



ninth bonn applied english linguistics conference

(baelc9)

abstracts

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ninth bonn applied
english linguistics
conference



digital
pragmatics
& cmc

Ninth Bonn Applied English Linguistics Conference

(BAELc9)

Trigger warning

This conference will cover presentations with the topics sexism, transphobia and sexual harassment. Should anyone need to leave the Zoom meeting/turn off their camera and sound at any point during the conference because of sensitive content, they are welcome and encouraged to do so and return when they are in a more comfortable state.

Therefore, it is forewarned that this conference will/will potentially address, and potentially discuss, the following situations:

- Abuse (mental, emotional, verbal, etc.)
- Cursing/Curse words
- Discrimination (on the basis of gender, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, etc.)
- Harassment (verbal, sexual, etc.)
- Nudity (partial and/or full)
- Surgery
- Slurs (on the basis of gender, gender identity, race, sex, sexual orientation, etc.)

Time	Title	Format		Chair
10:00 – 10:10	Welcoming Words			Klaus P. Schneider
10:10 – 10:35	Alexandra Chudar – <i>Pragmatics of English diminutives: a corpus-based study</i> Minsk State Linguistic University	10:10–10:20	Summary of Presentation	Katrin Renkwitz
		10:20–10:35	Live Q&A	
10:35 – 10:50	Short break			
10:50 – 11:15	Elena Albu – <i>A corpus-pragmatic approach to negation on Twitter</i> University of Tübingen	10:50–11:00	Summary of Presentation	Lionel Sango
		11:00–11:15	Live Q&A	
11:15 – 11:30	Short break			
11:30 – 11:55	Hanna Bruns – <i>Trans* representation online: How to challenge the prevalent discourse on binary gender"</i> University of Bonn	11:30–11:40	Summary of Presentation	Pawel Sickinger
		11:40–11:55	Live Q&A	
11:55 – 12:10	Short break			
12:10 – 12:35	Dominik Schoppa – <i>Contextual conceptualizations of complimenting and insulting behaviour</i> University of Augsburg	12:10–12:20	Summary of Presentation	Pawel Sickinger
		12:20–12:35	Live Q&A	

12:35 – 14:00	Lunch break			
14:00 – 14:25	Brooke Nelson – <i>"Show me where you want my c*ck buried": Women's creative multimodal responses as relational work in online sexual harassment</i> Northern State University	14:00– 14:10	Summary of Presentation	Stefanie Rottschäfer
		14:10– 14:25	Live Q&A	
14:25 – 14:40	Short break			
14:40 – 15:40	Keynote Jonathan Culpeper – <i>(Im)politeness Reciprocity and Some Reflections on Social Media</i> Lancaster University	14:40– 15:25	Live Presentation	Klaus P. Schneider
		15:25– 15:40	Live Q&A	
~15:40	Closing Words			

Pragmatics of English diminutives: a corpus-based study

Alexandra Chudar (Minsk)

Alexandra Chudar, a PhD student in Theory of Language at Minsk State Linguistic University, Belarus. Currently she is working on her thesis about structural, semantic and pragmatic characteristics of diminutives in the so-called Southern Hemisphere Englishes, including Australian, New Zealand and South African varieties.

As elements of expressive vocabulary, diminutives carry out a wide range of pragmatic functions. These functions were described in several works (Jurafsky 1996, Schneider 2003, Ponsonnet 2018, etc.), though the lists presented there are often incomplete and could be combined into a more extensive scheme. Moreover, there is a limited number of works where pragmatics of diminutives is analyzed with the help of corpus instruments (Travis 2004, Juffermans 2008). In my presentation I will try to present a more comprehensive model of pragmatic functions for English diminutives. Primarily I will focus on diminutives referring to people (both synthetic and analytical), as they carry out the majority of pragmatic functions characteristic of diminutives in general.

The data from Australian, New Zealand and South African subcorpora of GloWbE was analyzed, as these varieties are considered rich of diminutives. However, taking into account the similarity of diminutive functions across languages, the results of this study can most likely be applied to diminutives in general.

One of the ways to determine the pragmatic potential is to apply corpus instruments to the analysis of the evaluative prosody (Louw 1993). Using GloWbE data I will show that the evaluative prosody of diminutives is often not consistent – depending on the context, the same diminutive can be used to express affection/closeness and disapproval/contempt. In particular, this can be observed in the cases of “little thing” type, when the base word of the diminutive is pragmatically neutral and the evaluative potential of the diminutive becomes apparent only in its interaction with other items. Apart from this, I will present the cases when the analysis of concordance lines allows for the detection of other pragmatic functions of diminutives, including diminutives serving as in-/out-group markers, cases of teasing and irony, and the usage of diminutives as pragmatic hedges.

A corpus-pragmatic approach to negation on Twitter

Elena Albu (Tübingen)

Elena Albu is currently an Alexander von Humboldt fellow at the University of Tübingen. Her work is found at the interface between pragmatics, corpus linguistics and psycholinguistics. She is particularly interested in the cognitive functioning and discursive behaviour of negation in natural language. Previously, she was a research and teaching assistant at the University of Strasbourg and was also awarded a Swiss Government Excellence Postdoctoral Scholarship. She was part of the international project “Twitter at the European Elections: A Comparative International Study of the Use of Twitter by Candidates at the European Parliamentary Elections in May 2014 [TEE2014]”.

Social media, in general, and Twitter, in particular, have become powerful communicative tools during electoral campaigns (Conway et al. 2012; Larsson 2012). The political discourse has quickly adapted to the digital environment and, as a result, a new type of political communication has emerged in the form of the political tweet. The aim of this paper is to discuss how negation is used in the tweets sent by the UK candidates running for the European Parliamentary Elections in May 2014. Building on Biber et al. (1999) and Tottie (1991), particular attention is paid to *no*-negation, *not*-negation and *n't*-negation. We are interested in: first, which type of negation is prevalent, second, whether these types are distinctly employed and third, given the vacillation of the frontier between the oral and written registers in tweets, whether negation has a contribution to the colloquialisation of political discourse.

The corpus under analysis comprises the tweets of the UK candidates, collected within a time span of four weeks, three weeks prior to the election day and one week after May 22nd. This paper uses the tools and methods provided by corpus pragmatics (Aijmer and Ruhlemann 2015; Jucker 2018; Romero-Trillo 2008). The results show the prevalence of *not*-negation and *n't*-negation (72.44% in total, approximately 36% each) in comparison to *no*-negation (19%). However, *not*- and *n't*-negation are not used interchangeably: in addition to verbal negation, *not* is frequently used in elliptical nominal structures, while *n't*-negation attaches mainly to modal verbs. Overall, the particularities of negation (the preponderance of *not*-negation and *n't*-negation, the use of non-verbal negation with the full form *not*, the extensive use of the inflected form *n't* with modal verbs, the use of elliptical structures) ascribe the tweets to spoken language and informal style. This suggests that electoral tweets have shifted the formality barrier, shaping a more flexible and dynamic political dialogue between the candidates and their electorate.

References

References

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Friday, 27 November 2020 | 11:30 – 11:55

Trans* representation online: How to challenge the prevalent discourse on binary gender

Hanna Bruns (Bonn)

Hanna Bruns finished her M.A. in “Applied Linguistics” at the University of Bonn in 2019 and is currently pursuing her PhD on the topic of gender-neutral language. Her main research interests include Queer Linguistics, Critical and Positive Discourse Analysis, Computer Mediated Communication, and Language Change.

Online spaces offer a way for people to share information and to build communities. These spaces are especially important for people who might not be able to gain access to a traditional support system and who therefore need to look for “information and guidance” online (Jones 2019: 86). This is, for instance, true for transgender people. Particularly online video diaries (vlogs), typically shared on YouTube, have become increasingly popular (Jones 2019: 86), and are said to have the power to “save trans lives. Distributed freely through the Internet and easily found, they collectively tell trans youth that self-determination and transformation are viable routes” (Horak 2014: 581).

This study therefore focuses on YouTube vlogs of two transgender individuals in order to find out which strategies they use to challenge traditional representations of trans* people. The stereotypical discourse (also called master narrative, Andrews 2004) they counter is often based on hetero- and cisnormativity, e.g. the idea that transgender people identify with either of the two binary genders (i.e. the other binary gender than they were assigned at birth) and that they wish to undergo specific medical treatment so that they ‘pass’, i.e. are recognised, as the other gender (cf. Zimman 2012: 12-13).

The data used for this study consist of 13 YouTube videos from the year 2018, posted by the two individuals on two channels. The study shows that the two YouTubers demonstrate a high awareness of the stereotypes reproduced within the transgender community and use a combination of five discursive strategies to discuss and refute the master narrative. Making use of these strategies, the subjects' counter-discourse aims at presenting a multi-faceted representation of transgender identities. Through this, the YouTubers are opening up a virtual space for people who might otherwise feel marginalised within the trans* community.

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Friday, 27 November 2020 | 12:10 – 12:35

Contextual conceptualizations of complimenting and insulting behavior

Dominik Schoppa (Augsburg)

Dominik Schoppa is a first-year PhD student at the University of Augsburg and holds an M.A. degree in Applied Linguistics as well as a B.A. degree in English Studies and Media Sciences. While working as a student assistant at the chair of English Linguistics at Bonn University, he was further involved in multiple research projects examining non-standard features of early African American English. His presentation is based on, and will cover selected findings from, his M.A. thesis in the research area of metapragmatics. Further areas of interest include – but are not restricted to – pragmatics, psycholinguistics, and cognitive linguistics.

The two notions of complimenting behavior and insulting behavior share quite a peculiar semantic relationship as acknowledged in pragmatics literature: while some studies insinuate antonymy between these two types of verbal behavior (cf., e.g., Slugoski and Turnbull 1988), others highlight the incomparability of their respective sensitivity to context, with insulting behavior being much more context-dependent than complimenting behavior (cf., e.g., Daly 2018). On that account, the present study seeks to examine how ordinary language users conceptualize

these two types of verbal behavior by systematically distinguishing communicative functions of explicit references to complimenting and insulting behavior in context. In particular, online blog corpora were searched for inflectional and derivational variants of *COMPLIMENT* and *INSULT*, and the retrieved items were coded for their pragmatic functions and conceptual supercategories within the immediate communicative contexts in which they occurred. Empirical results reveal that, among other things, references to complimenting behavior are dominated by speakers' insinuations of congruence regarding their own and the hearers' understanding of this notion, whereas references to insulting behavior feature a much larger share of insinuated incongruence of the corresponding concept in the minds of the speaker and the hearer. In other words, while the concept of complimenting behavior seems quite stable in ordinary language users' minds, the concept of insulting behavior appears to be much more open to negotiation. Judging by this difference in speakers' contextual conceptualizations, mental representations of complimenting and insulting behavior appear to be incomparable, thus rendering the question of antonymy irrelevant at first sight. However, speakers' occasional juxtapositions of explicit references to complimenting and insulting behavior call this preliminary conclusion into question. The two seemingly contradictory findings are discussed against the background of first-order and second-order perspectives on pragmatics research (cf. Locher and Bousfield 2008), emphasizing the researcher's choice of perspective as a likely predictor of the kind of results obtained and the corresponding conclusions drawn.

References

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Friday, 27 November 2020 | 14:00 – 14:25

“Show me where you want my c*ck buried”: Women’s creative multimodal responses as relational work in online sexual harassment

Brooke Nelson (Aberdeen, South Dakota)

Brooke C. Nelson is an instructor of English, Reading, and Communication Studies with Northern State University at Huron Community Campus. She teaches a wide variety of remedial (e.g. ENGL-033 & READ-041) and introductory (e.g. SPCM-101 & ENGL-210) courses. Her research interests lie in sociolinguistics—specifically, discourse analysis and pragmatics. She has conducted and presented work on creativity, multimodality, and impoliteness in the context of online sexual harassment at regional and international conferences. Currently, she is exploring the mitigation strategies used by genderqueer activists on social media.

Verbal aggression targeting women has been well-attested in computer-mediated communication (CMC) research since the early days of the internet (e.g., Herring, 1999). However, current social media platforms provide internet users with new multimodal affordance, creating new possibilities for patterns of social interaction—including sexual harassment. Traditionally, the limited studies of women’s responses to online aggression have focused on text. The present study, however, examines women’s humorous multimodal responses (e.g., GIFs, memes, photoshop) to illustrate the ways in which images perform relational work in online sexual harassment contexts.

The data come from the Instagram account *ByeFelipe* on which women post screenshots of abusive messages they have received on social media or online dating platforms (e.g., Facebook, Tinder). Of these posts, 36 screenshots in which women responded to online sexual harassment with visual semiotics (meme, GIF, emojis, etc.) are analyzed for their interactional stancetaking and impoliteness function (Kiesling et al, 2018; Culpeper, 2011).

In these screenshots, women- in addition to, or instead of, using language- have chosen to utilize multiple modalities to evaluate, such as a GIF of a child’s disgusted face, or mockingly express alignment to the harassment, such as when female interlocutors sent fake nude pictures. Women often used GIFs and static images originating from outside contexts to negatively evaluate the initial hypersexual request, whereas those expressing mock alignment either modified existing visual semiotic resources or constructed for the specific context. These responses and their dissemination across social media disrupt previously established hegemonic power relations, but in doing so, they also pose ethical questions regarding the distribution and publication of internet-based data.

Friday, 27 November 2020 | 14:40 – 15:40

Keynote

(Im)politeness Reciprocity and Some Reflections on Social Media

Jonathan Culpeper (Lancaster)

Jonathan Culpeper is Professor of English Language and Linguistics in the Department of Linguistics and English Language at Lancaster University, UK. His work spans pragmatics, stylistics and the history of English. His most recent publications include The Palgrave Handbook of Linguistic (Im)politeness (2017, Palgrave; co-editor) and Second Language Pragmatics: From Theory to Research (2018, Routledge; co-author), a finalist for AAAL Book Awards. For five years, he was co-editor-in-chief of the Journal of Pragmatics (2009-14).

For some years, I have been working on the notion of ‘reciprocity’ in the context of (im)politeness, partly in collaboration with Vittorio Tantucci (Lancaster University). The idea that reciprocity can account for at least some of the dynamics of (im)politeness is not new. Ohashi (2008), for example, called for it to be given greater consideration. Despite this, reciprocity has hitherto received scant attention in the (im)politeness literature.

The first part of this presentation sets the background. I define (im)politeness and discuss the connection with morality. Morality is in fact a key underlying connection between reciprocity and politeness. I note the role of reciprocity in religions and legal frameworks, and also its presence in societal rights and obligations, as noted by anthropologists and sociologists. I suggest arguments as to why reciprocity is present in “proto-morality” (Bergmann 1998), a kind of morality substructure beneath cultural manifestations of morality.

The second, longer, part of the presentation introduces the Principle of Reciprocity in (Im)politeness. I show through examples how it operates, with respect to both politeness and impoliteness, and its ability to trigger the search for (im)politeness implicatures. I also consider how reciprocity interacts with context, and the particular importance of power. I will also briefly mention some of the results flowing from the quantitative study I conducted with Vittorio Tantucci.

In the third part of the presentation, I reflect on some of the issues relating to (im)politeness in social media, and ponder whether reciprocity can account for it, at least in some cases.

Finally, in the conclusion I note possible future research avenues.

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