Micro-Analysis of Online Data (MOOD)
4th International Interdisciplinary Symposium
MediaCityUK, 15th - 16th September 2016

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Thursday 15th September

Keynote 1: William Housley, University of Cardiff

Approaching Social Media as Interaction: Opportunities, Challenges and Roadblocks

During the course of this talk I consider the role of the ‘microanalysis of online interaction as data’ in the age of social media and the emerging contours of digital society. An initial consideration is the current framing of social media in terms of ‘big and broad social data’. This presents opportunities for the augmentation, reorientation or surrogacy of traditional social research methods and methodology. It also provides a range of interdisciplinary opportunities for scoping and exploring the relationship between ‘small and big data’ through collaborative work with computer scientists and creative technologists. At the same time it also reinvigorates the study of social interaction and language-in-action in a number of ways through the identification of novel forms of data and interactional practice(s). The study of online interaction within new digital spaces is vital to understanding a range of behaviours that include the social production of antagonistic content, ‘digital wildfires’, rumours and counter-speech. Within interdisciplinary contexts this form of inquiry also provides the baseline work through which annotation exercises for machine learning and the development of algorithms for digital tools, that can be used to scope big and broad social data, are realised and designed. However, I also consider how these opportunities are being challenged through emerging ethical regimes and methodological mindsets that reduce the scope and capacity of this form of work to report on studies and replicate findings through a range of roadblocks. I conclude by restating the theoretical, empirical and methodological benefits of pragmatic approaches to understanding social media and online interaction in the age of big and broad social data and reaffirm the requirement to situate analyses in ‘the ground truth’ of practical action and communicative practice.
Session 1: MOOD theory and methods

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Barry Brown, Mobile Life Centre, University of Stockholm, Sweden.
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On the relevance of conversation analysis for understanding social media use

Conversation analysis (CA) has provided significant insight into the ordinary organisation of everyday talk. The increasing centrality of technologically-mediated interactions as a key form of communication in our everyday lives suggests that we might turn to conversation analysis and its rich library of concepts to see what new leverage it may have. Specifically we have become interested in social media use and its embeddedness in the mundane situations of everyday life. We captured a corpus of recordings of the screens of iPhone users while also capturing ambient sound. This corpus has let us explore the ways in which conversation analysis might help us understand how interaction ‘through’ the media is organised by its participants. To do this we drew upon classic CA concepts, such as the use of adjacency pairs like questions/answers, conversational repair, and the importance of the sequentiality of utterances in general.

Yet there are questions raised by our approach – we think there is cause for caution when using conversation analytic concepts. As ethnomethodologists we are interested in endogenous social order that is particular to the places in which we find it – as a pre-theoretical matter. Thus we are led to consider what exact role CA’s various descriptions of the set of methods employed in everyday talk might have to play in understanding online interactions. For instance, social media use is organised very differently at times – most obviously, it is often asynchronous forms of interaction that take place between physically distant users.
Through our study, we argue that conceptually CA may still give us a set of sensitising ways of looking at social media, in that we can test concepts which have proven to be relatively longstanding in their utility for describing talk. CA’s empirical interests have extended to many different ‘talk settings’ in which the methods of everyday talk are modified and adapted in various ways – that is, talk is ‘setting-ed’ (e.g., in court rooms or lecture theatres). Indeed, the impact of technologies for mediating talk may also be found in the very earliest work of Sacks, who developed a corpus of telephone conversations for analysis. Much of this early work unpacks telephone-relevant features of conversation (e.g., conversational openings and closings). In many ways this parallels what people do on social media: drawing upon existing, sedimented practices, just as we might draw upon the methods of ordinary face-to-face talk when making a phone call. Moreover, judiciously applying CA encourages close attention to interaction with and ‘on’ social media, which at times can become rather unfocused. In this paper we unpack the possible ways in which CA – when used carefully – may lend new understanding to multi-party online interaction.

Nathalie Meyer, University of Zurich, Switzerland. nathalie.meyer2@uzh.ch

Ethical Issues in Research on Video-Based Public Internet Platforms

When working with spoken, written, and/or visual data from the internet, researchers should always bear in mind that their data might contain information which could be considered private or can lead to the identification of users’ online or offline selves (e.g. the same nickname used on different platforms, proper names, a user’s physical image etc). Thus, even though it could be argued that such data is public and therefore freely usable for academic purposes, this paper takes up the ongoing debate regarding ethics and internet research (cf. Bolander and Locher 2014; Convery and Cox 2012) and discusses why it is essential for researchers to consider certain ethical issues, especially when working with publicly available and easily obtainable video data.

While nowadays it is easy and usual to anonymize proper names and sometimes even nicknames in published examples of written data, ethical considerations become a bigger issue when working with video data obtained on the internet (e.g. YouTube video blogs, Twitch livestreams etc.), which should also be represented in the form of screenshots in
published papers. While one could pixelate the faces of the people visible in a screenshot, this technique can render a picture useless, especially if the research focuses on gaze or mimics. Therefore, based on two reports on *Ethical Decision-Making and Internet Research* (Ess 2001; Markham and Buchanan 2012), researchers working with such data should be aware of at least the following three issues:

- **Human Subjects**: Ethical decisions may vary according to the specific content of the data. If the data involves minors, personal information about the creator and/or participants, or delicate issues, ethical decisions should be made more cautiously.

- **Data (Text)/Persons**: The main question regarding this issue is whether the research deals with data that has been collected from an individual, and is therefore closely linked to this particular human subject, or whether it is comprised of thousands of random anonymous posts.

- **Public/Private**: While some internet-based content may seem public at a first glance, it may still contain very private issues. Furthermore, researchers have to bear in mind that users do not actually create their content for research purposes and may not agree with their contributions being analyzed (cf. Eysenbach and Till 2001).

When looking at these issues with regards to live streams or vlogs, all of these aspects are indeed important, because streamers and vloggers usually present themselves via a webcam and occasionally talk about personal things such as the area where they live, what their job is, or they even talk about other streamers or vloggers they know in real life, thereby releasing information about specific people. An additional issue to consider is that, even though a user is very active at the time of a study, it could very well be that he/she wants to stop and erase all saved broadcasts and other videos that were created. Thus, prior to the beginning of the data collection, streamers and vloggers should be asked for their full consent regarding their participation and the storage and use of the video data.

**References**

*Practitioner Research in Higher Education* 6.1, 50-57.


<http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmj.323.7321.1103> (accessed 15 February 2016).


**Session 2: Asynchronous Interaction**

Linda Walz, York St John University, UK. l.walz@yorksj.ac.uk

**Membership categorisation in expatriate bloggers’ narratives: challenges and insights**

Blogging is a form of online interaction which in the course of the last two decades has developed many different forms and purposes. Personal blogs are spaces shaped by individuals to narrate and reflect on their experiences. One subtype are expatriate blogs, which are written by individuals who have moved abroad and who are blogging about their experiences in their new country of residence. Previous work has addressed storytelling in personal blogs with a focus on illness (Page 2012) and gap year narratives (Snee 2014). Whilst the expatriate blogosphere is a thriving online community and directories list a multitude of expatriate blogs, little research has investigated how expatriates use such online personal narratives to construct their identity in a phase of transition.

This research addresses this issue by examining twelve blogs written by self-identified expatriates living in England. All blogs were begun at the time of relocation, capturing this initial phase of transition as well as subsequent years. Informed consent was obtained from all participants and the analysis takes into account posts from the beginning of the
narratives up to one year beyond relocation as contained in the archives. This provides unsolicited narratives and allows the research to avoid the observer’s paradox (Labov 1972). This paper specifically focuses on the posts written close to the moment of relocation. Membership categorisation analysis (Sacks 1992) is employed to investigate what categories expatriate bloggers invoke in their narratives to negotiate their experiences abroad and thereby construct their identity. As an “analytic mentality” (Housley and Fitzgerald 2015: 6), this approach is suitable to analyse how categorisations of self and other are achieved through participants’ own methods and resources, granting an emic perspective on the identity work in expatriate blogs.

Analysing identity construction in blogs needs to overcome a number of methodological and technical challenges. These include the selection of a small number of blogs for qualitative analysis from a corpus of 381 blogs initially sampled from two directories, converting the data into an analysable format using NCapture and NVivo, and incorporating multi-modal aspects such as pictures and hyperlinks into an analysis of membership categorisation. These issues are addressed and solutions suggested.

The analysis shows that a dominant membership category invoked in the posts around the time of relocation is that of being a ‘person in transition’, which can take different forms and draws on notions of mobility as well as home-making practices. Pictures and hyperlinks are employed to a varying degree across the blogs to authenticate and authorise certain categorisations and identities (Bucholtz and Hall 2004). For instance, expatriate bloggers frequently post pictures of luggage and of the disorder ensuing from packing and unpacking. They also provide hyperlinks containing information and advice on matters such as the visa application process or moving pets abroad. Analysing membership categorisations in multi-modal relocation narratives thus grants insights into how expatriate bloggers construct their identity in a phase of transition.

References


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**Argumentation patterns and the use of persuasive devices in the answers of the information requests in online discussions about heat pumps**

Today huge amount of information is searched and shared online every day, and its influence on peoples’ perception of things and possibly also on their behavior has been increasing all the time. There are many tools and platforms in the internet for searching and sharing information, and one of the oldest but still very popular ones are online discussion boards. They are shared places for people to give advice and peer-support and express their views, opinions and experiences.

According to the previous research (Otterbacher 2011), reception of the online messages by the readers depends on how they are written. Textual presentation, and the use of persuasive devices logos, ethos and pathos specified by Aristotle, are found to be important factors in explaining their perceived prominence. Logos is based on reasoning, ethos author’s reputation and pathos appeals to readers’ emotions. (Otterbacher 2011: 430–431.) This presentation is part of an ongoing research, which aims to find out how domain-specific information is requested on online discussion boards and what kind of result does the request have. The theoretical framework of the study is based on the research on computer-mediated discourse analysis (see Herring 2004) and pragmatics of computer-mediated communication (see Herring, Stein & Virtanen 2013).
The aim of this presentation is to find out what kind of argumentation and persuasive devices are used in the answers of the message threads whose opening message aims at getting information. The data of the present study consists of 40 message threads whose opening message aims at getting information concerning domestic heating and especially heat pumps. The data have been gathered from two Finnish discussion boards, Lampopumput.info (heatpumps.info) and Suomi24.fi (Finland24) where participants discuss for example choosing, installing and using heat pumps. Lampopumput.info requires registration from participants, whereas Suomi24.fi allows participants to write messages without registration and be completely anonymous.

In analyzing the data I have utilized rhetorical theory and argumentation analysis. Argumentation theory and discourse analysis both have interest in argumentative discourse and they both also describe and analyze actual argumentative practice, which is why combining them is possible and also beneficial (van Rees 2007: 1462). The previous research has shown that Toulmin’s (2003) argument model is applicable for the study of argumentation taking place in asynchronous threaded online discussions (Savolainen 2012: 2538; Clark, Sampson, Weinberger & Erkens 2007). The analysis of argument patterns helps clarifying the ways in which the answers are attempted to make credible and how participants can evaluate their credibility (Savolainen 2012: 2536).

I have coded the data according to the classification scheme based on Aristotle’s persuasive devices and Toulmin’s (2003) argument pattern as applied by Savolainen (2012) in analyzing asynchronous threaded online discussions. The following elements of argument are included in the analysis: claim, counter-claim, rebuttal and grounds (see Savolainen 2012: 2539). In my presentation I will describe and discuss the results of the quantitative analysis of the data and also scrutinize some examples of the data more carefully and qualitatively.

References:
Methodological considerations for the study of an online Community of Practice: A Reddit Case Study

Conducting research into different online platforms raises methodological challenges. While various online platforms often share characteristics and allow for the use of similar methodologies, the nature of social media websites in particular means that each site works differently. This consequently affects the way that researchers can interact with the data produced on these sites.

While online forums have been used for discourse analysis for some time (e.g. Stommel 2008; Hardaker 2010; 2013), Web 2.0 platforms (see Herring 2013) present challenges not addressed in these studies. In this paper I will discuss these challenges, and my suggestions for overcoming them through the lens of my work on Reddit (www.reddit.com).
Reddit is made up of many individual forums (known as subreddits) where users discuss particular topics. Yet even small subreddits can produce massive amounts of data. For example, during December 2015, the subreddit I study published 56 individual posts which prompted a total of 1506 comments. In order for microanalysis to be feasible, it is necessary to limit what is included within the dataset; but in a way that does not lead to a skewed perception of the Community of Practice (CoP) (Wenger 1998) of this subreddit.

In this paper I discuss decisions I made around complying and coding a longitudinal sample of posts from the r/badlinguistics subreddit, as well as samples and techniques for micro-analysis. I argue that taking this mixed-methods approach analysis provides a truer picture of the CoP than could be gauged by either qualitative or quantitative analysis alone and provides an important way to triangulate data in the online context. I conclude by reflecting on the analytic and ethical challenges of studying data in a pseudonymous context like Reddit, where users are sometimes highly anonymous (i.e. throwaway accounts) but at other times clearly identifiable.

References


Hardaker, Claire. 2013. “Uh... not to be nitpicky, but... the past tense of drag is dragged, not drug.”: an overview of trolling strategies. Journal of Language Aggression and Conflict 1(1). 58–86. doi:10.1075/jlac.1.1.04har.


Stommel, Wyke. 2008. Conversation Analysis and Community of Practice as Approaches to Studying Online Community. Language@Internet 5.

Thought police, bigots, and PC emojis: Construals of political correctness in Twitter conversations

This study investigates the discursive construction of political correctness (PC) in everyday written interaction on social media. The notion of PC has emerged as a contentious emblem of polarized political discourse in the Left–Right and progressive–conservative interfaces, recently perhaps especially in the light of social media campaigns for social justice such as #BlackLivesMatter. As the OED notes, PC may in contemporary, typically depreciative, usage be taken to mean “conforming to a body of liberal or radical opinion, esp. on social matters, usually characterized by the advocacy of approved causes or views, and often by the rejection of language, behaviour, etc., considered discriminatory or offensive” (Politically, n.d.). Commentators, critics, and scholars exhibit a range of perspectives on the meanings and functions of PC (see e.g. D’Souza, 1991; Wilson, 1995; Lakoff, 2000; Fairclough, 2003), but naturalistic empirical work on PC as a discursive entity in everyday language is largely lacking (Granath & Ullén, forthcoming).

The present study aims to contribute to an empirically grounded understanding of PC via analysis of the meanings and functions of labeling something or someone as politically correct on Twitter. To this end, a dataset of 159 conversations (i.e., reply chains automatically marked as conversations by Twitter) featuring the exact phrase “politically correct” was collected. The focus on conversational tweets comes with some limitations, but yielded a material of Twitter users interacting with one another on political topics, responding to news events, commenting on pictures, et cetera, revealing how these discourse participants reproduce, contest, and negotiate notions of PC. In a context partly defined by context collapse (Marwick & boyd, 2011), some Twitter users situate their construals of PC in public discourse by @-addressing public figures or using hashtags, whereas others deploy joking accusations of PC in more “private” interactions. Conversations range from playful to heated, sometimes in the course of a single exchange:
User1  @User2 @User3 if GOPers didn't always elect stupid hayseeds & yokels, they wouldn't be outsmarted by Hillary

User2  @User1 @User3 Ooh I like the ethnic slurs. Soo tolerant lol

User1  @User2 @User3 hey sugar, didn't realize you were such a sensitive & politically correct hayseed. Howdy Gowdy!

User2  @User1 @User3 Oh and now we get to gender attacks. Want to use insults based on religion, age, and weight to round it out?

User1  @User2 @User3 hey baby, you know what will cheer you up? Watching Hillary tear mega-hick Trey Gowdy a new one on Thursday

In its analytical approach, this study attempts to square the circle of respecting the perspectives of discourse participants, while retaining a critical political engagement (Bucholtz & Hall, 2008). It is argued that empirical attention paid to the functional flexibility of the PC label in a social media context may help elucidate, if not resolve, the apparent intractability of both public and private ideological disputes which are variously viewed as stifled by political correctness or stifled by accusations of political correctness.

References


Shani Burke, Loughborough University, UK. s.burke2@lboro.ac.uk

“Please protect the Jews”: Ideology and Concealment in the *Britain First* Solidarity Patrol

This paper will present on a chapter from my PhD thesis that examines Facebook comments in response to *Britain First*’s ‘solidarity patrol’ video. In this video *Britain First* patrol in Golders Green, North London to show support for the Jewish community after the shooting in the Kosher supermarket in Paris following the Charlie Hebdo attack. I use Critical Discursive Psychology to analyse the transition from comments that begin as supportive and congratulating *Britain First*, to anti-Jewish comments that question the benefits that Jewish people have brought to Britain.

In the Solidarity Patrol, *Britain First* on the surface align with the Jewish community, but are ostensibly using the Jewish community as a scapegoat to present Islam as a threat following the Charlie Hebdo attack. I draw upon the work of Billig (1978) who showed that the far-right party the National Front attempted to disguise their extremist views and reject the fascist label, and more recently Goodman and Johnson (2013), who show how the British National Party attempted to appear non-racist and therefore more appealing to mainstream audiences.

Facebook is becoming a significant platform for far-right parties such as Britain First to communicate to a wider audience through the use of updates, images and videos. Facebook pages are an important and advantageous form of communication for far-right parties such as *Britain First*, as it is free both to set up and use. *Britain First* in particular have a substantial following on Facebook, and as of February 2016, have 1,299,770 ‘likes’ on their Facebook Page.

To analyse the Facebook comments, I drew upon the analytical framework of Critical Discursive Psychology (CDP), an approach based upon the principles of Discursive Psychology (Edwards & Potter, 1992) of focusing on ‘action’, what is being accomplished through discourse, rather than what this indicates about cognition. CDP also examines the
formation of identities and interactional work that is performed through discursive accounts (Wetherell, 1998).

Findings identified that initial comments showed gratitude towards Britain First for their support towards the Jewish community, including from individuals who self-identify as being Jewish. Individuals constructed Jewish people as victims and under threat from Islam. However, comments became progressively anti-Jewish, focusing on the ‘damage’ that Jews have done to Britain. My findings show how Britain First have used the Charlie Hebdo attack to construct a religious group as being vulnerable at the hands of Islamic extremism, which has resulted in the transition from supportive to oppositional discourse about Jewish people.

The findings have implications in terms of showing how the alignment with one religious group can be used to achieve opposition to another religious group in the wake of events such as the Charlie Hebdo attack. The result is that Britain First have not only achieved their objective of anti-Islamic discourse, but this has also resulted in the marginalisation of Jewish people by users on Facebook.

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Session 4: Social Media 1

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Social television as a medium for constructing fandom

This study examines the use of Twitter as a medium for constructing fandom while watching television. This kind of live tweeting activity is particularly common during global sports events, and this study focuses on one of the biggest sports event in the world, FIFA World Cup 2014. TV viewers worldwide are allowed to participate in this media spectacle as it unfolds via second screen. Audience members are able to engage with each other, and even to see their own tweets as a part of the broadcast itself. This kind of reciprocity between producers and viewers is referred to as social television.

This study focuses on the Finnish live tweeters watching the World Cup broadcasted by YLE. The concern here is to analyze how they construct their fandom by tweeting via the formal hashtag #ylemmfutis. Since the Finnish national team did not compete in Brazil, Finnish audience did not have a “natural” target for their fandom, and thus they needed to construct their fan positions by themselves. This study therefore approaches the problem with a concept of discursive positioning: live tweeters are constructing their fandom by taking different kinds of positions in their tweets. Fandom thus is not seen as a stable identity, but a situationally negotiated position. This study is also interested in how the broadcast is involved in the construction process of an audience and their fandom.

The key findings demonstrate that the selection of a team to support in the World Cup spectacle is seen as a socio-normative practice. This selection can be made by constructing either explicit or implicit positioning. In both ways, it is common that the created fan positions are tied to various kinds of shared fan practices. The role of the broadcast is to provide a model for ideal fandom, and invite the audience to identify with it. The fandom of World Cup can be seen here as a form of trend fandom, which could be defined as an ad hoc project of fandom.
References:


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Tumblr as Discourse Medium

Tumblr is a microblogging and social networking platform optimised for multimedia content that distinguishes itself from more traditional blogs by the inherent multimodality of its design. That is to say, when users make a new post they can choose one of seven types: text, photo, quote, link, chat, audio, or video. Textual commentary can be embedded within all multimedia posts.

As such, Tumblr can be taken as a discrete context in which to study the evolution and everyday practices of online multimodal discourse. Thus, studying the exchanges embedded in Tumblr documents – from the textual pragmatics developed as alternatives to face-to-face meta-communicative signals, to the use of images to convey sentiment, to rectifying mode and content, to conceptions of authorship in explicitly collaborative online spaces – has the potential to be augment the study of virtual discourse more generally. This is particularly true because Tumblr supports a broad range of media and is explicitly oriented towards facilitating an integrated multimodal experience; thus, while YouTube comments
are hidden beneath ‘Show More’ links and Twitter responses are limited to 140 characters, Tumblr users can embed paragraphs of text beneath a song.

This paper seeks to contribute an important set of tools for micro-level analyses of textual and multi-modal discourse and interaction on Tumblr and in virtual contexts more generally. To do so, it considers two common forms of Tumblr interaction: First, informal exchanges intended only for the fleeting consumption of participants that mirror oral conversations and chat exchanges in some respects, though they are textual, publicly visible, and asychronic. Second, documents in which multiple authors contribute sections that respond to, transform, and build on each other in a manner reminiscent of both philosophical debate and collaborative storytelling. It considers the similarities and differences between the two, both in terms of the quality and character of the interaction they represent and in terms of the textual, multimodal, and pragmatic practices that are shared by or unique to each. It also examines the relationship that each variety of conversation bears to conceptions of temporality, collaboration, authorship, and the public nature of the Internet – all of which are themes that studies of virtual discourse can and should continue to struggle and engage with.

In addition, virtual multi-author document-conversations like those on Tumblr pose complex ethical challenges for researchers; for example, who ‘owns’ such texts and which, if any, contributors must be consulted before it is ethical to quote these posts in academic publications? This paper draws on professional research standards (e.g. Markham & Buchanan 2012, ESRC 2012), three years of digital ethnographic research, and emic discussions of appropriate standards of attribution and dissemination found on Tumblr, to propose a set of ethical standards for requesting and negotiating consent and for anonymising and protecting virtual informants.
Session 5: Multi-modal analysis

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Youtube as a forum of superdiverse prosumption

A new tension between local and translocal linguistic practices and communication patterns has accentuated recently, and it is particularly striking in social media. Following Arnault, we can define the notion of super-diversity to mark a new historical condition of transnationalism stemming from the profound quantitative and qualitative changes in the global flows of people since the late 1980’s. It points to the fluidity and intricacies of the diversity in the communication patterns in the age of heightened mobility and transnationalism. We analyze some samples of interaction from the Youtube taking into account both videos and their reception. The Youtube is a forum of “prosumption”, i.e., "production by consumers". This new production format also allows and enables a new heightened heterogeneity, superdiversity of products and their reception/consumption. The superdiversity comes out as a form of new genres that play around with the earlier ones thereby also challenging the consumers/recipient. Various kinds of subversive parody videos are a well-known, existing genre also in a Youtube. Subgenres of parody videos include phenomena, such as buffalax that are versions of snippets of movies or musical performances augmented with “subtitles for what sounds like” translation from the original language of performance to buffalax video producer’s own language. This kind of treatment Bollywood movie scenes or oriental pop songs is an example of Youtube prosumption. At the same time, this kind of parodies are exemplary of new kind of recontextualization of meaning that is open for a diversified reception. In our analysis, we discuss two Youtube videos and their reception. The videos are Funny Crazy Indian Nipple Song and Hiidansip vs Hiidhalonen (with English subtitles). A Funny Crazy Indian Nipple Song is a buffalax video done on the song “Kattaana Ponnu” from the movie “Naam Iruvar Namakku Iruvar” casting Prabhu Deva and Meena Maheshwari, and downloaded in 11.11.2007. It had been watched 157 209 times by 29.2.2016, and it had got 145 comments. Hiidansip vs Hiidhalonen is a political parody video concerning Finnish-Estonian relations, and it was presented in an Estonian New Year's Eve show by Ott Sepp, Märt Avandi & Ö-Fraktsioon, directed by Kaaren Kaer, and downloaded to youtube in 30.12.2011. It had been watched 432 905 times by 29.2.2016, and it had got 1 028 comments. We will note that also the reception of these videos articulates superdiversity. The commentators do not only explicate, negotiate and sometimes debate about the subversion of meanings, but they also defend non-standard language forms in the discussion of Funny Crazy Indian Nipple Song, or engage in multilingual debate (Estonian, Russian, English and Finnish) in Hiidansip vs Hiidhalonen. The debates also express liquid racism and nationalism, and put the diversity in a battleground, where ethnic and nationalistic stereotypes are invoked but also challenged. Also the reception of Youtube videos participates in the redefinition of superdiversity.
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The production of community through nonliteral discourse in online movie reviews

This presentation examines how nonliteral discourse (such as exaggeration, sarcasm, irony, parody, and satire) is accomplished in a particular speech genre (movie reviews) in a mediated context (online videos and text comments). The analysis shows how implicit meaning constitutes a resource for building, and participating as a member of, an online community.

This analysis focuses on a U.S. movie review website, including analysis of videos and their text-based comments sections, alongside four other North American movie review websites (one other video/vlog-based, two text-based, one mixed) and with some consideration of similar genres in other Englishes (British English) and other languages (Cantonese). Videos were transcribed and text/comments copied; these were analyzed using discourse and conversation analysis (Cameron, 2000; Schegloff, 2007).

One common form of nonliteral discourse in online movie reviews is to give a review of a film that is opposite to the actual opinion of the reviewer. Cues of implicit meaning include not only tone of voice, but also contradicting: one’s own statement, known facts about the world, shared cultural assumptions, and/or what is known about the site or reviewer’s general stance. In most cases in which reviewers give a mock-positive of a film about which they have a negative opinion, that their review is not an “honest” opinion is fairly clear to anyone familiar with the site, largely through exaggerated emotional expression and extreme case formulations (Pomerantz, 1986; Edwards, 2000).

For example, in one video two reviewers negatively review the film “Boyhood,” but in subsequent reviews profess loudly and repeatedly about how much they loved the film. Even without having seen the original review, the repetition of phrases (such as “it took 12 years to make!”), throwing objects across the room as if overwhelmed with excitement, and shouting “I fucking loved that movie!” all come across as over-the-top and out of character. In a different case, it is harder to discern the “false” opinion when the reviewers positively review the film “Grown Ups 2.” Though the film was widely panned and the site has several times negatively reviewed other Adam Sandler films, the reviewers come across as genuinely surprised at having enjoyed the movie, and their review starts off free of exaggeration or anything but the subtest clues that they are not serious. The nonliteral nature of the review is made explicit at the very end of the video and in the comments section below it.

A number of specific strategies are deployed to present what are technically “lies” in such a way as to accomplish their opposite meanings. Though the nonliteral discourse strategies in the data are (literally and logically) contradictions and paradoxes, they impart what might be called a “truth of mood” (Vincent-Marelli, 1997). By exploiting the ambiguity and negotiability of nonliterally-professed opinions, reviewers rely on a significant shared
cultural understanding and community familiarity. This presentation will reflect on the implications of this analysis for online interaction, analysis of video and comments, and the role of nonlinteral discourse in intersubjectivity and ingroup participation.

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Session 6: Data session

**Hannah Ditchfield, University of Leicester, UK. hd111@leicester.ac.uk**

*From Messages to Status Updates: Exploring screen capture data of Facebook interactions*

This data session focuses on data collected from the social networking site *Facebook* via screen capture software, liteCam. Similarly to Meredith’s work (2014), this data features recordings of Facebook message interactions. However, this set also includes screen capture recordings of other types of Facebook’s written, or typed, modes of communication including comments, wall posts and status updates.

In this study, participants downloaded screen-capture software on to their own
computer or laptop. Participants could, then, collect data whenever they would normally use Facebook, rather than having to go to a computer lab or use a specific computer (Garcia and Jacobs, 1998; Beisswenger, 2008). Participants simply had to start up liteCam and record their entire screen while they were interacting on Facebook, starting and stopping the recording at their own will. Through asking participants to record their Facebook interactions through screen capture, I had access to live textual “construction” and “repair”; that is, how sentences are put together, corrected, tweaked, and revised as well as any pauses and interactional gaps. Details such as these are not available in data sets that are just composed of transcriptions of interactions on Facebook.

I have collected this data as part of my PhD project and my interests are centred around how people use discursive techniques to manage their identity and self through their talk and interaction on Facebook. However, I also have an interest in how individuals manage the more unique affordances online, such as the ability to edit their responses before sending a post, in their processes of impression management online.

I decided to collect different modes of Facebook’s written communications (such as comments, wall posts, status updates and messages) as I have an interest in whether and to what extent the more ‘public’ or ‘private’ nature of the types of post may affect talk and interaction. Therefore, one of the questions I am looking to ask of this data is if and whether there are any differences in the ways individuals manage self in more private posts, such as Facebook messages, compared to the more public posts such as status updates.

As well as this, I am interested in thinking about to what extent the ‘typed’ word is used in conjunction with other, more multimodal, methods of communication on Facebook such as videos, pictures and audio. This leads me to ask questions around whether more multimodal types of analysis are necessary with data such as this and if so, what types of analytical methods can we use to make sense of this type of data.

References
Keynote 2: Janet Smithson, University of Exeter

Identity, authenticity, legitimacy: How can we tell if online talk is “genuine” and what are the methodological and ethical implications?

Abstract
Increasing attention is being paid by both academics and policymakers into how people access and use online support forums for support, advice, social reasons for a wide range of needs, including health, mental health and parenting. While discourse analysts are particularly interested in theoretical and methodological aspects of forum talk, when presenting analysis of online talk to a wider audience – especially health, clinical or practice-based audiences, and also to potential research funders - two issues are regularly raised. How do we know the posters are genuine? And how can we ensure an ethical approach to the use and replication of data taken from online forums? In my analysis I relate these concerns to discursive notions of identity, authenticity and legitimacy. I examine data from health and parenting websites to consider what authenticity in online talk means both discursively, and in relation to research ethics requirements. The analysis pays particular attention to posters’ boundary management strategies – who determines what is acceptable posting on a forum? What happens when pesters deviate from this? I look at the link between inappropriate posting and accusations of trolling, and consider the impact of this for posters who might be attempting to access help but not posting in line with the forum talk norms. I conclude with implications for ways we might combine methodological development with addressing the ethical and practical concerns outlined above.
Topic initiation in Tinder-based instant-messaging conversations

Tinder is a mobile application which makes possible an instant-messaging conversation between two strangers looking for an intimate relationship. We are conducting a field study of the uses of Tinder based on interviews with 20 users, and analysis of their chat conversations in the course of using Tinder (50 conversations). Whereas previous studies on mobile gay dating applications like Grindr show that chat is primarily and explicitly oriented to a quick meeting (Race, 2014; Licoppe et al., 2015), our corpus, based on 50 chat conversations between heterosexual Tinder users in France, indicates that participants engage in extensive chat conversations as a preliminary to other forms of face to face encounters.

In this communication we focus on the openings of such electronic conversations and the way participants negotiate around a reason for the call (Schegloff, 1986), and collaboratively initiate the conversation and a recognizable first topic, as for example in the excerpt below:

Excerpt 1

1. JON Bonjour Claire
   Hello Claire

2. JON Je me demandais où a été prise ta deuxième photo ? Ça pourrait être le pays
   I wondered where your second picture was taken ? It could be the

3. basque
   Basque country

4. CLA Bonjour ! Eh non, elle a été prise en Australie !
   Hello ! Eh no, it has been taken in Australia !
5. **CLA**

   Je ne suis allée au Pays Basque qu’une fois, tu connais bien ?

   *I went only once in Basque country, do you know well?*

   We will focus on two topics of interest:

   a) How the initiation of the conversation relies on resources provided by the personal profile available on the mobile app (as in lines 2-3 in the extract above). This shows how participants orient towards such conversations as occurring between ‘pseudonymous strangers’ (Licoppe, 2016), i.e co-participants who have never met, but know about one another through a virtual knowledge repository (the profile). Such profiles are part of an augmented setting for co-participants, so that using it as a resource appears as an extension of the use of the setting as a resource to initiate topical conversations between strangers (Maynard & Zimmerman, 1984).

   b) Question formats seem to be a sensitive issue in the first stages of such conversations. Co-participants display an orientation towards systematically avoiding open question formats, either by using directly more constraining question formats (such as polar questions, alternative questions or information requests, as in line 2-3 above) or ‘repairing’ open questions by transforming them into more constraining question formats. In such displays of recipient design, the questioner seems to project more strongly an answer, and to offer a slot for the recipient to choose what he/she wants to develop, and to display her ability to make correct or plausible inferences. We aim at describing how this interactional orientation is collaboratively used appears as a resource for the pursuit of a sustained conversation (in a context in which silence is rapidly perceived as a sign of rejection) and eventually for seduction as an interactional achievement.
‘I laughed when i read your next question!’: Doing rapport in an email interview

The use of the face to face or group interview is ubiquitous to the extent that we are an ‘interview society’ (Atkinson and Silverman, 1997). However, much less attention has been afforded to email interviews. The focus of this presentation is exploring rapport through applying a conversation analytical approach to a ‘single case analysis’ (Schegloff, 1987) of an email interview undertaken by one of the authors as part of her doctoral research.

EMCA research has tended to concentrate on ‘naturally occurring’ data and has rarely used interviewing as a source of data. Although there is a growing body of EMCA writing on interview talk, very little has been written about the on-line interview. The email interview we will discuss took place over a six month period and consisted of 40 emails. It can be seen as a ‘successful’ interaction, as the participant remained engaged throughout and indeed, expressed her enjoyment of the process. In our presentation, then, we will explore some of the ways in which doing rapport was accomplished using extracts from the interview material. Specifically, we will discuss the following: doing ‘listening’ through formulating and summarising; orientation to the interview as a joint project; doing positive affirmations and being on topic. Through our analysis, we aim to contribute to the theoretical and methodological understanding of an EMCA approach to online interaction.

Session 8 – Online chat interaction

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Problematic interaction in online chat counselling

Advice is known to be sensitive business, as it implies advice recipients lack certain knowledge or expertise while advice givers (claim to) have knowledge to offer (Heritage & Sefi, 1992). In online chat counselling, when the advice is not acknowledged explicitly
(enough) or soon (enough), this implies advice resistance. The counsellor may then post pre-closing questions such as “have I answered your question?” or “can you work with this?” (Stommel & Te Molder, 2015). Very rarely, counsellors topicalize the apparent advice resistance in some way. However, handbooks (Schalken et al., 2013) and online counsellors we spoke to recommend metacommunication, i.e. talking about what happens during the interaction, when clients show signs of advice resistance. This study therefore explores metacommunication in the context of advice resistance.

Data were derived from a corpus of 197 sessions of the Dutch information chat service on alcohol and drugs and 348 sessions from a Dutch general chat help service. We selected chat sessions from this large data set in which the interaction did not run smoothly (non-fluent “turn taking”, long pauses, overt resistance, etc.). This procedure resulted in 49 interactions from the information chat service on alcohol and drugs and 47 interactions from the general chat help service. We used Conversation Analysis (CA) to analyse these sessions. This application of CA to online data, with sensitivity to the online nature of the data, is in line with how Giles et al (2015) proposed to analyse online interaction microanalytically.

First, we found that clients often log out when the interaction gets problematic. As a result, the counsellor is bereft of a chance to topicalize these problems. Second, in anticipation of possible advice resistance some counsellors use disclaimers that display limitations to their advice competence (especially when the question is medical or otherwise specific). Third, in response to signs of advice resistance, counsellors sometimes question the adequacy of their just given advice. Thereby, they openly put their advice competence up for discussion or even undermine it. In rare cases counsellor actually topicalize the client’s lack of advice recipiency in response to signs of advice resistance. They question the client’s commitment to the chat session and/or susceptibility to the advice.

Comparing these findings with the recommendations concerning metacommunication the following tentative conclusions can be drawn. When metacommunication involves counsellors questioning the adequacy of their advice, it seems an effective strategy to manage (potential) advice resistance. In contrast, the type of metacommunication in which the counsellor questions the client’s role as advice recipient seems less effective, as it requires a lot of additional interactional work to restore the counselling relationship. An explanation may be that this type of metacommunication involves a severe threat to the
patient’s face, which jeopardizes the counselling relationship. This type of face threat may cause clients to log out immediately – a strategy which is presumably typical for online counselling. This could explain why counsellors are reluctant to use metacommunication in problematic chat counselling sessions.

References


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Minimal response, interjections or affective feedbacks – the case of expressions like *uh-huh, hmm* and *myeah*

In conversations minimal responses such as *yeah, uh-huh* and *mmhmm* are seen as the listener signaling a certain level of interest with the speaker. Often the function of those signals is accentuated as a way of engaging in the conversation without claiming the right to taking the turn. But in online interactions such as e-mails, instant messaging and chat via Facebook, this fine-tuned systematics of turn taking is needless, since the interaction is not carried out simultaneously. Posts are shown in the same order as they are sent, and this sequentiality cannot be changed concurrently through negotiation. Even though systems have been developed in order to make interaction simultaneous, such initiatives have never
been prosperous (Herring 1999). We still interact in a non-synchronous way that, even though the interaction sometimes can be very fast and collaborative, never becomes instantaneous like spoken conversations.

Overlap, interruptions and backchanneling that are frequent in spoken interactions, do not occur in online interactions. Nevertheless words or expressions that normally function as a way of holding the turn or filling the pauses, such as *eh* and *hmm*, or expressions that usually signal the listener’s focused interest, such as the continuers *mm* and *m hmm*, can be seen in online posts along with signs like *well*, *okay*, *myeah* and *erh* that in different ways operate as recipient tokens, acknowledgement tokens (Jefferson 1984) or change-of-state tokens (Heritage 1984).

In my presentation I will discuss whether those different tokens are most fruitfully seen as markers of conversation and adapted turn taking, reminiscent reactions of the body or perhaps “simply” customized signs of presence. I will take my starting point in the insights of the conversation analysis’ work on monitoring the turn taking and see if this approach helps us understanding the frequency of some of tokens, that I for convenience call *minimal responses* altogether. If those tokens are not obligatory required for managing the turn taking and negotiating the when and what to say (i.e. write), why do we employ them after all?

In my quest for understanding the frequency of minimal responses, interjections and other apparently superfluous words like *daww*, *duhh* or *aghh*, I will examine those tokens as different signs of the body still being an important factor in the way we understand and perform interaction online. In continuation of this, I will discuss the reasonable in using comprehensions and arguments used in conversation analysis concerning turn taking and prosodic issues when such topics actually are not relevant in online interaction.

**References**


The practice of hyperlinking in service-focused chat interaction

Today, most organizations offer a range of communication modes for clients to find information: websites, e-mail, question forms, telephone and live chat. One of the affordances of the text-based modes is that they can include hyperlinks to refer clients to relevant sources of information. Hyperlinks are highlighted words in the text that one can click to go to another place in the same or a different document or website. Previous research on hyperlinking has investigated authors’ motives for using hyperlinks (Kim, 2000), used social networking analysis to political (and other) blog networks (Hargittai, Gallo & Kane, 2008; Marlow, 2004), and examined the effect of hyperlinks on reading texts and language learning (Proctor, Dalton & Grisham, 2007; ten Have, 1999; Mazzali-Lurati, 2007). No studies have yet explored how hyperlinks are functioning in chat interactions. In this presentation we will present an analysis of the use of hyperlinks by professionals in chat service interactions – focusing in particular on the point at which hyperlinks are offered and how the clients respond to the links. Our data consist of 48 chat sessions from the Dutch national alcohol and drugs information service and 1,376 chat sessions accumulated over three months of an American university library chat reference service. Hyperlinks were provided in 22/48 counseling chats and in 1,376/1,376 library chats. We have noted four patterns across the data thus far: hyperlinks as direct response, hyperlinks as proposed response, hyperlinks as collaborative navigation device, and hyperlink as supplemental resource. Hyperlink as direct response appeared frequently in the librarian chat data in response to a degree of certainty by the patron as to their request. Proposed responses and collaborative navigation functions appeared frequently in both datasets in response to an element of uncertainty as to the client’s request, during which sending the link is followed
by an ongoing interactional negotiation where both parties seem to be looking at the
content of the hyperlink and together solving the problem being pursued. Hyperlinks
offered as supplemental resources, while not as frequently occurring as the other functions,
ocurred toward the end of the interaction as a way of reinforcing the service-orientation of
the chat interaction. Overall, a better understanding of the ways in which the introduction
of hyperlinks mediates the expert-client interaction is one that may provide useful insights
for those who facilitate and offer such services.

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Reinterpreting the use of hashtags: the humoristic use of #jesuis

In January 2015, the attack on the French satiric magazine Charlie Hebdo headquarters in Paris caused a lot of reactions on social media, including the appearance of the hashtag #jesuischarlie in order to express support and alignment with the victims. From then on, the stem #jesuis has been productive e.g. #jesuisparis after the November 2015 Paris attacks, but has also evolved into humoristic uses. In these, humor has an adversarial function (Veale et al. 2006): they ridicule the conveyed political or emotional load, underlining among others the superficiality of the massive social media protest (Kuipers 2002) and/or intentionally pushing the boundaries of the taboo of violent death. While the hashtag was originally developed as a way to indicate thematic coherence and to structure messages, its uses are now also largely rhetoric (Giles et al. 2015: 49). This paper will address from a linguistic-discursive perspective the hashtag #jesuis and its variants, specifically those used for humoristic purposes, with the aim of placing this strategy among other functions of hashtags (Zappavigna 2015).

Our analysis will be based on a database of tweets from 2015-2016 containing #jesuis. The hashtag is not only produced in French tweets, which is another proof of the creativity of its use. We will focus particularly on the evolution of hashtags that were initially supportive, such as #jesuischien ‘iamdog’ (concerning the death of a police-dog), to the ridiculing by means of the playful breaking of the taboo of death, through hashtags such as #jesuiscafard ‘iamcockroach’, #jesuisfourmi ‘lamant’. The latter use a parallel syntactic structure (Davies 1984), but refer to animals that are lower in the taxonomy, in terms of emotional connection, therefore questioning the pertinence of mourning.
With this study, we wish to explore how the hashtags are used not only as a structuring device, but also as a preferred locus for polyphonic echoing of previous hashtags and for humoristic uses. The recognizability of the hashtag, both at a technical level by means of the #-sign and by means of its linguistic structure, contribute to its specific role for rhetoric uses, viz. to express affiliation and to challenge the limits of taboo in social media, which encourage their users to rapidly express themselves on sensitive societal topics, such as terrorism.

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How much conversation is there on Twitter?

« Join the conversation » was Twitter’s pitch line to attract users and/or incite them to tweet. The way in which the platform presents itself then clearly relies on the image of Twitter as a gigantic conversation where anyone can participate. However, various studies on political participation have questioned this idea (a.o. Di Fraia et al. 2016). In this paper, we will analyze whether Twitter can indeed be considered a form of conversation. In order
to do so, we will rely on the one hand on a critical study of different approaches to the concept ‘conversation’. We will critically compare the concepts of conversation in communication studies (Boyd et al. 2010) with those in linguistics, such as “talk-in-interaction” (Schegloff 2007:xiii), “that familiar predominant kind of talk in which two or more participants freely alternate in speaking (….)” (Levinson 1983: 284) or “the prototypical manifestation of spoken, dialogic language, characterized by communicative proximity, its dynamicity, its cooperative character and non-premeditated turn-taking” (Briz 2000: 225). On the other hand, we will apply this to a case-study of the use of Twitter by French, Spanish and British members of the European Parliament, starting from the May 2014 electoral campaign till May 2015. This case study will adopt an interdisciplinary approach involving methods from linguistics and communication studies, by combining data analysis with ethnographic interviews with the MEPs and/or their communications collaborators.

In the first place, we will analyze the correspondences and differences between the technological possibilities and the affordances emerging through the use of Twitter (Hutchby 2001, 2014), in order to see whether the way users communicate through Twitter privileges features that may be linked to conversation (such as replying to a tweet) or rather disregard these features. We hypothesize that not all Twitter users exploit the conversation-like possibilities of Twitter, but that some use them rather as a tool for self-presentation.

In the second place, we will analyze the tweets themselves with a particular focus on whether they contain elements that suggest a wish to receive reactions or to establish interactions, such as address forms, including address through the use of the addressee’s Twitterhandle (e.g. @johndoe), interrogative speech acts,…

In the third place, we will look into reactions to tweets, scrutinizing whether they may be considered forms of conversation. We will show that not all tweets which may elicit a (verbal) reaction actually do so, and that not all reactions are the start of a string of conversation.
By doing so, we will also address methodological problems to analyze Twitter in terms of ‘conversation’ such as the role of the different participants (e.g. hearer, bystanders and overhearers, in Goffmanian terms) and their capacity to participate in the conversation, as well as the impact of technical features (e.g. the conversational nature of actions that may be considered reactions, such as retweeting or liking, cf. Giles et al. 2015: 49).

References

Session 10 – Data session – online breast cancer screening discussions

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The data come from an online forum which aims to offer information to women about breast screening (mammography). In the UK, women are invited for breast cancer screening, usually after the age of 50. However, rates of breast screening in the UK are at their lowest
level for a decade, with the proportion of women between 50-70 screened falling to 63.3% in 2014-2015, from 70.1% in 2004-2005 (BBC News, 2016). There are a variety of reasons why women may not attend their initial screening, including; fear of over diagnosis (where low grade disease that would never have developed into a cancer is subject to aggressive therapy); expectations that the examination will be painful; concerns about radiation dose and cultural/spiritual beliefs resulting in a fatalistic approach to health behaviour.

The WOMMeN research team at the University of Salford have established an online breast screening hub, which will offer women information about breast screening. A particular focus of the hub will be an online forum, where women can go for support. Members of the hub will include practitioners (radiographers and mammographers) who will be able to offer professional information to women on the hub.

As this hub is in its very early stages, we would propose bringing data from either the initial ‘user design’ phase of the research project or ‘community building’ phase of the forum. We are interested in the way in which experts and lay people discuss issues around breast screening, as well as how a community develops in an online platform. As we are still in the early stages of development, we cannot anticipate exactly what this data will look like, and it may predominantly be experts discussing issues with one another. In such a case we would be interested in how healthcare professionals discuss issues with one another in an online space when they are not anonymous.

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