New Methods for New Media Summer School

13th - 14th September 2019, Queens University Belfast

ABSTRACTS

Keynotes

Prof. Dr. Michael Beisswenger, University of Duisberg-Essen, Germany
What is new about communication in 'new' media? Rethinking computer-mediated communication from a linguistic and corpus-modelling perspective.

Internet-based communication technologies have been popular and used extensively for over 25 years, and linguistic research on *computer-mediated communication* (*CMC*) has been accompanying emerging communicative practices and their effects on language change since the early 90s. From its very beginning, linguistic CMC research has had a strong empirical focus by basing its hypotheses and findings on the analysis of data collected from CMC environments. Acknowledging the emergence of (new) media linguistics as a broad and highly dynamic field of research and in view of the huge impact of CMC on language, society and culture, CMC has recently also become increasingly interesting for corpus linguists and for the providers of linguistic corpora and digital research infrastructures in the humanities. In the past years, corpus projects for several languages and for a broad range of CMC genres (for an overview see *CLARIN: CMC Corpora*) have been aiming to close the "CMC gap" in the corpus landscape and to contribute to the creation of a language resource infrastructure that supports the corpus-based study of CMC and the comparative analysis of linguistic phenomena in CMC corpora with the discourse represented in corpora of other type, i.e. spoken conversations or genres of edited text (cf. Beißwenger et al. 2017).

One main prerequisite for the combination, connection and merging of corpora is the existence of a widely acknowledged format for the representation of resources of different types. Such a format does not exist so far, though there have been several suggestions of how a basic format for the representation of CMC could look like.

Since 2013, a special interest group within the *Text Encoding Initiative* (*TEI*) has created and discussed approaches toward the modelling of CMC corpora based on an established encoding framework in the field of digital humanities (TEI P5). I will open my talk by

providing an overview of current issues in creating CMC corpora. I will then discuss the benefits and challenges of creating a model for the representation of CMC corpora using an acknowledged de-facto standard like the TEI. The challenge of creating a formal model of corpus representation leads back to an issue which has been at the core of the linguistic modelling of the subject since the very beginning of CMC research: the question of whether CMC adds to the existing genres of written and spoken discourse, of text and conversation, as an innovative "third kind" or simply as a new variant. I will discuss this issue in detail from a linguistic perspective and present a suggestion for a new answer to the old question of what is new (i.e. innovative) about communication in 'new' media. In a final step I will show how the linguistic modelling of the subject can be adopted for the creation of a basic TEI model for the representation of CMC corpora (cf. Lüngen et al. 2016, Beißwenger 2018) – and how the linguistic modelling of the subject and the "formal" modelling of corpus data can be regarded as two sides of the same coin from a digital humanities point of view.

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Dr. Ruth Page, University of Birmingham, UK
Social Media Narratives.

In the last 15 years, the stories told in social media contexts have presented researchers with opportunities to question what counts as a 'narrative' and to apply more contextual approaches from narrative analysis to a wide range of storytelling examples, ranging from blogs to wikis and social networking sites (e.g. Hoffman, 2010, Page, 2012, Dayter, 2014). While this has brought to the fore key conceptual and methodological challenges, such as how to deal with 'big data' and the recontextualisation of stories across different sites, these storytelling examples have for the most part concentrated on verbal forms of narration. However, the increasing use of image-sharing sites and apps present further challenges in terms of the highly visual nature of the ephemeral stories that are shared 'in the moment' (Georgakopoulou, 2017). I will show how the mediated narrative analysis that I developed to analyse shared stories (Page, 2018) can be applied to these multimodal narratives, using a selection of the Featured Stories from Snapchat and a selection of Stories used by social media influencers in their Instagram accounts. These case studies show the different ways in the modality and media affordances of these stories are put to different ideological ends, where the Snapchat Featured stories promote a discourse of 'us-ness' in times of political uncertainty, while the Instagram stories are used to increase the relatability used by the influencers to build their brands and increase audience engagement. These stories are embedded in wider 'sharing economies' (John, 2017), where the mediated contexts of narration which co-opt personal stories for other commercialised ends.

Methods Sessions

Methods session 1:
Dr. George Bailey, University of York, UK
Working with Twitter data in R

Twitter provides a rich source of data for use in the social sciences, all freely available in the public domain and easily accessible through the official Twitter API. In this workshop, we cover how to use the R statistical computing environment in order to both collect and analyse Twitter data.

Methods session 2:
Dr. Piia Varis, Tilburg University, Netherlands
Digital Ethnography

Digital ethnography is still a relatively new approach, but increasingly used to understand how digitalisation influences our lives. This workshop provides you with a basic understanding of digital ethnography. After a short theoretical introduction, we move on to a more 'hands on' part with a focus on digital ethnographic analysis of social media discourse. The workshop requires no prior knowledge of (digital) ethnographic research.

Methods session 3
Dr. Ruth Page, University of Birmingham, UK
Analysing Images using the UAM Image Tool

In this workshop we will cover the key principles involved in analysing visual data as part of multimodal discourse analysis. The topics include how to choose software, developing a coding scheme, creating an annotation manual, assessing reliability and using a particular piece of software (the UAM Image Tool).

Lightning Talks

Adrian Yip, Queen Mary University of London
A corpus-assisted critical discourse analytical approach to new media in sports

Mediated sport is a crucial site where gender ideologies and power relations are repeatedly constructed and contested (Messner, 2013). Numerous studies in the last few decades continue to suggest that female athletes are rendered invisible and their athleticism and achievement are often trivialized. Nonetheless, the increasingly popular new media represent a potential site that facilitates women's agency and counters traditional gendered discourses. More participants are engaged in the production of media/gender discourses, challenging the polarization of athleticism and feminism (Bruce, 2016).

My research investigates how female and male professional tennis players are represented in the new media. The dataset, which consists of texts and images, was assembled during the 2018 Wimbledon Championships from six sports news websites and three social networking platforms including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. In this talk, I will illustrate with an example how I analysed the data by integrating corpus tools (such as frequency lists, keywords, concordances and collocations) into Fairclough's (1995) sociocultural approach to critical discourse analysis. Kress & van Leeuwen's (2006) visual grammar and van Leeuwen's (2008) social actor network were also drawn on. The importance of a multimodal lens in deciphering gendered discourses in the new media will be discussed.

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Dominika Kovacova, Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic
"Instagirls: The Construction of Celebrity on Social Media Platforms".

My project focuses on the language of female users of Instagram who have gained online popularity and a considerable influence thanks to their original social media behaviour. The work revolves around a proposed classification model which defines five most prominent categories of posts employed by Instafamous users. A dataset consisting of posts uploaded by five Instagrammers is studied both synchronically and diachronically to reveal new insights into the process of celebrity construction. First and foremost, the proposed categories of posts are examined for recurrent linguistic practices that Instagrammers employ for the purposes of their self-presentation and identity performance. Furthermore, since Instagram posts consist of both textual and visual elements, the analysis is largely multimodal and

considers the interrelationship between the two semiotic modes. Functions of hashtags, tags and emoji, which form an inseparable part of Instagram, are also examined and compared with their role on other social media platforms. In summary, the objective of this project is to shed more light on the construction of celebrity online and to propose a novel classification of Instagram posts that could arguably be applied to other social media.

Merryn Davies-Deacon, Queen's University, Belfast
Crowdsourcing dictionary entries in major and minoritised languages

This project will examine the use of online crowdsourcing by dictionaries and terminology databases, focusing on two contrasting examples. The Collins English Dictionary is a long-established and well-known dictionary published in the UK, which began inviting submissions through crowdsourcing in 2012 along with the launch of its full online version: it typically receives up to 100 submissions each month. TermBret is a division of the language office regulating Breton, a regional language of France, which maintains an online database of recommended terms and also regularly solicits users' suggestions for translations of specific French words. With data from the two websites, and additional information provided by the staff responsible for both services, this project will use both large-scale quantitative analysis and a more fine-grained look at the types of words and definitions put forward, aiming to investigate how these reveal attitudes towards language and who owns it, what sort of person engages with crowdsourcing of this type and what this might reflect about issues of representation and diversity, and whether this sort of feature is successful in meeting its aims.

Nastasia Griffioen, Radboud University Nijmegen
Improved Assessment of Quantity and Quality of Social Media Use through Stimulated Recall

Current research into the effects of social media use on psychological wellbeing provides a highly mixed picture [1-5]. Recently, a call for a new methodological lens emerged; one that focuses more on quality of social media use rather than quantity [6,7]. Our novel *stimulated recall* paradigm implements a number of elements that fill the gaps currently present in social media and wellbeing research. Objective data are collected regarding users' social media behaviours through video footage and in-phone data, and subsequently used for a structured "stimulated recall interview", in which objective data are reviewed together with the participant in an act of 'co-research'. Details such as the reasons for their use (e.g. boredom) and processes surrounding their use (e.g. with whom, what exactly) are discussed and visualised in a so-called "stimulated recall chart". Our ongoing study (current $n = 61$) implementing this paradigm suggest that this method is experienced as pleasant by participants in spite of its personal and intensive nature. The stimulated recall paradigm offers interesting and necessary new avenues for approaching social media use, addressing aspects of use that have thus far remained underexposed. Answers to questions such as "Why do young people use social media?" are now within reach, which is an important step forward in the field of social media use and wellbeing research.

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Philip Doyle, Dublin City University
Examining the social construction of meaning in nonfiction cinematic VR, using multimodal discourse and dramaturgical analysis.

Nonfiction cinematic VR productions (CVR) are considered here as *social situations* performed by filmed subject and spectator alike. Drawing on theories of performativity in nonfiction, the filmed subject is considered as enacting their identities on a stage determined in part by the constraints of filming: In CVR it is the 360° VR camera around which they perform.

The VR camera positions and constructs the spectator in a manner similar to conventional film-viewing but with additional bodily agency that comes with omnidirectional perspective. The perceptual realism achieved by cinematic VR (as a photographic-immersive form) fosters a level of presence and identification between the spectator and the filmed subject that prompts a co-performance of sorts where meaning emerges in a manner specific to CVR as the subject and spectator negotiate its stage.

As a study of an immersive filmic form, multimodal discourse analysis (MMDA) allows for the combining of existing methods of discourse analysis developed for the film image with diverse analytical tools apt in examining the body in space (architecture and proxemics for example). The sociological component is addressed through the dramaturgical theories of Erving Goffman whose ideas center on meaning as emerging as engagements between participants in micro-social situations. By analyzing CVR as a series of perceived micro-engagements between the spectator and the filmed subject on the CVR stage, a picture emerges of how meaning is constructed in the CVR text.

Shiyu ZHENG (Sharon), Warwick University
Digital media for Chinese fans' transcultural engagement: stimulus for networked individualism

Due to the restriction of foreign TV products in China, Chinese fans have formed into their featured fan community of foreign TV series via Chinese digital media. Chinese digital media sites such as Douban, Youku, Bilibili, Post Bar have attracted a great number of fans to engage in participatory culture and promoted foreign TV to a large extent. These digital media become easily accessible and available for fans in different regions to access foreign media products, adapt scenarios, discuss contents, share comments, construct communities, etc. Meanwhile, the digital media present their featured functions to archive and profile user contents. My research focuses on how Chinese fans use digital media to transnationally engage in the participatory culture of a British TV series and build up networked individualism. In this project, I will particularly highlight the importance of Chinese digital media to help Chinese netizens overcome the transcultural barriers and form into their featured communities via networked individualism. Different from the general communities formed, the cross-cultural fandom has utilised Chinese new media to form the communal identity and build up their networked individualism.

Thomas Chukwuma Ijere, Northumbria University at Newcastle
An International Study of the impact of New Technologies on Political Communication during Elections

The study is a comparative work that seek to define across three contexts (i.e. UK, US and Nigeria), contemporary practices in political communication. Methodologically, the study relies on interviews, documents and audio records for empirical analysis. The study's contribution is an operationalised framework for furthering comparative exploration of emerging campaign practices worldwide. Theoretically, the study seeks to advance understanding in the explanation of cross contextual convergence in political communication practices in an era of trans-nationalised media. The 5-minute presentation during the Summer School will focus on highlighting these elements of the study as well as the study's research methodology-showing key indicators for justifying case selection.

Xixiang Zhao, UCD, Dublin
Conflictual Interaction in Computer-Mediated Communication

With the rise of the use of e-communication media, the growth in openly conflictual interactions has attracted the attention of scholars (e.g., Graham, 2007; Bou-Franch & Garces-Couejos Blitvich, 2014ab). Due to being a less socially controlled environment, the Internet, or specific parts thereof, constitutes a space for relatively uninhibited behavior and self-exposure, which often involves openly impolite and face threatening behaviors. The internet, therefore, constitutes a prime space for the exploration of the genesis, development, and resolution of both overt and covert conflictual behaviors. This study aims to explore online conflicts with a view to creating a model of conflictual interaction on Twitter that is to show how the conflictual interaction on CMC is initiated, intensified and controlled.

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