice enhancement (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005).

Tentative findings identify a mismatch between counsellors’ and children’s understandings of the grooming process, building on studies which identify victim’s perceptions of interactions with offenders as the formation of online relationships (Kloess et al., 2014). Through a combined methodology, this research advances understanding of the under-researched victim’s perspective of online grooming communication to contribute to improved prevention and protection for children.

**References**


