

**October 16<sup>th</sup> 2013**

**4-5:30pm**

**Room MB206**

**Erika Darics, University of Portsmouth**

*Lingua Digitalis: A discourse-centred approach to digital communication*

Computer-mediated interpersonal communication - email and “chat” in particular - have been around for 40 years now, yet we still don’t know how to use them effectively. The lack of a shared physical context, the lack of audio and visual feedback during interactions, and the resulting heightened chance for misunderstanding and miscommunication have been proven to be the most challenging aspects of digital text-based communication. To make things even more complicated, norms of online interaction are still in the process of forming and evolving, in Susan Herring’s words “open to development and local definition” (2013). In this unconventionalised communicative environment contacting a professor via e-mail, for example, for an urgent reference letter; or using Instant Messenger at the workplace to get the boss do something is not a straightforward task. The relative weight assigned to typed words and symbols becomes high, and in order to be effective, users have to be aware of how their linguistic or discursive choices affect the interpretation of their message, both on transactional and relational levels.

In this talk I explore how a discourse-centred, qualitative examination of digital texts can contribute to the creation of such metalinguistic awareness. We will examine real-life data from a variety of text-based genres to explore how text functions in the digital realm: we will look at, for instance, the interactional functions of written non-verbal cues, style shift and timing, and through practical applications (re)discover the usefulness of interactional sociolinguistics for digital communication research.

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Herring, Susan C., Dieter Stein, and Tuija Virtanen, (2013). Introduction to the pragmatics of computer-mediated communication. In Herring, Susan C., Dieter Stein, and Tuija Virtanen, (eds.) *Pragmatics of Computer-Mediated Communication*: Mouton De Gruyter, pp. 3-25.



October 30<sup>th</sup> 2013

4-5:30pm

Room MB554

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual CLERA Distinguished Lecture

**Professor Norbert Schmitt, University of Nottingham**

*Size and depth of vocabulary: What the research tells us*

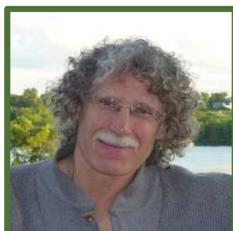
Research has conclusively shown that learners need a large vocabulary to function proficiently in their second language (especially in English). In addition to this large vocabulary *size*, learners must also know a great deal about each individual lexical item in order to use it well. This is often referred to as the quality or *depth* of vocabulary knowledge, and is as important as vocabulary size. Most laymen (including many teachers and learners) might consider a lexical item 'learned' if the spoken/written form and meaning are known. While it is true that the form-meaning link is the first and most essential lexical aspect which must be acquired, and may be adequate to allow recognition, much more must be known about lexical items, particularly if they are to be used productively.

While the ideal case would be where learners have a large lexicon in which each item is well known, it is possible to think of cases where learners have a small lexicon of well-practiced and well-known items. Conversely, learners using extensive rote memorization might be found to have large vocabularies in which all that is known about the individual items is the memorized meanings.

While these extremes do exist, what does the research show is the typical relationship between size and depth? Some researchers have even suggested there is little real difference between the two constructs in practice (e.g. Vermeer, 2001). This presentation will first discuss different ways depth of vocabulary knowledge can be conceptualized:

1. developmental progress from no knowledge to full mastery
2. knowing the form-meaning link of a word
3. knowing other word knowledge components, such as multiple meaning senses, derivative forms, and collocation
4. how well the words in the mental lexicon are organized
5. being able to use the word receptively and productively (i.e. in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and the ability to infer from context)
6. the ability to use the lexical item fluently

The presentation will then report on a critical synthesis of vocabulary studies in which both size and depth have been measured to develop an empirically-based description of the relationship between breadth and depth.



**November 13<sup>th</sup> 2013**

**4-5:30pm**

**Room MB206**

**Dr. Tatiana Tkačuková, Aston University**

*Language problems of litigants in person*

The talk deals with language difficulties lay people experience when representing themselves in court. In light of recent legislative changes and cuts in legal aid in England and Wales, the number of litigants in person has raised dramatically. The talk presents preliminary results of the linguistic project funded by the Marie Curie Fellowship for Career Development and provides an overview of communicative and linguistic problems litigants in person experience during opening and closing speeches, witness examination, interaction with judges and opposing counsels. The talk also identifies further research options that can potentially help lawyers and the judiciary in the debate on changes of legal proceedings for litigants in person. The materials for analysis draw on several widely publicised cases and small claims cases from England and Wales and the USA.

**November 27<sup>th</sup> 2013**  
**4-5:30pm**  
**Room MB206**

**Dr. Muna Morris-Adams, Aston University**

*"What are pigeons?" Vocabulary explanations in non-native English speaker teacher classrooms.*

This talk explores the vocabulary explanation strategies employed by novice non-native speaker teachers (NNESTs) during teaching practice sessions with 'real' students.

There is still a widespread assumption that NNESTs do not have the English language proficiency needed to be competent teachers, - an assumption which can affect both their confidence and employment prospects. Much has been written about NNESTs, but the focus has been largely on self-and other-perceptions, sense of identity and self-confidence, rather than on actual classroom performance. More evidence from classroom-based studies could help to challenge the negative stereotype of NNESTs as linguistically unfit for teaching. The study on which this talk is based will attempt to answer the following question: What impact, if any, does the language proficiency of NNESTs have on their classroom teaching?

One area where NNESTs are thought to have particular difficulty is in conveying meanings to learners in the target language (Llurda 2006), for example, during vocabulary explanations. Extracts from classrooms will illustrate the many and varied strategies which the NNESTs employed to get the meaning of words across to the students, and their target language use and the effectiveness of the strategies will be discussed.

**January 22nd 2014**  
**4-5.30 pm**  
**Room NW807**

**Dr Krzysztof Kredens (Aston University)**

*Adversarial interpreting in legal contexts – problem or solution?*

While team interpreting is promoted as best practice in some interpreting situations or contexts, in legal settings the simultaneous presence of two independently sourced interpreters can result in unexpected problems. For one thing, they will work not as a team but experts retained by what could be construed as opposing parties, and for another the defence interpreter's role will not be entirely clear, with the state-appointed linguist being the sole 'official' interpreter. Such problems can arise for example in the English legal system, where police interviews with non-English-speaking suspects are normally conducted with the assistance of one police-appointed interpreter. On occasion, however, another interpreter, one secured by the solicitor to translate during private consultation with the client is present in the interview room as well and may volunteer linguistic input. In this presentation I will ask how the presence of two interpreters in a police interview, but also in the courtroom, could impact on the communication dynamic and how it could shape the emerging narrative. I will also discuss the ethical implications of unwarranted interpreter interventions during another interpreter's performance. To illustrate my points, I will use authentic transcript data from an English police interview with a suspect.

**February 5<sup>th</sup> 2014**

**4-5.30**

**Room MB568**

**Professor Paul Meara (University of Cardiff)**

*Mapping Applied Linguistics.*

This paper is concerned with a question that has been raised by a number of prominent applied linguists (notably Guy Cook) who have attempted to identify what it is that makes Applied Linguistics a coherent research enterprise, and how the concerns of the field have changed in recent years. This important debate is largely based on subjective interpretations of the history of Applied Linguistics, and there is a serious shortage of objective analysis.

The bibliographies found at the end of research papers contain a vast amount of information that can be exploited to develop objective historical accounts of how research fields develop. A particularly useful bibliometric technique is Co-citation Analysis, which examines the way certain authors tend to be cited together in bibliographies. The analysis typically identifies clusters of authors who all work on a common theme, forming "invisible colleges" within a subject area. Analysing the growth and disappearance of these clusters over a period of time allows us to identify the changing nature of a fluid research field such as Applied Linguistics.

This paper presents a co-citation analysis of all the papers that appeared Applied Linguistics between 1980 and 2010. The data is presented in a series of seven maps which allow us to identify the main research themes in the Journal, and the relationships between these themes. The analysis partly confirms the historical accounts of the development of Applied Linguistics published by Bygate and Cook, but it also contains a number of unexpected features that do not fit with these more subjective analyses.

**February 19<sup>th</sup> 2014**

**4-5.30**

**Room MB568**

**Dr Almut Koester, University of Birmingham**

*Applying Research on Workplace and Business Discourse: Corpus-based Teaching Materials*

In this talk, I will consider ways in which research on spoken business and workplace discourse can be applied to English language teaching, particularly in the area of Business English. When considering current Business English teaching materials, there is a considerable gap between research and practice, as most of these materials are not based on research and therefore may not always accurately reflect the language and content of actual business communication. Although the use of 'authentic materials' has been popular in English Language Teaching for many years, when authentic texts are used in Business English materials, they often involve language *about* business, e.g. texts and interviews from the business media, rather than language of *doing* business, such as real business meetings or interactions. This contrasts with the wealth of research that has been carried out on naturally-occurring business and workplace interactions using discourse analysis, genre analysis, conversation analysis and corpus research.

I will argue in this talk that such research can be usefully drawn on in order contribute to the development of better and more realistic approaches and materials for teaching English for Professional Purposes. The talk focuses specifically on decision-making, which is a key activity in spoken workplace communication. I will first review findings from corpus research and discourse analysis on workplace interactions involving decision-making, and then show how these findings can be applied to developing Business English teaching materials, using real business conversations.

**March 12<sup>th</sup> 2014**

**4-5.30**

**Room MB568**

**Dr Nigel Harwood, University of Essex**

*Proofreaders and proofreading: findings from two research projects*

In UK universities L2 writers in particular are sometimes encouraged by content lecturers to seek help from a proofreader. But what is being offered in the name of 'proofreading'? What kinds of changes are made to writers' texts, how, and why? Here I report my findings from two investigations into proofreading.

The first project is an interview-based study of 16 proofreaders which investigated informants' beliefs, practices, and experiences, focusing for this talk particularly on findings relating to the proofreaders' understanding of their roles. Proofreaders regularly made use of metaphors to describe their role. Five different metaphors were used: helper, cleaner, leveller, teacher, and mediator. Informants often saw themselves as fulfilling two or more roles simultaneously, although some explicitly distanced themselves from one or more of these roles. Proof-readers talked about which areas they were (un)willing to address in their interventions. In general, while they were willing to correct grammar mistakes, they placed the onus on the writer to make more substantive changes, in consultation with their supervisor. However, many informants expressed doubts and uncertainties regarding (in)appropriate proof-reading practices.

The second project is a study of actual as well as reported practices of 14 proofreaders who talked aloud as they proofread a master's assignment which had been awarded a bare pass grade by a content lecturer. Proofreaders described what they were doing to the text and why. Post-talk-aloud interviews enabled greater exploration of the proofreaders' practices and beliefs. While there was common ground among informants regarding practices and beliefs, there was also divergence, with some informants willing to intervene more than others, understanding their role in various ways, and expressing various degrees of uncertainty regarding their role. This uncertainty, together with the evidence of substantive variations in informants' proofreading practices in both studies, suggests the need for universities to formulate proofreading guidelines to specify acceptable practices.

**March 26th 2014**

**4-5.30**

**Room MB568**

**Eleni Oikonomou, PhD candidate, King's College London**

*Space and educational practice*

In this talk I will discuss the interaction of space and human activity focusing on an educational setting. Physical spaces are usually connected with specific social practices, yet in late modernity due to various reasons, such as technological advancement or mere circumstances, a single space can be the theatre of several functions resulting in a blurring of boundaries between various spheres of social activity. Specifically, the educational setting I research, one-to-one English language lessons taking place in either teachers' or students' homes, poses the question of how an intimate space is transformed in a working place where educational practice becomes possible.

With reference to this context, I will give an overview of the 'spatial turn' in social sciences (e.g. Lefebvre, Massey), which conceptualises physical space as a social construct, thus acquiring a fluid character which can constantly be interpreted and re-interpreted by the actors through the practises they engage therein. I will focus on the ways that the educational physical space has been viewed over the years and how recent theories have transformed our understanding of school environment from a backdrop of human activity to an active factor in shaping social reality, as well as underline the multiplicity of semiotic meanings that educational settings can signify. Finally, I will discuss the particularities of the one-to-one lessons and whether these have an impact on the relationships formed and consequently on the nature of the educational practice.