



EUCOR English PhD Conference 2011

Strasbourg, Friday December 9, 2011

MISHA, salle de la Table ronde



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4rth Annual EUCOR Trinational PhD Conference - Dec 9, 2011

MISHA, 5, allée du Général Rouvillois, Strasbourg



10:00 - 11:00

Welcome and Coffee

11:00 - 11:30

Marie-Thérèse RUDOLF von ROHR

Basel

Manufacturing consent: Persuasion involving risk situations in online health sites

11:30 - 12:00

Chair
Mélanie Meunier

Laurence CRISTINA

Strasbourg

Propaganda and Politics in the Women's Social and Political Union, Great Britain, 1903-1918.

12:00 - 12:30

Derek GOTTLEB

Basel

Bright Things Come to Confusion: Literary Scholarship and the Possibility of Responsive Knowledge

12:30 - 1:45

Lunch break

1:45 - 2:15

Michael PERCILLIER

Freiburg

Syntax unites, accent divides: English in Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia

2:15 - 2:45

Florent PEREK

Freiburg

Rethinking grammatical meaning and its relation to lexical usage

2:45 - 3:15

Fabien CURIE

Strasbourg

Competitors or Allies? The NAACP, the Communist Party and the Issue of Civil Rights (1929-1941)

3:15 - 3:30

Coffee break

3:30 - 4:00

Barbara MULLER

Strasbourg

Metaphors and similes in some Shakespearean tragedies

4:30 - 5:00

Chair
Michael Federspiel

Golnaz SHAMS

Freiburg

Collectives and Mentalities in Drama: Intermental Thought on Stage



EUCOR English PhD Conference 2011

CHAIR: Mélanie Meunier

11:00 – 11:30

Marie-Thérèse RUDOLPH VON ROHR (Basel) - **Manufacturing consent: Persuasion involving risk situation in online health sites**

This study explores the use of persuasive language on selected peer-to-peer as well as professional sites covering health risks. Since the Internet is most often used to find health information (cf. Richardson 2005; Camerini et al. 2010) and the enthusiasm for its possibilities -such as providing opportunities for networking for patients or reducing power asymmetries between lays and experts- continues (Zufferey et al. 2010; Camerini et al. 2010), it is fundamental to examine how health risks are constructed linguistically online. Equally, how the ideological underpinnings of many Western societies, where health has been relegated to a matter of individual behaviour, pan out online need to be analysed (cf. Burgess 2008, etc.).

The main focus is on how persuasion and power are interlinked in an attempt to align the audience on these websites. My research interests lie in what realization patterns of persuasion can be found, how expertise is brought about, and what warranting strategies are used to make websites/ advice credible and how power asymmetries are dealt with linguistically (cf. Locher 2010) Additionally, the ideology of “the empowered patient” is examined, if and how it is situationally invoked and linguistically mobilised on the websites, thus attempting to attend Seale (2003) who pleaded for an analysis of how the notion of “empowerment” can be exploited.

Persuasive strategies are studied qualitatively using a discourse-analytic framework and Herring’s faceted classification scheme for CMD (2007). Currently, the study is in the stage of data sampling, therefore there are no results yet.

The results will add to previous studies on health risks online. Further, it will add to the understanding of persuasive communication from a discourse-analytical stance.

11:30 – 12:00

Laurence CRISTINA (Strasbourg) – **Propaganda and Politics in the *Women's Social and Political Union*, Great Britain, 1903-1918.**

The Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), founded by Emmeline Pankhurst and her daughter Christabel in 1903, remains until today the most famous, but also the most controversial suffragist organisation. Indeed not everybody agrees with the means they used to achieve their goal – the right to vote for women on the same terms as men – but we have to admit that their use of propaganda was particularly well handled.

Not all historians agree on the actual definition of the term “propaganda”, but the propagandistic means of the WSPU to attempt to influence the opinions, attitudes and behaviour of the population and the politicians were mainly books, pamphlets, photographs, periodicals as well as speeches and meetings.

The profusion of propaganda used by the WSPU towards the “outside” made me understand that the suffragettes – as they were identified – not only intended to convince the public and politicians that women should have the vote but the way they directed propaganda also towards the “inside” of the organisation sheds light on the politics of the Pankhursts and the way they led the WSPU.

That is the reason why in this study, I will try and analyse the link between the propaganda and the politics of the WSPU and will mostly focus on the various periodicals as a way to account for the lack of democracy of the WSPU as well as its impact on suffragism.

12:00 – 12:30

Derek GOTTLIEB (Basel) - **Bright Things Come to Confusion: Literary Scholarship and the Possibility of Responsive Knowledge**

Examining the magical device of the western flower and its love juice, as it appears in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, this paper argues that the play affords a vision of the (real) world's enchantment and of the ways in which we, as literary scholars and as ordinary people, find ourselves compelled to reject or ignore it, as such an enchantment marks the limitations of subjective will, objective reason, and sovereign rationality in accounts of the experience of being human. This paper further argues that modes of explaining the western-flower device as either obviously false to lived experience or in need of translation into the language of (neurophysiological or psychotropic) causation equally miss an essential truth that the device reveals about ourselves, the nature of the world we inhabit, the languages that we speak, and the role of literature as art with respect to all of the above. I attempt to offer a mode of scholarly discourse that depends on response rather than representation without, somehow, sacrificing its claim to scholarship.

Michael PERCILLIER (Freiburg) – *Accent unites, syntax divides? Varying degrees of nativisation of English in Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia*

Due to its complex colonial history, the region of Southeast Asia comprises countries and territories that use English as a second language as well as countries where English is a foreign language. This diverse constellation of nations with different colonial backgrounds allows for a comparative analysis of English in neighbouring *English as a Second Language* (ESL) and *English as Foreign Language* (EFL) countries. Besides giving insights on the differences between ESL and EFL forms of English, this type of analysis can shed light into the genesis of postcolonial varieties of English. This is particularly the case for countries sharing a substrate language but which do not share a colonial history. One such example of a substrate language spoken in countries with different colonial backgrounds is Malay, which is spoken in the ESL countries Singapore and Malaysia and the EFL country Indonesia.

By performing a comparative analysis of two postcolonial varieties of English and a neighbouring variety of learner English, the study aims to provide an insight into the genesis of postcolonial Englishes and to question the current ESL/EFL distinction in light of structural differences. The data used is a collection of spoken texts from the NIECSSE and GSSEC corpora for Singapore English, the ICE-Malaysia corpus for Malaysian English, and material recorded specifically for the purpose of the study on the Riau Islands for Indonesian learner English.

A majority of non-standard features observed are common to all three varieties, however certain features prove to be virtually unique to the learner variety (e.g. realisation of /ʃ/ as [s]), while others display a substantially larger range of realisations in the EFL variety than in the ESL varieties (e.g. monophthongisation of /eɪ/ to [e] in Singapore and Malaysian English, to [e], [ɛ], [i], [ɪ], [ɜ] and [o] in Indonesian learner English). With respect to overall frequencies of phonological, morphological and syntactic features, a clear divide can be observed between the syntax of ESL and EFL varieties, while the accent of Malaysian English is clearly more marked than the accents of both Singapore English and Indonesian learner English. While the comparison of the ESL varieties fits the established truism of variationist studies “Accent divides, but syntax unites”, the inverse appears to hold true when contrasting ESL and EFL forms of English, in particular with regard to syntax, which clearly “divides”.

The major conclusions drawn from the comparative analysis are mainly concerned with the genesis of postcolonial Englishes, the structural differences between ESL and EFL forms of English as well as the extent of their register variation. The comparison of nonstandard features across the three varieties suggests that many ESL features originate in learner errors, which enter a *feature pool* from which they are either selected in the process of nativisation or discarded. Furthermore, the selection process appears to be more subtle than a simple retention/discarding of a given feature, as it also reduces the range of realisations of certain retained features. As regards the ESL/EFL distinction, the frequencies of non-standard features suggest a clear structural divide when it comes to grammar, syntax in particular. This distinction cannot be applied to accent, as the differences between Singapore English and Malaysian English are greater than those observed between Singapore English and Indonesian learner English. This disparity between accent and grammar is further demonstrated by register variation, as the Indonesian learner data, which was recorded in a relatively formal setting, clearly displays more features than informal Singapore and Malaysian English when it comes to syntax, yet lies between formal and informal Singapore English with respect to accent features.

An outlook on further research lies in a possible additional ESL/EFL distinction on a sociolinguistic level: while ESL speakers have a range of sub-varieties on the acrolectbasilect continuum at their disposal, EFL speakers may produce little to no structural variation in a limited set of situational settings.

2:15 – 2:45

Florent PEREK (Freiburg) - **Rethinking grammatical meaning and its relation to lexical usage**

In usage-based approaches to grammar, it is hypothesized that syntactic constructions come to be associated with the meaning of the lexical items most prominently occurring with them, which we may refer to as the lexical origin hypothesis. For example, the English double-object construction (e.g., Mary sent John a package) most prominently occurs with the verb give, and therefore comes to convey the ‘transfer’ meaning of that verb when it is used with other verbs (e.g., John built the kids a treehouse). However, there is much reason to doubt that this hypothesis will straightforwardly apply to constructions with a highly abstract meaning that is not lexicalized by any verb in the language.

In the central part of my dissertation, I address this problem by drawing on the example of the conative construction (e.g., John kicked at the ball). The semantic contribution of this construction is highly variable and dependent on the verb, and if anything very abstract: it may be succinctly described as a “detransitivizing” function, whereby the conative variant lacks one or more features of its transitive counterpart (for example, minimal effect or lack thereof). As shown by a study of its distribution in a 16-million words corpus of novels, the conative construction prominently occurs with many different types of verbs, none of which either particularly stands out or provides a clear indication of the constructional meaning.

To account for this data, I suggest a refinement of the lexical origin hypothesis. I grouped the distribution of the conative into semantically defined verb classes, and treated each of these groups as instantiating a different construction. The analysis of the distribution of four thus-defined verb-class-specific constructions reveals that in each case, the meaning of the most typical verb(s) lines up with the semantic contribution of the construction in the corresponding verb class. For example, the most prominently used verbs of ingestion are nibble and sip, whose semantics clearly line up with the ‘bit-by-bit’ reading that the construction produces with verbs of that class.

These results shed some new light on the relation between lexical and constructional meaning, as they show that the meaning of the conative construction does plausibly emerge from lexical material, but only “locally” at the level of each verb class rather than that of the whole construction. Hence, the construction is better described as a cluster of verb-class-specific schemas rather than a single maximally general one, which is in line with a growing body of evidence that lower-level generalizations may on balance be more essential to the linguistic knowledge of speakers than it has been assumed so far.

2:45 – 3:15

Fabien CURIE (Strasbourg) - **Competitors or Allies? The NAACP and the Communist Party and the Issue of Civil Rights (1929-1941)**

Contrary to popular belief, the American civil rights movement was not born in the 1950s and 1960s. By the time Martin Luther King delivered his famous speech, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) had spent decades combating racial inequalities, especially in the courts. In the 1930s, in the midst of the Depression a new, vocal, radical and somewhat unexpected proponent of racial equality appeared : the American Communist Party. Different in their origins, their nature and their aims, the two organizations thus found themselves working for the same cause. This study will attempt to analyze the diverse forms of encounter between the NAACP and the CPUSA throughout the 1930s, which oscillated between direct confrontation and cooperation. We shall see how the NAACP was compelled to broaden its traditional agenda in order to include economic problems and thus appeal to black workers, whereas the Communist Party had to consider the specificity of the American “black problem” to reach the working class as a whole, i.e. including African Americans.

CHAIR: Michael Federspiel

3:30 – 4:00

Barbara MULLER (Strasbourg) - **Metaphors and similes in some Shakespearean tragedies**

The theory of metaphor is built on shifting sands and mutated over time. The result of such mutation is felt in sixteenth-century rhetorical treatises. Besides, sixteenth-century rhetoricians themselves provided slightly divergent definitions of the trope: metaphor - also called metaphora - is a “wresting” (Georges Puttenham), an “alteration” (Thomas Wilson), a “transference” (Desiderius Erasmus) or a “borrowing” (Sir John Hoskins). Is the Shakespearean use of metaphors in his tragedies in tune or out of tune with the rhetorical canon?

This issue involves a thorough account of all metaphors in the corpus, for which I sought the help of software named « Hyperbase ». Facing an obstacle to identify metaphors with this program - since metaphors do not have an identifiable marker like similes - I ventured into the exploration of similes within the corpus. It appears that the number of similes does not enjoy stability at all from one play to another, which raises the issue of the dynamic use of similes and metaphors in Shakespearean tragedies.

More strikingly, an exploration of rhetorical treatises reveals that simile as a figure of speech was not properly codified in the Renaissance: when present in rhetorical treatises, it oscillates sharply between divergent classifications and definitions. Besides, I could find neither any trace in critical studies of how similes were conceived in the Renaissance, nor any comment upon the fact that similes were not properly codified within the general taxonomy of sixteenth-century rhetorical treatises. Shakespearean similes, when analyzed in critical studies, are studied in the light of present-day definitions of simile.

And yet, a synchronic approach may offer a new perspective on similes and metaphors in the tragedies: why choose a simile instead of a metaphor on the stage and vice-

versa? More than a mere taxonomic problem, the different mechanisms at stake in metaphors and similes imply a different experience on the part of the spectator. Theatre implies a sudden apprehension of meaning and in this apprehension the dramatist aims both at plainness and copia of words, in which metaphors and similes play a part.

4:00 – 4:30

Golnaz SHAMS (Freiburg) - Collectives and Mentalities in Drama: Intermental Thought on Stage

My paper deals with the subject of collective consciousness and intermentality in the genre of drama. The main theoretical framework is provided by the ideas put forward by Alan Palmer and depends heavily on cognitive science. In this paper I will discuss Palmer's view on narrative fiction and the how and why we read it. His objection to the traditional approaches to narrative theory is that they deal with the analysis of the characters and the characters' minds as something internal and inward. The internalist view is important; however, the externalist view is as important but has been neglected for some time. With this kind of view the minds of the characters are seen as a social and public constructs that are put out there in the storyworld for the readers to reconstruct. It is this social aspect of the mind that is of interest to me. I will elaborate on this aspect through the Continuing-Consciousness frame and it's relation to the notion of embedded narratives and the two sub-frames of Thought-Action Continuum and Intermental Thought. Furthermore I am interested in the formation and maintenance of groups in drama and the group dynamic in general in this particular genre. Finally I will talk about why I believe Palmer's theory, which was originally intended for the genre of novel, is very much applicable to drama and actually even more suitable, although there are some challenges to be dealt with in this genre.

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