

English Language and Linguistics Research Seminar Series
Spring Semester 2017

All seminars will be held in Wells Street 206 at 17:00.

Wednesday 1 February 2017

Alex Golding, University of Brighton

The engagement of motor imagery in metaphoric comprehension

This paper proposes a synthesis of ideas from relevance theory's conceptual and propositional approach to metaphoric interpretation with assumptions about the role of motor imagery from embodied cognition. Relevance theory's account of metaphoric interpretation describes how conceptual and propositional representations are accessed during interpretation. The hearer of a metaphor inferentially develops the encoded concept to an occasion-specific ad-hoc concept, which resembles the speaker's thought more closely. Under this approach, motor imagery is not intrinsic to speaker meaning since it is not part of the concept and able to undergo inference. Motor imagery is the capacity to mentally represent actions for muscular control or to simulate them to plan for action. Within embodied cognition, for example, the word <run> accesses its conceptual counterpart, which shares a resemblance to previous activated motor imagery of observing or running oneself. Novel metaphors using action verbs activate motor imagery more than familiar ones as the latter accesses a new meaning, thereby weakening its motor imagery connection. Therefore, to reconcile this data with relevance theory, this paper proposes three solutions. Motor imagery may: (1) act as input to the inferential process, but not be part of speaker meaning; (2) generate other thoughts which undergo inference; (3) or be part of conceptual meaning and undergo inferential operations, which are intrinsic to metaphoric meaning. Whilst (1) and (2) are appealing, option (3) finds support from recent experimental evidence.

Wednesday 15 February 2017

Olivia Walsh, University of Nottingham

Creating an online corpus for the study of linguistic purism in France and Quebec

Language columns (*chroniques de langage*) are articles discussing questions related to language which are produced by a single author and published regularly in the periodical press. Although the content of columns can be quite varied, all deal with questions of language, and most focus on advising readers on the 'correct' and 'incorrect' use of the French language, or on providing linguistic commentary on language issues that cause difficulty to those speakers who want to conform to 'good usage' or to prescriptive norms. These texts thereby act as conduits of linguistic ideologies, and they play a particularly important role in the production and reproduction of the ideology of the standard.

The current Leverhulme project 'Linguistic Purism in France and Quebec (1865-2000)' examines a corpus of language columns from both France and Quebec to determine whether or not these texts contribute to the creation or maintenance of standard language ideology and, more specifically, purist language ideology in either place. Although a corpus of such texts exists for Quebec (*ChroQué*, containing nearly 8000 texts produced by around forty columnists between 1865 and 1996), no such resource exists for France. The project therefore involves the collation of a diachronic corpus of language columns from French newspapers for the period 1865-2000 and the creation of an online database to facilitate the dissemination and consultation of these texts, which are frequently very difficult to access, available only in newspapers which have been archived on microfilm. The motivation for the creation of the online corpus, and some of the challenges involved in its creation are the focus of the current paper.

Wednesday 1 March 2017

Kieran O'Halloran, King's College London

Filming a poem with a mobile phone, apps and an intensive multiplicity: a stylistics pedagogy

A film poem is a cinematic work which uses a written, often canonical poem as its inspiration. Film poems usually exceed the likely intentions of the poet, becoming something new; one creative work is used as a springboard for another. Typically, however, in film poems the poem's stylistic detail is largely irrelevant to its cinematic execution.

I spotlight in this talk how this oversight/limitation can be addressed by bringing film poems into stylistics teaching and assessment. I model i) how stylistic analysis of a poem can drive the generation of a screenplay for a film of the poem; ii) how a student could then use the screenplay to make a film from that poem. This is done using their mobile phone together with simple-to-use audio/video apps which are free or very cheap. Accompanying this talk is a film that I made on a mobile phone of Michael Donaghy's poem, *Machines*.*

In developing this approach for producing film poems via stylistic analysis, I incorporate ideas from the philosopher, Gilles Deleuze, and from his collaboration with the psychoanalyst, Félix Guattari, in their book *A Thousand Plateaus*. In particular, I make use of their concept of 'intensive multiplicity'. More broadly, the talk highlights how a stylistics lecturer can exploit common ownership of mobile devices by students, in many countries, as an additional motivation for the learning and application of stylistic analysis.

* The poem can be found here:

<http://www.poetryarchive.org/poem/machines>

Wednesday 15 March 2017

James Hawkey, University of Bristol

Mixed methods approaches to language attitudes research: findings from Northern Catalonia

The use of quantitative and qualitative methods within single studies has rapidly gained popularity in recent years throughout the social sciences, and benefits from innovative, rigorous formal methodologies (Tashakkori and Teddlie 2010: 803-804). Furthermore, so-called 'mixed methods' are specifically advocated for sociolinguistic studies (Schilling 2013: 8-11), given the overlapping objectives of the two leading branches of the discipline, namely quantitatively-focused variationism and qualitatively-driven interactional sociolinguistics. This talk focuses on a range of language attitudes data obtained concerning French and Catalan in Northern Catalonia (the area in and around the city of Perpignan in Southern France). In it, I will address findings from language attitudes questionnaires widely distributed in the region, as well as fine-grained sociophonetic data and qualitative interviews. This will allow us to shed new light on a fascinating and little-studied linguistic minority in Western Europe.

Wednesday 29 March 2017

Tamara Rathcke, University of Kent

Then, what is charisma? The role of audio-visual prosody in L1 and L2 political speeches

Charisma plays a significant role in political speeches, and determines the ability of a politician to carry an audience. While acoustic features of charisma have received some empirical attention, the contribution of visual prosody has been mostly neglected in studies focusing on features of a charismatic appearance. Unknown are also the audio-visual cues to charisma in non-native speakers. This small-scale study investigated speeches delivered by Donald Trump (L1 American English) and Arnold Schwarzenegger (L1 Austrian German, L2 American English). Video and audio recordings of their political speeches (around 25 min per speaker) and the transcripts were used. The use of pitch range, speech rate, emphatic stress and hand gestures was analysed. In order to establish the core means of the speakers' persuasive influence on their audiences, within-speaker comparisons were conducted for phrases with and without cheering from the audiences. The results showed some differences in the use of the audio-visual prosodic features between the L1 and L2 speaker as well as some similarities, and suggest that charisma is not easily attributable to a fixed set of prosodic means but may be best understood as a skillful modulation of audio-visual prosody in social interaction. A large-scale grant application to continue this research will be discussed at the end of the presentation.