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Slexipedia: Word formation and use

The neologism Slexipedia coined from the blending of SL (Second Life) and Crystal's lexipedia (Crystal, 2004) reflects the kinds of words and word-formation processes found in the vocabulary of the language of residents in the Second Life online virtual world. In addition to identifying and introducing a SL Glossary, this paper investigates the innovative word formation processes of SL vocabulary that has emerged ecologically, and the manner in which this language is used socially in conversational interaction. The corpus which the glossary entries were from was built over a 3 year period consisting of 190 thousand words by a process of participant observation of the author. Empirical observation of the corpus led to two methods of analysis; computational (quantitative) using WordSmith Tools and CFL Lexical Feature Marker, and descriptive (qualitative) methods. Frequency counts and distribution of the use of the vocabulary items led to the results that showed that in addition to new words formed according to the processes mentioned in Stageberg (1981), there were new processes like acronym-word blending and acronym compounding that haven't been accounted for previously in linguistic studies.

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Code-switching in Social Media: A case study of Arabic/English in the social networking site “Facebook”

Over the last four decades, research on code-switching (CS) elevated a phenomenon that had been traditionally regarded as language corruption to an investigation field in its own right. Many linguistic and sociolinguistic approaches have been proposed to understand both the grammar and function of CS (e.g. Myers-Scotton 1993; Auer 1984). Whether complementary or contradictory, these approaches have focused mainly on oral production of CS. What is the position with regard to writing and, more specifically, electronic writing? Are the theoretical tools that have been used for analyzing oral CS relevant for the analysis of CS in electronic writing?

In this paper, I aim to contribute new insights into grammatical and functional approaches to CS in electronic writing with a focus on Arabic social networking site “Facebook”. I take both grammatical and sociolinguistic approaches to the “Facebook” data. As regards the analysis framework, I will begin by a distinction between borrowed items and CS to exclude borrowed items from the contextual functionality of CS in electronic writing. Then, I use a heuristic approach in terms of Gumperz's (1982) notion of CS as a contextualization cue and
apply it with Auer’s (1984) theoretical framework of conversational analysis to argue that CS can be functional and meaningful in electronic conversations. Analysis of data reveals the significant functionality of CS in electronic writing. CS in electronic writing achieve similar communicative functions to CS in oral interactions. The script choice plays an important role in marking borrowed lexical items as opposed to single-item CS. Motivations for CS are also linked to technological affordability such as the lack of script-software support and sending the quickest and shortest message.

References


Jannis Androutsopoulos (jannis.androutsopoulos@uni-hamburg.de)

Networked choices: Towards understanding multilingualism in Social Media

Integrating research on computer-mediated communication and societal multilingualism, this talk outlines a framework for the study of multilingual practice in social media and exemplifies it with findings from a case study on facebook language practices. Multilingualism in social media encompasses everything language users do with their entire range of linguistic resources, mediated by keyboard-and-screen technologies, and oriented to networked audiences. In the framework proposed here, these practices are examined at three levels: a) properties of digital writtenness, including literacy competences, constraints of keyboard production, and visual language; b) access to the digital mediascape, including the ability to embed voices on profile pages, copy-and-paste practices, and access to online translation services; c) participation in ‘friends’ networks, leading to increased common ground afforded by ‘semi-public’ audiences, language choice strategies resulting out of ‘context collapse’, and an increased performance quality of networked language. In their interplay, these resources and constraints shape linguistic heterogeneity in networked communication in specific ways, leading to multilingual practices that are individualised, genre-shaped, and based on open-ended, but nonetheless stratified semiotic repertoires. As a result, networked multilingual practices are related to, but distinct from both multilingualism in offline communities and other domains of CMC. Findings from a case study on the facebook language practices of a group of Greek-background students in a German city are used to illustrate this.

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Communities in clusters: a case study of Irish language bloggers and Twitter users and their place in the multilingual web

The internet provides opportunities for the emergence of online communities of minority language users, embedded within the multilingual web. These communities represent a new and exciting way for web users to interact in their chosen languages, regardless of their location. This paper will discuss two such communities of Irish language users – in the blogosphere and on
Twitter. A social network analysis will illustrate their size and the connections between their members, exploring the role language plays in their mutual engagement with one another. It will seek to define how notions of communality are manifested in a virtual context in the small clusters of bloggers and Twitter users interacting in Irish. Discourse analysis of their interactions will describe the linguistic features that set these groups apart, shaped by the new and innovative contexts in which the language is used. It will address notions of genre and register in describing how language is adapted to different web outputs. In doing so, it will describe some of the creative strategies through which users have adapted the language to text-based computer-mediated communication: through abbreviation, code-switching, and by playing with modality. Furthermore, this paper will address some of the challenges and opportunities in adapting linguistic research methods to an online context.

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"Cool, no immediate response needed…" The blurring boundaries between synchronicity and asynchronicity in computer mediated communication

Computer-mediated communication has been here for more than 40 years now, yet the norms and rituals of online text-based interactions are still far from established. The continuously evolving communication technologies bring about new communicative situations, forcing us to flout and re-think previously existing norms of interpersonal interaction. In this presentation I draw on interactional sociolinguistics and computer mediated discourse analysis to discuss some of the new communicative situations created by text-based communication genres in general, and Instant Messaging in particular. I will examine the time-related aspect of interactions - i.e. chronemics - in more detail, and explore the effect of the blurring boundaries between synchronicity and asynchronicity.

Through naturally occurring data from a virtual team, the members of which communicate predominantly via Instant Messaging, I examine how IM is utilised in the virtual workplace, and how users adapt their discursive behaviour in the new communicative situations created by the technology in order to avoid miscommunication or being seen as impolite.

**Frobenius, Maximiliane** (m.frobenius@mx.uni-saarland.de)

The closing section of video blogs

This paper investigates the closing section of video blogs (vlogs), an asynchronous, monologic, audiovisual form of communication consisting of video footage of speakers talking into a camera. It builds on the premise that speakers model their talk on conversational interaction (cf Schegloff 1987: 222, Haviland 2007: 150). A comparison of the vlog data to conversational closings (Schegloff and Sacks 1973) shows that vloggers employ structures and lexical items familiar from conversation, e.g. topic bounding elements followed by leave-taking formulae, as in anyway, that's it for today, take care everybody, bye bye. There are strong parallels to answering machine message closings (Gold 1991, Liddicoat 1994), another mediated, asynchronous type of monologue.

Some of the data deviate from the conversational pattern in that they lack the typical elements, featuring cut-offs without an apparent vlog (or even topic) closing. Other vloggers make use of editing techniques that allow them to introduce features unknown to conversation (e.g. cuts, captions/subtitles). These seem to be borrowed from other media, such as TV and radio.
The vastly different types of closings found in vlogs demonstrate that there is not (yet) a pattern that vloggers uniformly adhere to. This paper will give an overview of the different strategies speakers use when they have to adapt to the monologue situation.

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'I don't have to display my history online': Discourse practices of securing privacy in Facebook

Disclosure in social network sites (SNSs) is the default as participation and presence are predicated on it (boyd and Marwick 2011). Yet, crafting, updating and monitoring a profile in a SNS does not necessarily entail that we have to include every single detail about ourselves. The purpose of the present paper is to explore how privacy issues affect Facebook users’ discourse practices in constructing meaningful online identities through the spectrum of two Greek case studies. I will seek to answer the following questions: Do users deliberately exclude any information because of privacy concerns? Do they leave it vague or implied? How do they manage the collapsing of contexts in relation to their intended and unintended audiences?

Relying on the precepts of discourse-centered online ethnography (Androutsopoulos 2008), a methodological approach which combines the systematic observation of selected sites of online discourse with direct engagement with its social actors, I will present a multimodal dataset of profile information, status updates, comments, video links, photos, and interview excerpts, drawn from my ongoing PhD research. In my analysis I consider such features as ambiguous reference, indirectness, presupposition, and unidentified or vaguely identified people and places.

It is shown that users adopt conscious and strenuous textual strategies to control the flow of information on their Facebook walls, enhancing thus and securing their social privacy. I argue that taking part in a networked public trying at the same time not to be public is not an oxymoron but an ‘agentic act’ (Livingstone 2008: 409) to which users resort in order to protect their identity. By means of this agentic act they also refuse to abide by the requirements of Facebook’s rigid and predetermined architecture, challenging and questioning the very definition and use of SNSs.

References


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**Trial by social media: ‘Wikiforensics’ in the Meredith Kercher case**

The murder of the British exchange student Meredith Kercher in Perugia gave rise to social media communities devoted entirely to the case. Much of the online discussion is a form of ‘wikiforensics’: the exercise whereby Internet users, as a pastime or on a freelance basis, extensively discuss the evidence, motives and modus operandi of the suspects but also judge the workings of the criminal justice. ‘Amateur-experts’ are deeply divided over the issue of innocence and guilt of the main protagonist Amanda Knox. Through their adoption of specific aspects of legal and forensic discourses within their own interactions they seek to vindicate their own position and set themselves apart from competing claim-makers.

Within the framework of critical discourse studies (e.g. Caldas-Coulthard and Iedema, 2008, van Dijk 2008, Conley and O’Barr, 1998) and metaphor studies (Kővecses, 2010 and Maslen and Deignan, 2010), we analyse the practices of two principal communities to establish how their discourses contribute to internal cohesiveness and external polarisation. We specifically focus on the significance of semantic fields and metaphorical expressions referring to concepts dirt and cleanliness (Campkin and Cox, 2007) which contribute to reconstructing the event of the murder and judging the moral character of the main protagonists. What in terms of legal discourse appears as forensic evidence becomes a rich source for metaphorising innocence and guilt. Our findings raise particular questions about the significance of race and gender in online character construction.

**References**


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**Mobile phone brand ‘tribalism’ in social media: A case for linguistic netnography.**

The purpose of my presentation will be to discuss the characteristics of a social media discourse revolving around mobile handset brands. My presentation is based on a report created by Gareth Price from Precise Brand Insight team. The report analysed English language conversations within available social media around five of the leading global mobile handset brands (iPhone, Samsung, BlackBerry, HTC and Nokia). Using data from a social media research tool Crimson Hexagon, a corpus composed of twits, Facebook statuses and forum comments containing mentions of the five mobile handset brands was built.

The analysis revealed that a large portion of opinions about mobile phones gathered from the social media expresses strongly felt emotional attachment to brands that at the same time is transient and transferable. This fleeting loyalty, which is the defining characteristic of the
so called ‘mobile tribes’, has been often attributed to brand marketing activity of handset manufacturers. My presentation will offer an interpretation focusing on individuals’ endeavours to build transient online identities. I will argue that there is more to the ‘mobile tribes’ phenomenon than corporate marketing, and that such deeply felt attachment to consumer goods should rather be understood in the context of wider modernisation and globalisation processes.

I will conclude by stressing the restrictions of an analysis based entirely on online content, in which limited knowledge about local identities of participants and difficulty in tracing the flow of interactions severely impede researcher’s ability to understand the context.

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“A bit too skinny for me”: Evaluating virtual bodies in Internet dating online-offline activities

Analysts have demonstrated that adolescents – when entering the heterosexual market – can engage in two different roles: as a commodity or as a broker (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 2003, Kothoff 2008). The negotiation is so to speak not merely constituted by two persons – a man and a woman – but also includes subsidiary participants who co-act in the process of constructing certain persons as acceptable and attractive objects of desire. Homosocial constructions of desire have primarily been examined among adolescent groups in offline settings (Eckert 1996, Georgakpouloou 2008) and in literary studies (Sedgwick 1985). As the Internet is becoming a key social context for people seeking romantic partners, the question of how subsidiary participants take part in online flirtation emerges.

Based on audiovisual recordings in Danish of heterosexual female friends who sit in front of a computer and together engage in online dating activities, this presentation shows how virtual male objects are jointly constructed and evaluated as desirable or non-desirable. Using the screen tracking software, Hypercam, the present paper investigates online heterosexual activities on Internet dating sites in relation to simultaneous offline homosocial interaction. The recordings give a new and direct insight into the interrelations between online and offline modes by showing how acts within social media are both evaluated and initiated through offline interaction.

Interactional multimodal analysis demonstrates how women, by explicitly evaluating the physical appearance and sexual attraction of the male objects, negotiate stereotypical gender roles through the positioning of themselves as agentive subjects in the dating act. At the same time, the humorous and sometimes disparaging evaluations function as common entertainment and strengthening of the offline homosocial relation.

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Seeing Red: social networks and football fan activism

Since the mid-1980s digital technologies such as email, mobile phones, interactive websites and, more recently, social network sites such as Twitter and Facebook, have transformed the means and opportunities for activists to “communicate, collaborate and demonstrate” (Garrett, 2006). They have provided means by which the comparatively resource-poor and power-less form communities, forge identities, and come together to challenge the resource-rich and powerful (Diani, 2000). The same period has witnessed economic globalisation and the mobilisation against it.

Football has not escaped the forces of marketisation and globalisation, with leading English clubs once owned by local businessmen now floated on the stock-market and owned by Russian oligarchs, American corporations and Arab petro-billionaires. Inevitably, this has led to
resistance amongst fans who have seen not only the traditions of ‘their’ clubs undermined but even the very existence of those clubs threatened.

This paper explores the use of social networking sites and multimodal resources by a group of Liverpool Football Club (LFC) supporters organised in and by the first ever football supporters’ union, the Spirit of Shankly, in pursuit of its successful campaign to oust the then owners, American businessmen Tom Hicks and George Gillett.

The paper will consider the role that social media can play in creating, defining, fostering and drawing on a specific sense of ‘community’ and identity and providing opportunities for the creative expression of the same through both online and offline interaction. It will argue that the social media aspect may best not be considered as an independent phenomenon, but needs to be understood as part of the broader cultural, political and social world of those engaging in and through it.

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'Ezekiel 33:6-9 is clear': Evangelical Christian use of Biblical metaphor to take dominant positions in YouTube interaction

In online arguments between Evangelical Christians on YouTube, Biblical text is frequently presented as an authoritative mediator in disputes about appropriate belief and behaviour. However, as Biblical language and exegesis are often disputed, the same Biblical text can be employed by different users to take conflicting positions. Biblical parables are particularly problematic as they present foundational Christian beliefs, said to be the authoritative word of God, in metaphorical terms. Use of Biblical metaphor therefore presents a unique affordance for Christians, as Biblical metaphor indexes not only the passages from which the metaphors are derived, but also the authoritative voice of the text, potentially becoming a resource to dominate other Christians.

Using metaphor-led discourse analysis (Cameron & Maslen, 2010) grounded in a discourse-centred online ethnography (Androutsopoulos, 2008), I will present a case study of YouTube interaction in which an Evangelical Christian justifies use of the term 'human garbage' through development and exegesis of metaphors from a Biblical parable. In response, another Evangelical Christian challenges the first user by developing metaphors from and doing exegesis of the same parable. Analysis will show that dynamic use of Biblical metaphor revoices the authority of the text in individual user exegesis and interpretation. Analysis of metaphor use will also show that in revoicing Biblical text, users attempt to dominate and assert moral authority over each other.

References

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Welkum to Cheezeland: Linguistic Features of lolspeak and its Relation to Attitudes and Identity

As online language started to attract increased academic interest in the last years, it is important to move from a speculative and rudimentary approach to one which is based on
empirically relevant data. Therefore, it is best to rely on corpora for the linguistic analysis of CMC. In order to study the highly creative usage of language called lolspeak on the Lolcats ‘n’ Funny Pictures of Cats blog, I collected and annotated a corpus of user comments consisting of approximately 2000 posts (36,000 words).

Lolspeak shows considerable variation from Standard English on the levels of orthography, syntax and lexis. A wide range of processes can be identified when it comes to lolspeak orthography, which is also reflected in the fact that more than 20,000 words are tagged as nonstandard in the complete corpus. Lolspeak lexical items are words which are specific to the context of the lolcat-blog, often characterized by a high degree of linguistic creativity.

The usage of lolspeak can be regarded as in-group marker. Sometimes the intended message can become partially or completely unintelligible for people who are not experienced lolspeak users. Items created with linguistic creativity, such as “bite a mins” for “vitamins”, need some additional effort on part of the reader to decode. In fact, the blog readers are aware of lolspeak’s in-group marker status, and on several occasions new readers criticize its unintelligibility. Some users consider this variety to be context-dependent, judging it unsuitable for the discussion of serious topics. Others advocate the use of lolspeak throughout the blog. Commenters also play with their identity and even assume the role of cats. This can be seen in posts where commenters switch from a human identity using standard orthography to a feline perspective using lolspeak.

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The emergence of migrant-regulated alternative spaces for accessing technology communication from the margins: The case of Locutorios

Current transnational trajectories are largely orchestrated by the ICTs (Castells, 2000), the social glue of twenty-first-century migrants (Vertovec, 2009). At the same time, today the nation-state and the telecommunications sector act as a technopolitical block which regiments these mobile citizens and gatekeeps their access to fully-fledged citizenship in the communication technology realm, as well (Ros et al., 2007) - both establish a series of legal, economic and, above all, linguistic barriers which incapacitate those living at the bottom of the social ladder.

From the field of linguistic anthropology, in this paper I explore the emergence of a unique transnational space, the locutorios or migrant-tailored call shops, as the new subversive spaces for migrants who are excluded from the network society to access a wide range of communication services from the margins, in a bottom-up manner. I claim that locutorios subvert the nation-state’s surveillance systems by providing SIM-cards to those who are undocumented. Besides, they also challenge multinationals by offering cheaper calls; in-group regulated flexible payment methods and loans; and, above all, a group of language workers who act as linguistic brokers and mediators by bridging many communication divides. This new wordforce (Heller, 2010) provides real multilingual customer services in the non-elite allochtonous migrants’ codes, and dial telephone numbers or fill in money transfer for those who are non-literate or non-socialised in the Western-oriented, monolingual bureaucratic practices and literacy regimes.

I conclude that locutorios are a window into how migrants appropriate and self-distribute communicative capital in their own spaces and through their own means, setting up their own transnational networking sites, inserting themselves into the established regimes, and connecting the unconnected from below.

The data include two years of fieldwork in Barcelona (2007/09); in-depth interviews to locutorio users and workers and a wide range of documentary materials (SMS, posters, ringtones).

References
Sokół, Małgorzata (msokol@autograf.pl)

Scholarly communication in Social Media: The challenges of the emergent genre of academic weblog

The paper aims at discussing the role of the emergent genre of academic weblog in scholarly exchange, and the challenges that academic blogging brings for academia in general and the linguistic study of Web-based genres. The academic weblog is a genre in the making that may be regarded as an informal response to the “publish or perish” policy and is evidence that we might be on the brink of a major paradigm shift as regards academic publishing practices. Academic weblogs are viewed as a primarily self-oriented genre, but with the potential to support collaboration and group interaction. They are also a hybrid genre, less rigorously constructed, fluid and permeable, characterized by a high level of personalization, and with an unclear status as far as recognition among peers is concerned.

The theoretical discussion of the status of academic weblogs as an emergent genre of scholarly exchange will be supported by a quantitative-qualitative analysis of a corpus of English academic blogs, grounded in the sociopragmatic approaches to the analyses of Web-based discourse. My aim will be to determine the level and characteristics of interaction and collaboration in a corpus of blog entries together with their accompanying comment sections. Content analysis of the research material will aim at establishing the function of the posts and their comments through identification of their rhetorical purpose(s), the analysis of the entries’ structure (presence of multimodal- vs. text-only interaction), and the level of interactivity in order to establish the degree of self- vs. audience-orientation of weblogs under investigation. The preliminary findings of the study reveal the bloggers’ need to be socially recognized by the blogs’ users, e.g. through the use of interactivity resources. Still, as information exchange seems to be a major use of academic blogging, users prove to be focused more on obtaining their self-oriented goals rather than on contributing to the collectivity.

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Deixis and the micro-coordination of social life in mobile technologies

With social media apps becoming a fixture of current mobile technologies, the time is ripe to take stock of previous research on earlier mobile services (e.g. text-messaging and mobile phone conversations) and discuss their resonance to the growing area of social media research. This paper explores the issue of social presence in mobile technologies, with a focus on referential practices of deixis in text-messaging. Deixis is employed as a tool that allows us to look into the contextual aspects to which users of text-messaging orient, in order to fulfil specific tasks. According to Hanks (2005, p. 191), deixis as referential practice invokes a web of the ‘elementary social relations of speaker, addressee, and object, and the phenomenal context of utterance’. These contextual relations support ‘our sense of co-presence, […] and of the immediacy of the spatial-temporal world in which speech takes place’ (ibid). By exploring deixis as referential practice, this paper discusses the issue of how co-participants communicate these relations in mobile contexts.
The study analyses a sample of texts exchanged by young people in Greece (summer 2003-spring 2004). It reveals the proliferation of deictic references in mundane acts of micro-coordinating social activities. The data analysis suggests that the current location of the summoned party is used as a contextual resource in pre-summoning sequences that attempt to negotiate and coordinate the actual summons of an imminent telephone call. At the same time, my participants spatially and temporally position and re-position themselves towards ongoing social arrangements. Habitual engagement with people, places and activities allows participants to (re)formulate locational references in line with the interaction unfolding. Such findings are discussed in relation to current advances in social media research, implicating an increased blurring of boundaries between face-to-face and a range of mediated interactions.

References

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Managing conversations on social network sites: language choice and the collapsed audience

As a site where an increasing amount of communication takes place, Facebook is characterised by various features which impact on how people interact. Chief amongst these features is a particular interface between what is considered public and what is kept private; one that appears to differ from perceptions of privacy that predate social media. However, what we see on social network sites (SNSs) like Facebook is not necessarily an erosion of the value of privacy, but a nuanced response to a complex communicative situation. For example, on SNSs ‘multiple audiences’ are collapsed, so that family, friends, colleagues and acquaintances are potentially addressed as one, and messages intended for particular individuals or ‘communities’ may be composed with a wider audience in mind. In response to complex addressivity issues, SNS users have been seen to develop various strategies for targeting certain individuals and excluding others.

Language choice – the decision to draw on the resources of one language or another at any one point in an interaction, as well as how and when to code-switch between them – is one strategy used in multilingual interactions to indicate the extent to which a posting is considered to be ‘private’ or that it is intended for more ‘public’ consumption. The focus in my talk is on the use of English (alongside other languages) by Facebook communities whose members share a first language, and its use as a lingua franca between groups who do not. For both types of group, English extends the resources available to users in managing online conversations within the ‘collapsed audience’ of a semi-public SNS. Language choices made on Facebook are also shaped by users’ responses to other features of the site, such as its asynchronous nature, the possibility of translocal interaction, the particular communicative dynamic that Facebook affords, and the norms that emerge around new practices.

My talk raises questions for understanding language use and interaction on social media: in what ways might a ‘collapsed audience’ shape what people say, how they say it, and the language they say it in? What linguistic strategies might users employ in negotiating the line between what is ‘private’ and what is ‘public’ – and what does their interaction reveal about what both public and private mean to people online? And how might users’ language choices shape, and be shaped by, the type of interaction taking place on SNSs? The purpose of the talk is not necessarily to provide answers, but to highlight these important questions for social media research in particular, and sociolinguistic study more generally.

Tanskanen, Sanna-Kaisa
“You think it’s appropriate to make offensive comments?”: metapragmatic negotiation of norms in an online student community

Research on discussion forums has revealed that in this type of computer-mediated discourse “metacommunication is an important argumentative resource in the negotiation of norms and expectations” (Kleinke & Bös forthcoming; see also Tanskanen 2007). This study looks at metapragmatic comments, which are not concerned with the topic of discussion but comment on the communicative act itself; participants use them in order to make visible their assessment of their own and their fellow participants’ contributions (Hübler & Bublitz 2007; Tanskanen 2007). With material from The Student Room (TSR; thestudentroom.co.uk), which advertises itself as the “world’s biggest online student community”, the present study shows how the members of the community use metapragmatic comments for negotiating the norms of the community.

The analysis will reveal what qualifies as inappropriate language use in the community and how the members (re)negotiate the norms of appropriate online behaviour. If “criticism, conflict, and the emergence of means of conflict resolution” are among the characteristics of an online community as Herring (2004) claims, observing how the members of TSR allow themselves to criticise and to be criticised will also help us evaluate the usefulness of the term “online community”.

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“Bed Intruder (the interview)”: the role of genre in shaping the notion of context, text, interaction and community in social media.

Periodically a video surfaces on YouTube that finds itself part of a social media phenomenon. “Bed Intruder (the interview)” (Antoine Dodson, July 29, 20101) is such a video, having spawned more than 46 million hits to-date, numerous intertextual series of related videos, in-person interviews, online commentaries, as well as merchandise, ringtones and an I-tunes song based on semiotic elements of the video. As an internet meme, “Bed Intruder (the interview)” is a productive place for exploring language use, linguistic ideology, race, gender and class in the virtual spaces of social media.

Nonetheless, it is the linguistic performance featured in the original interview – drawing from the African American performative speech genre of Signification (Labov 1972; Mitchell-Kernan 1972) -- that is worth analytical consideration by Applied Linguists for the manner in which the performance (and the on/offline reactions to the performance) problematizes the concepts of context, text, interaction and community. Context, for example, is complicated by the situations
that gave rise to the video – the intrusion, the interview, and the editing – and shape the style and interpretation of the performance. Likewise, text is reconsidered to acknowledge the role the body (gestures and paralinguistic uses of language) plays in language and meaning-making within this speech genre. Finally, interactions are mediated; they need not be dyadic nor face-to-face, rather, they are heteroglossic, multivoiced, dialogic responses addressed to an audience that is real, imagined and/or anticipated (Volosinov 1973), stretching the very boundaries of community.

The following paper takes a multimodal and dialogic discourse analytical approach to analyzing the language of “Bed Intruder (the interview)” to demonstrate the ability of the genre of signification to push against traditional analytical concepts and simultaneously demonstrate the creative (poetic) and pragmatic functions of language in use in a social media context.

1 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EzNhaLUT520

References


Unger, Johann (j.unger@lancaster.ac.uk)

Confronting critical discourse analysis with social media

In this paper, I examine some of the theoretical and methodological challenges faced by researchers who wish to approach data found in social media from a critical discourse analysis (CDA) perspective. While there is a large and continually growing volume of work in computer-mediated discourse analysis (CMDA, see Herring 2008), and there have been a number of successful attempts to apply CDA in online contexts (e.g. Wright & Wodak 2006), CDA scholars have traditionally been rather reluctant to engage with new media (Mautner 2005), and CMDA scholars have not necessarily engaged with the socio-political contexts of data.

When faced with 'web 2.0' phenomena such as social networking, crowd-sourcing and participatory media, current understandings of context found in CDA are not always adequate. This is especially interesting to investigate in relation to activism and political resistance, where offline, online and hybrid practices rapidly evolve in response to political events, as could be seen in recent revolutions and political upheaval (e.g. the Arab Springs and the Occupy movement). Different technologies, which are often controlled by governing elites, are nevertheless adapted and exploited by grass-roots activists to achieve their aims. Ultimately, CDA is advantageously placed, as a loose, adaptable theoretical approach rather than a rigid methodological framework, to investigate these new contexts, but it requires new tools to fully realise its potential.

References


Zara, Maya (zara.maya@rocketmail.com)
The BBC Asian Network: Code switching and cultural bricolage

Rampton (1999) identified that the transnational flow of populations can result in migrant communities developing their own ethnic minority media. The BBC Asian Network is an example of this as the radio station caters for various Asian and British Asian backgrounds, native languages and musical interests. The home languages such as Urdu and Punjabi have largely been restricted to private domains, but this multimedia platform promotes the use of these languages in a public sphere. The result of this is both a cultural and language bricolage, (Rampton, 1999) which is expressed through code switching practices.

Listeners use text, email, social networking sites and live calls to communicate with the DJs’. Code switching is often initiated by the radio presenter through specific features such as ‘every desi (person of Asian origin) knows how to.’ Listeners then respond and frequently continue the use of code switching. Thus, code switching is used to index cultural norms and collectively celebrate these as a humorous part of an Asian identity.

Georgakopoulou (2003) noted that CMC can encourage diversity of voices, ideologies and expressions of difference. Both DJs’ and listeners’ code switch to express differences in viewpoints between the older and younger generations. Thus, code switching is purposeful to index traditional and modern cultural views. This also illustrates play with identity as it is often humorous (Bechar-Israeli, 1995; Turkle, 1995).

This paper investigates the use of code switching on the radio network and asks two central questions.

1) To what extent is code switching intentionally used to promote a common sense of cultural identity?

2) What purpose does code switching have, and does this vary according to the particular radio presenter and type of show?

Data has been collected by recording and transcribing live shows and monitoring social networking sites.

Workshop Wiki

You will find the wiki to be used in preparation for the workshop activities at:

http://languageandsocialmedia.pbworks.com/