Socio-cognitive approaches to analyzing spontaneous interactions

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Keywords: Construction Grammar, multimodality, conversational language, intersubjective alignment

The language of spontaneous dialogue is an indispensable resource for elucidating the enormously complex patterns of language production and reception. While it has largely remained outside the scope of cognitive linguistic (CL), the focus of attention in this research domain has recently started shifting, taking more and more to "the road beyond the quantitative turn" (Janda, 2013). Current studies have begun emphasizing the intersubjective nature of language and there is a growing interest among CL practitioners in the social aspects of language (cf. also Geeraerts' 2016 label "socio-semiotic commitment" particularly appealing in the context of one of CL's theoretical frameworks: Construction Grammar (CxG; Fried & Östman, 2004)). The importance of integrating socio-pragmatic aspects – in addition to issues of semantic content – in an adequate analysis of linguistic structure has been one of the CxG's basic tenets from the start (Fillmore, 1974/1981), although constructionally grounded analyses of spontaneously produced conversational language remain relatively scarce. The goal of this session is to draw focused attention to the complexities of conversational language and the theoretical and methodological challenges inherent to the nature of interactional communication, with special attention to the potential of CxG as a specific framework.

The composition of the session reflects several strands of research that characterize most recent developments relevant to the sessions' goals: (i) growing interest in multimodal accounts of conversational language, aimed at integrating sound, gesture, eye gaze, etc. into capturing the speakers' communicative competence; (ii) general shift from a purely qualitative approach toward using quantitative evidence, embracing the methods of experimental psychology and neuroscience while maintaining the advantages of observational research (e.g Holler et al., 2016; de Ruiter & Albert 2017); (iii) sustained attention to developing CxG as a tool for articulating the rich mental representations of conversational language, including the idea of multimodal CxG (Zima & Bergs, 2017). We thus aim at bringing together researchers who will contribute various complementary perspectives to an integrative study of conversational language, connected through the overarching *socio-cognitive* approach and tapping into the analytic resources provided by CxG. Among the issues addressed is the challenge of the scarcity of naturalistic data, inter-individual variation, intersubjective alignment of interlocutors, neurophysiological correlates of certain aspects of intersubjectivity, and the degree of constructional generalization supported by the descriptive analysis of individual instances, observed in a number of different languages.

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