PROGRAMME DOCTORAL EN SCIENCES DU LANGAGE

CU O
CONFÉRENCE UNIVERSITAIRE
DE SUISSE OCCIDENTALE

-- Final program, May 8 2019 --

**Analyzing Discourse & Interaction in Social Media:
new methodological challenges?**

May 19-21 2019

Hôtel Le Grand Chalet (Leysin)

https://www.grand-chalet.ch

Sunday May 19

14h00   *Welcome coffee*

14h30   Opening & short bio presentation by the Guests & PhD Students

14h45   <u>Plenary lecture:</u>
          Ruth Page, Dept. of English Language & Linguistics, Univ. of Birmingham:
          Ugly selfies: Developing a multimodal theory of self-denigration

15h45   Discussion

16h15   *Coffee break*

16h30   <u>Presentation</u> by PhD students
          Tiziana Jaeggi, University of Fribourg:
          When perceiving the future closer than it is – A psycholinguistic investigation of the way we talk about the future

          Tatiana Smirnova, University of Lausanne:
          Social and cultural event in the era of digital social networks: the case of the « Fête des Vignerons »

18h00   End-of-day discussion
-18h30   (chair: group of PhD students - A)

19h15   *Dinner*

Monday May 20

8h45   <u>Plenary lecture:</u>
         Christian Licoppe, Sociology of Info & Communication Technologies, Telecom Paris-Tech.:
         Hookup cultures and sequential patterns of pre-encounter electronic 'conversations': The cases of Grindr and Tinder

09h45   Discussion

10h15   *Coffee break*

10h45   <u>Presentation</u> by PhD students
         Marie Lollia, University of Lausanne
         Corpus-based analysis of the French and Ukrainian press about the war in Donbass : a discursive, lexical and semantic approach

11h45	*Lunch*
14h00	<u>Plenary lecture:</u> **Korina Giaxoglou, School of Languages & Applied Linguistics, The Open University UK** *Sharing small stories of mourning online: modes of affective positioning for public participation*
15h00	Discussion
15h30	*Coffee break*
16h00	<u>Presentation</u> by PhD students **Laetitia Gern, University of Lausanne** *Political positioning on YouTube* **Olivia Droz-Dit-Busset, University of Bern** *Social media influencers as 'new generation' copywriters: The convergence of the social and commercial.*
17h30 -18h30	End-of-day discussion (chair: group of PhD students - B)
19h15	*Dinner*

Tuesday May 21

8h45	**Sean Rintel, Microsoft Research Cambrige, UK** ***Methodological challenges in exploring discourse for designing video communication.***
9h45	Discussion
10h15	*Coffee break*
10h45	<u>Presentation</u> by PhD students **Sabrina Roh, University of Lausanne:** *The pragmatic function of the alternation between schwa and zero : the case of JE PENSE*
11h15	Final round table discussion (chair: group of PhD students - C)
12h15	*Lunch*
13h30	End of the doctoral school

Groups of PhD students

GROUP A (spokesperson Sarah Bittel, IHEID)
- *Dessart, Eberle, Delaloye, Bittel*

GROUP B (spokesperson Simone Morehed, UNIFR)
- *Jones, Morehed, Portman, Merminod*

GROUP C (spokesperson Laetita Gern, UNIL)
- *Piotrowkska, Roh, Gern, Delutz, Behrendt*

Rationale

Despite the rapidly expanding body of research on 'digital discourse', the nature of the

relationship between interactive digital environments, and the forms of discursive actions and interactions that take place within them and around them, has barely begun to be explored.

Thus far, linguistic and discourse studies have focused on issues ranging from the relationship between the affordances of digital technology and the social identities and communities that they enable users to construct (Androutsopoulos 2014), to the emerging forms and modes of 'e-language' (and sometimes concomitant concerns about their effect on language standards in other contexts: Thurlow & Mroczek 2011); from the building of linguistic e-corpora to the narrative dimensions of life-logging discourses in social media (Tannen & Trester 2013 ; Page *et al.* 2014, Georgakopoulou & Spiliotti 2017).

While studies in these areas have produced significant insights into the language and the discursive & interactional practices of digital communication, and provide important focal points of reference, with this project of doctoral school, we plan to explore some specific forms of representations, actions and interactions that have seldom been addressed up to now, forms that are realized in and through digital spaces themselves, in the very places that constitute and institute social media.

Using a range of theories and approaches from sociolinguistics, interaction analysis, conversation and discourse analysis, and multimodal semiotic analysis, all the contributors analyze the relationship between interactive environments and social interactions.

In particular, they explore how social media users represent and construct space and place as object and context, and they address questions that include: What kinds of places and spaces are being constructed through digital communication and for what purposes? How are these relations between on line, digital and off line, concrete environments being managed in locally situated interactions? With what kind of linguistic markers and resources, and according to what stakes?

In this seminar, we explore more precisely what is at stake in terms of methodology in analyzing social media discourse & interaction. Do new forms of complex multimodal discourses & interactions imply new forms of theoretical framing? Considering a wide range of digital practices and platforms, can or should they be characterized as familiar, reconfigured or emergent as compared to established off line practices (Herring 2016)? Existent practices are necessarily affected by digital, but how does the observation of these practices (ex: the practices of doing a political statement, of interviewing when being a journalist, of being checked by the police, of making a phone call, of sharing a photo book, of mourning etc.) question concepts? How does the observation lead to reconfigure (or not) methods?

The seminar comprises 3 types of talks: 4 plenary lectures by renowned researchers in the field of CMDIA (computer mediated discourse & interaction analysis), a range of workshop sessions presented by doctoral students, and a final roundtable. The invited speakers discuss the epistemology of digital discourse & interaction on various platforms of social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube, Snapchat etc.). Students present their work in two types of work-in-progress sessions: presentation of the thesis project, in which preliminary results can be discussed; and data sessions, in which empirical data is submitted to close scrutiny. A final round-table is designed to critically assess the conceptual and methodological implications that ensue from the work presented during the seminar. The seminar will be of interest to students and researchers concerned with the analysis of digital discourses and interactions on social media platforms in the web 2.0

Abstracts

Ruth Page, University of Birmingham

Ugly selfies: Developing a multimodal theory of self-denigration

In this presentation, I will set out a multimodal account of how self-denigration is conveyed through the so-called 'ugly selfie' as these are posted to the photo-sharing site Instagram. The data comprises 226 Instagram posts and their comments, categorised with the hashtag #uglyselfie. The methods I use integrate previous frameworks from social semiotics and interactional pragmatics to explore the verbal-visual patterns in the Instagram 'post-events'. The visual analysis combines the semiotic resources associated with facial expression (eye gaze, eye brow position, mouth expression), with the mediated features of the selfie as a digital genre (camera angle and filters). The verbal analysis considers the self-denigration and its co-texts within the caption and the rapport-enhancing and threatening responses that occur in the comments. The results showed that ugly selfies convey various types of self-denigration, which include self-deprecation and self-mockery. The differences between self-deprecation and self-mockery are explained by the types of 'mixed messages' generated by the images. In self-deprecation, the mixed messages arise from a contrast between the image and the caption. In self-mockery, the mixed messages arise from contrasts within the image itself, where visual exaggeration and incongruity lead to a jocular interpretation of the ugly selfie. Further research using experimental design to test the effect of camera angle, proximity and eye gaze on perceptions of ugliness, humour and irony help pinpoint the different ways in which the multimodal resources of selfie-taking are perceived. Throughout the paper, I will reflect on the methodological challenges and innovations that arise when studying the responses to digital discourse like the ugly selfie

Christian Licoppe, Page, Telecom Paris-Tech.

Hookup cultures and sequential patterns of pre-encounter electronic 'conversations': The cases of Grindr and Tinder

Based on two empirical studies relying a) on interviews and the analysis of naturally-occurring conversations and b) on a conversation analytic perspective, this talk compares the interactional practices for the main types of uses of the mobile dating applications Grindr and Tinder. Both platforms are cases of interactions between strangers, and the analysis shows that in both cases, while users develop distinctive patterns of interaction, they share a similar orientation towards a linguistic ideology regarding ordinary conversation between friends as a reference point with respect to which they can make sense of their own conversational practices: they orient toward ordinary conversation, as topic-based and inference-rich, and as allowing individuals to share and update knowledge so as to enable rapport and intimacy. However, Grindr and Tinder users take almost opposite stances with respect to it, when it comes to the way they manage electronic conversations on both mobile dating platforms. Gay Grindr users appear quite wary of the way their electronic conversations might waylay them into more personal relationships and they try to prevent this by developing an interactional genre made of laconic, fact-checking and very short exchanges. On the other hand, many heterosexual users on Tinder are looking toward ordinary conversation as a positive model when trying to manage topically-rich chat conversations in order to enable relational development while preventing the stopping of the exchange. Their interactional dilemma, then, is the achievement of such topically-rich conversation, but with complete strangers. Bringing an interaction-centered research perspective on these 'conversational' aspects of dating practices (such exchanges usually taking place after partner selection and before a possible encounter) provides a contrasted view of widely differing 'hookup cultures' (rather than going along with the media idea of the development of *a* 'hookup culture' enabled by mobile dating platforms). It also raises some tricky issues regarding the possibility of extending basic CA notions such as adjacent pairs to the study of such platform-based electronic interactions.

Korina Giaxoglou, The Open University.

Sharing small stories of mourning online: modes of affective positioning for public participation

In this talk, I examine the nature of social interactions and public participation on digital platforms from

a *small stories* research perspective. First, I overview the key aspects of small stories as a research paradigm from its inception in the context of the ethnographic study of offline peer interactions (Georgakopoulou 2007, Bamberg and Georgakopoulou 2008, Georgakopoulou 2015) to its recent operationalisation and extension for the study of narrative interaction and participation in digital environments (Georgakopoulou 2017, Georgalou 2017, Giaxoglou forthcoming, Page 2018). I then go on to present an analytical framework for the empirical study of online sharing as small stories, synthesising and extending insights from existing research on small stories in digital media and ethnographies of sharing online (Androutsopoulos 2014). This framework attends to different levels of sharing, namely *selecting*, *storying*, and *positioning*. Positioning is here extended to what I term *affective positioning* acts, which relate to modulations of distance, proximity, or intimacy at different scales. The framework is illustrated in the analysis of examples taken from different contexts of my research on digital mourning that helps to brings to the fore the way the affordances of digital technologies are mobilised for mourning and remembrance. As it will be shown, users draw on a mix of retrospective, real-time and prospective modes of storying their selected moments for sharing. These are found to be connected to specific kinds of affective positions for the sharers and their audiences, both known and unknown, and to create particular modes for public participation and visibility. Lastly, I reflect on the theoretical and methodological opportunities and challenges for the critical and transmedia study of discourse, narrative interaction and affect.

Sean Rintel, Microsoft Research Cambridge, UK.

Methodological challenges in exploring discourse for designing video communication.

Video communication has a surprisingly rocky history for a concept that is so intuitively desirable. It dates back to at least 1927 and we're still working on it today. In this talk I will discuss the methodological challenges I've faced collecting and analysing discourse in a way that is relevant for designing video communication applications. My argument across the research is that video communication research and development should not equate the richness of communicative experience with fidelity to face-to-face interaction. Rather, richness should be measured by the adaptability of a communicative medium to our needs. However, finding ways to explore this for practical development purposes needs to be very flexible and, in many ways, quite different to traditional academic work. I'll talk about this with examples from three areas of my video communication research: couples coping with network troubles when using video-conferencing to maintain their relationships; the tyranny of the everyday in video messaging; and Microsoft Teams' recent work in bringing adaptable Companion Experiences to enterprise video meetings.