Common Ground in linguistics: from its construction to its role in mapping meaning

Le *common ground* en linguistique : de sa construction à son incidence dans le paramétrage du sens.

Université de Paris Nanterre
Bâtiment Weber, amphi W

Livret des résumés

Presentation

The 7th edition of the "Mapping Parameters of Meaning" conference aims to define the conditions of emergence or disruption of the common ground between speakers, and to study how this common ground, in turn, conditions the linguistic phenomena that characterize the different types of discourse studied.

Although the concept of common ground permeates all branches of linguistics, its definition, role and manifestations vary according to the type of data observed and the theoretical framework used. The issues particular to this complex notion lie in the articulation of its two terms, *common* and *ground*.

- Depending on the chosen theoretical framework, the term "ground" can, in a broad sense, cover the familial, social, cultural or historical context of discourse implementation (Clark 2015). It could also encompass the shared knowledge of the world, or in a narrower sense, notions of preconstruction (Culioli 1990; Talmy 1975, 2000), anchoring, topicalization, and even references to a landmark or location.
- The term "common", on the other hand, refers to the phenomenon of community, whether real or virtual, constructed in speech or pre-existing. It can also refer to sharing as well as agreement and expectation, norm and convention, stereotype, and thus of convergence and divergence, of alignment, in relation to intersubjective phenomena. The community can be based on different elements: shared imaginary (Houdebine 1982), rituals (Hanks, W. F., & Bonhomme, J. 2009), or, according to the notion of pre-discourse (Paveau, M.-A. 2006), sharing of opinions, beliefs and knowledge.

The variety of possible French equivalents for the term "common ground" (*terrain d'entente, socle commun, point commun, base commune, dénominateur commun, cadre commun, etc.*) illustrates the wealth of potential reflections and perspectives relating to this concept.

The talks you will be listening to belong the fields of sociolinguistics and sociophonetics, pragmatics, interactional and multimodal linguistics, first language acquisition, or teaching and learning of a foreign or second language.

We wish you all a very enjoyable conference.

Présentation

La 7ème édition des colloques "Paramétrer le Sens" du groupe de recherche GReMLin se propose de définir les conditions d'émergence ou de rupture du *common ground* entre locuteurs, et d'étudier comment ce *common ground* conditionne à son tour les phénomènes linguistiques qui caractérisent les différents types de discours étudiés.

Si le concept de *common ground* traverse les courants de la linguistique, sa définition, son rôle et ses manifestations prennent des formes diverses selon le type de données observées et les cadres théoriques adoptés. Les enjeux propres à cette notion complexe se situent dans l'articulation des deux termes, *common* et *ground*.

- Le terme *ground*, "terrain", peut recouvrir, de façon large, et selon les cadres théoriques, le contexte familial, social, culturel ou historique de mise en œuvre des discours (Clark 2015), la connaissance partagée du monde, ou dans une acception plus étroite, la notion de préconstruit (Culioli 1990; Talmy 1975, 2000), d'ancrage, de thème, et même de renvoi au repère ou à la localisation.
- Le terme *common* renvoie quant à lui au phénomène de communauté, qu'elle soit réelle ou virtuelle, construite en discours ou préexistante, au partage, mais aussi aux notions d'entente et d'attente, de norme et de convention, de stéréotype, et donc de convergence et de divergence, en lien avec les phénomènes d'intersubjectivité. Cette communauté peut être fondée sur différents éléments : un imaginaire commun (Houdebine 1982), ou un partage d'opinions, de croyances et de connaissances, selon la notion de *prédiscours* (Paveau, M.-A. 2006) ou par exemple lors de rituels (Hanks, W. F., & Bonhomme, J. 2009).

La variété d'équivalents possibles du terme *common ground* en français (terrain d'entente, socle commun, point commun, base commune, dénominateur commun, cadre commun, etc.) illustre la richesse des réflexions et des perspectives ouvertes par ce concept.

Les communications s'inscrivent dans les champs de de la sociolinguistique et de la sociophonétique, de la pragmatique, de la linguistique interactionnelle et multimodale, mais aussi en en acquisition de la langue maternelle ou encore en didactique et l'apprentissage d'une langue étrangère, ou langue seconde.

Nous vous souhaitons un bon colloque.

Scientific Committee

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Martine Sékali, Université Paris Nanterre

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Table of content/ Table des matières

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Janus Mortensen (University of Copenhagen)

Keynote speaker/conférencier invité — Thursday April 25th/ jeudi 25 avril

In pursuit of common ground: Transient multilingual communities and the emergence of situated language policies

Transient multilingual communities, defined as social configurations where individuals from different linguacultural backgrounds come together to collaborate on shared projects for a limited period of time, constitute ripe sites for the study of social and linguistic norms in the making (Mortensen and Kraft 2022). For that reason, the study of transient communities speaks to a wide range of research interests within sociolinguistics and related fields. In this talk, I focus specifically on how the study of transient multilingual communities can contribute to the field of language policy research. In short, I shall be arguing that transient multilingual communities, because they provide us with a window on the emergence and (re)production of practices and beliefs that fall under the rubric of language policy (broadly conceived, cf. Spolsky 2004), offer a valuable starting point for theorising the processual, situated, and multiscalar nature of language policies (cf. Mortensen, Hazel & Brandt, fc). The talk draws on select examples from the TMC project (www.tmc.ku.dk). The examples will all, in different ways, illustrate how participants' orientation towards establishing a common language policy is part and parcel of establishing common ground in an effort to get the community at hand 'in working order' (Harder 2022).

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Janus Mortensen is Director and Professor of Multilingualism and Language Policy at the Centre for Internationalisation and Parallel Language Use (CIP) at the University of Copenhagen. He specialises in the study of transient communities, English as a lingua franca and sociolinguistic change. From 2016 till 2019 he was PI on the TMC project, a collaborative research project on the formation of social and linguistic norms in transient multilingual communities funded by Independent Research Fund Denmark. He has edited several journal special issues and books, including *Style, Mediation, and Change: Sociolinguistic Perspectives on Talking Media* (OUP, 2017), co-edited with Nikolas Coupland and Jacob Thøgersen, and

Norms and the Study of Language in Social Life (De Gruyter, 2022), with Kamilla Kraft. His ongoing research projects include *AI and the University – Towards a sociolinguistics of literacy and voice in the age of generative language technology* funded by the Carlsberg Foundation.

Laure Lansari (Université Picardie Jules Verne)

Keynote speaker/conférencier invité — Friday April 26th/ vendredi 26 avril

Marqueurs discursifs en *dire/say* en français et en anglais et construction du « Common Ground » : co-construction de la référence et affiliation

Plusieurs travaux en pragmatique mettent en lumière le rôle des marqueurs discursifs dans la construction et le maintien du Common Ground, défini généralement comme « les connaissances, croyances, et suppositions que les locuteurs pensent partager » (ma traduction, Clark 1996: 12) : par leur dimension « indexicale », dimension mise en avant par Schriffin (1987) dans son ouvrage pionnier sur ce champ de recherches, ces marqueurs semblent jouer un rôle prépondérant dans la façon dont les locuteurs s'assurent que leur discours est ancré dans le contexte au sens large. Plus récemment, d'autres travaux se sont intéressés au rôle plus spécifique de certaines fonctions des marqueurs discursifs dans la construction du Common Ground, notamment à la place de la reformulation dans la construction de la référence (Barotto & Lo Baido 2021, Fetzer 2006, Fusaroli *et al* 2017) et à celle de l'affiliation sur le plan intersubjectif (Enfield 2008, Fusaroli *et al.* 2017).

Notre présentation poursuit deux objectifs. Il s'agira d'abord de revenir sur un plan théorique et épistémologique sur la notion même du Common Ground : utilisée surtout en philosophie du langage et en linguistique et analyse de discours dans une perspective pragmatique, cette notion n'a pas été théorisée telle quelle en linguistique énonciative mais semble pourtant pouvoir être rapprochée de la notion de co-construction du sens centrale à l'énonciation. L'enjeu sera ensuite de montrer à partir de marqueurs précis – notamment *on va dire, j'allais dire* pour le français et *let's say, shall we say, I was going to* pour l'anglais – comment les marqueurs discursifs peuvent participer à la construction et au maintien du « common ground » à travers la co-construction de la référence et la mise en place d'une affiliation intersubjective.

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Laure Lansari est MCF HDR à l'UFR de Langues et Cultures Etrangères de l'Université Picardie Jules Verne (à Amiens). Membre du laboratoire CORPUS, elle s'intéresse aux domaines du temps, de l'aspect, de la modalité et de l'évidentialité ainsi qu'à la structuration du discours et aux émotions dans une perspective sémantique et pragmatique, en anglais et en français. Ses publications les plus récentes portent sur les liens entre modalité et émotion ainsi que sur les marqueurs discursifs.

MERCREDI 24 AVRIL 2024

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24TH

1. Britta Stolterfoht, James Griffiths, and Michael Franke (University of Tübingen)

Common ground in formal and experimental semantics and pragmatics

Notions of Common Ground (CG) play a central role in explanations of many aspects of human interaction, especially linguistically-oriented communication. Despite its importance and centrality to many issues in many academic fields, the notion of CG is highly elusive. This talk presents an overview of conceptualizations and formalizations of CG used in formal semantics and pragmatics, as well as in neighboring disciplines. We argue that CG is often not treated as an explanandum directly, but used to explain other phenomena, such as presupposition, context-shift or at-issueness. Nevertheless, by acting as an explanans in this way, we obtain indirect insights into which conceptualization of CG may be instrumentally useful. From this perspective, we argue that formal and experimental linguistic research can contribute to a more elaborate understanding of CG by starting from simple, idealized models (e.g., a simple set of possible worlds (Stalnaker 1978, Veltman 1986)), and refining these notions in the light of concrete empirical data, e.g., to integrate diverging perspectives of individual interlocutors (Stalnaker 2002, 2014), or questions-under-discussion (Roberts 2012).

We argue that the challenges that current research in this tradition faces can be categorized into three areas: (A) the heterogeneity of information, its processing, and its representation within the CG, (B) the variety of linguistic devices that are able to update and manage the CG, and (C) the diverse communicative settings in which the CG is established, as well as the epistemic relations of agents to the CG. We exemplify each area with a concrete case study from current research.

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Britta Stolterfoht's core research areas is the investigation of word order variations with arguments and adjuncts in German and English. As principal investigator in project B8 "Position und Interpretation: Syntactic, Semantic and Information-structural Constraints in Processing Adjuncts" of the Collaborative Research Center "The Constitution of Meaning" (SFB 833, http://www.sfb833.uni-tuebingen.de/), she investigates the interplay of position und interpretation during processing adverbials. A second core area is the semantics-pragmatics interface: Britta Stolterfoht is interested in the contextual and conceptual circumstances accompanied by grammatical category conversion as well as the semantically and pragmatically defined flexibility in the interpretation of nominal and verbal modifiers.

James Griffiths specializes in (experimental) syntax, the semantics and pragmatics of information- and discourse-structure, morphology (in particular, Distributed Morphology), and prosody. To date, his two main research interests have been the distribution of various forms of parenthesis and ellipsis, within and across languages. He is also interested in dialectal variation in English and has conducted research into syntactic phenomena that are present in some varieties of British English. Since October 2023, he is the Principal Investigator on the 3-year DFG-funded project *Cross-linguistic Experiments on Fragmentary Sentences* (CLEFs).

Michael Franke is a cognitive scientist working on language use and linguistic interaction, using experimental approaches and formal/computational modeling. He has a PhD in philosophy from The University of Amsterdam and is currently a professor of linguistics at the University of Tübingen.

2. Martine Sekali (Université Paris Nanterre)

Intégration du *common ground* dans et par l'acquisition du langage : développement des processus d''implicitation' chez quatre enfants anglophones

On s'interrogera ici sur la question de l'acquisition d'un *common ground* cognitif dans et par le développement de la langue maternelle chez les jeunes enfants préscolaires. Nous avons décelé, dans une précédente étude de cas (Sekali 2012) portant sur le corpus de Madeleine (CHILDES, *Paris Corpus*) de 9 mois à 5 ans, un phénomène remarquable nommé *concertina effect* (ou effet accordéon). Ce phénomène fait apparaître dans le développement des énoncés complexes de Madeleine une phase d'hyper complexification syntaxique aux alentours de 3 ans, suivie d'énoncés moins complexes syntaxiquement mais plus coûteux du point de vue cognitif, parce que construits à partir de représentations implicites. Le *concertina effect* peut, dans ce corpus francophone, être analysé comme l'incarnation linguistique d'un processus préalable d'explicitation nécessaire à la progressive 'implicitation' d'un *common ground* (règles et routines familiales, connaissance du monde, etc.) qu'il est alors moins nécessaire d'expliciter.

Ces résultats seront ici confrontés à l'observation de quatre corpus longitudinaux de langage spontané d'enfants, anglophones cette fois, filmés en milieu naturel et transcrits intégralement, accessibles dans la base de données CHILDES : Adam et Sarah du *Brown Corpus* (de 2 ans et 3 mois à 5 ans et 2 mois) ainsi que Violet et William du *Providence Corpus* (1 an et 4 mois à 3 ans et 4 mois).

Il s'agira d'étudier chez ces enfants ce processus d'implicitation, par l'analyse quantitative et qualitative du chemin développemental (formes et fonctions) des constructions dans lesquelles apparaissent deux marqueurs argumentatifs particuliers : *because* et *but,* dont il a été montré (en particulier Sanders 2005, Zufferey 2010 et Evers-Vermeul et Sanders 2011) pour *because*, Anscombre 2002 pour *mais*, Sekali 2007 pour *but*), qu'ils permettent d'intégrer/révéler une dimension sémantique implicite au sein de l'énoncé complexe. L'objectif est alors de rendre compte, avec une approche cognitiviste basée sur l'usage (Tomasello 2003) de la façon dont ces constructions émergent dans le langage des quatre enfants, et l'évolution/diversification des usages qu'ils en font, afin d'analyser l'acquisition de ce processus d'implicitation d'un *common ground* dans la langue.

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Martine Sekali is a Professor of Linguistics in the Department of English Language and Literature at the University of Paris Nanterre, France. She is a member of the GReMLIN Linguistics Research group, among the C.R.E.A lab (Centre de Recherches Anglophone). Her main areas of research interest include syntax/semantics/pragmatics interface analyses of complex sentences. She also specializes in the study of first language acquisition by preschool children.

Some relevant publications:

Sekali, M. 2012. The emergence of complex sentences in a French child's language from 0;10 to 4;01: causal adverbial clauses and the concertina effect. In M. Sekali (Ed.), *First language acquisition of French grammar (from 10 months to 4 years old)*. *Journal of French Language Studies* 22-1, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

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3. Martina Wiltschko (Universitat Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona), Heim Johannes (University of Aberdeen)

Early management of common ground: lessons from L1 acquisition of interactional language

Adult speakers have different cues available to manage the common ground (CG). Speakers can signal to their addressee via intona=on, discourse par=cles, and gesture that they want to raise an issue relevant to the CG, add something to it, or enquire whether it is already part of it (Malamud & Stephenson, 2014; Heim et al., 2016; Holler & Bavelas, 2017). Hence, managing CG is complex and presents a significant challenge in L1 acquisi=on. In this talk, we use the acquisi=onal trajectory of interac=onal language (i.e., voca=ves and *huh*), as a window into the development of CG management. The examples in (1-2) clearly show the interac=onal nature of these elements as they are used to request a response (rather than merely describing the world). This establishes that children, early on engage in interac=on and use interac=onal language to this effect.

> (1) Naima: Mommy? (1;01 – Providence Corpus)
> Mother: Yes.
> (2) Chuck: Out ball, huh? (1;08 – Bates Corpus)
> Mother: Ball out!

Based on two corpus-studies from the CHILDES database (MacWhinney, 2000) exploring the acquistion of vocatives and *huh,* we propose that in the process of language acquisition children bridge between two domain-general capacities (social interaction and classification) using language. Specifically, the well-known one-word stage is not restricted to naming objects in the world, but children explicitly interact with such utterances using interactional language as in (1)/(2). In this first stage, however there is no evidence for expressions of CG management. We show that explicit units of language that serve CG management are introduced in a second stage, such that they first make use of a generalized CG which is later distinguished into Speaker- and Addressee-oriented grounds, respectively. In a final stage, children arrive at an adult-like grammar with highly specialised CG marking that incorporates all cues of the target language.

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Martina Wiltschko is an ICREA research Professor at the Universitat Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona. She is a theoretical linguist, focusing on syntax and its interfaces. She obtained her PhD in 1995, spent much of her career at the University of British Columbia until 2019 when

she assumed her current position. During her tenure at UBC, she focused mainly on language variation and fieldwork (culminating in her 2014 Cambridge University monograph on the universal structure of categories). She then developed an interest in the nature of language in interaction culminating in the 2021 Cambridge University monograph on the grammar of interactional language. Most recently she has started a project (currently funded by the Spanish government) on the nature of human machine interaction, focusing on the role of interactional language.

Heim Johannes is currently working as a Lecturer in Linguistics at the School of Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture at the University of Aberdeen. He's mostly interested in researching how adults and infants use interactional units of language (particles, prosody, and gesture) in conversation. Much of this work is couched in a syntactocentric framework.
First language acquisition: questionhood, poverty of the stimulus, multimodal cues
Syntax: syntactic integration, inversion constructions, division of labor, gapping
Prosody: intonational inventories, iconicity of intonation, prosodic focus-marking
Pragmatics: speech acts, non-canonicity, particles, turn-taking, common ground Information-structure: focus constructions and particles, contrastive vs. new Language evolution: evolution-development interface, iconicity, multimodality

4. Céline Horgues (Université Sorbonne Nouvelle), Loulou Kosmala (Université Paris Nanterre)

Common ground through feedback: a comparison of tandem (NS-NNS) vs control (NS-NS) multimodal interactions in English

Corrective feedback (CF), i.e. feedback provided by language instructors or native speakers to correct their partner's L2 output (negative evidence, Gass 2003) has been the topic of numerous studies in the field of L2 acquisition and instruction (Nassaji & Kartchava, 2021). Conversational feedback (e.g. backchanneling, head nods, continuers), on the other hand, has mostly been the focus of L1 studies (e.g. Allwood, 2001; Boudin et al., 2021). Feedback is also essential when needing to re-establish common ground as part of miscommunication management (Dascal, 1999). The present research brings together these different types of feedback in the context of tandem conversations (interactions between native (NS) and non-native speakers (NNS); Brammerts & Calvert, 2003)) where a high degree of cooperation is expected to address issues of (mis/non)understanding, to facilitate the overall communication flow, but also to promote the L2 partner's language development.

Building on previous work (Horgues et al., 2023; Kosmala et al., 2023), the aim of this study is to explore the different types of feedback (corrective, conversational, miscommunication management, or a combination of the three) produced by native speakers in the course of interactions held in English, both in tandem (NS-NNS) and control (NS-NS) settings. Our multimodal analysis is based on a selection of the SITAF Corpus (Horgues & Scheuer, 2015) with a focus on feedback provision by four NSs in a task where their main role is to be the listeners of their interlocutor's story. We carry out a comparative study of their feedback patterns in two interactional conditions for the same narrative task: when listening to the story of i) a fellow native speaker or ii) their L2 tandem partner. While feedback participates in maintaining common ground in both conditions (through the omnipresence of conversational feedback), the NS-NNS setting promotes a meshing of more diverse feedback functions than in NS-NS conversations. We also show how feedback patterns and dynamics are also strongly governed by individual differences and task constraints.

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Céline Horgues is an associate professor in English phonetics and phonology at Sorbonne Nouvelle University, France, where she teaches English phonetics/phonology, listening comprehension and acquisition/teaching of L2 pronunciation. Her main research interests are L2 pronunciation teaching/learning, L2 prosody, foreign accentedness, native/non-native interactions and tandem learning (corrective feedback, miscommunication and foreigner talk). With Sylwia Scheuer, she coordinated the collection and analysis of a multimodal corpus of English-French tandem spoken interactions (the SITAF corpus, 2012-2014). Since 2012 she has been running a tandem course and a free tandem programme for the students of the English department at her University. In 2020 she co-edited a book on tandem language and culture learning in higher education with Claire Tardieu.

Loulou Kosmala is a Lecturer in English Linguistics and Phonology at Paris Nanterre Université. Interested in multimodality, interaction, and feedback processes in L1 and L2. You can find more detail about her on this link: https://louloukosmala.wixsite.com/loulou-kosmala

JEUDI 25 AVRIL 2024

THURSDAY, APRIL 25TH

5. Adam Wilson (Université de Lorraine)

"Everyone is supposed to understand": elaborating common ground in multimodal, multilingual professional contexts

The concomitant development of communication technology and the knowledge economy is transforming work around the world (Radović-Marković 2021). With intensified human mobility, an increase in professional activities relying on communication and the introduction of online collaborative workspace platforms, the "language part of work" (Boutet 2001) has never been so significant, multimodal or multilingual.

In this paper, I aim to explore the effect that these changes have on the elaboration of common ground in professional settings. To do so, I draw upon a multisite, sociolinguistic fieldwork project undertaken in several start-ups in which professional activity is essentially language based (translation, localisation, project management, content creation, etc.) and characterised by a high degree of multilingualism and multimodality.

First, I explore how common ground is established and maintained through the co-construction of meaning that takes places in different interactions in these professional settings. More specifically, I show how colleagues go about elaborating common ground even when their exchanges involve a variety of languages and a variety of modes and channels of communication.

Second, I look at how these interactional practices dovetail with the formation of language ideologies (Woolard 2020) in these contexts, especially with regards to plurilingual practices and the use of English as a Lingua Franca. Following this, I suggest that these ideologies index certain socio-professional identities and values and thus play a key role in forming the common ground that allows for the elaboration of new (professional) "communities of practice" (Eckert 2006).

In conclusion, working from the different analyses, I argue that foregrounding the notion of common ground can shed light on the sociolinguistic dynamics of professional inclusion and exclusion in the contexts explored.

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Adam Wilson is Associate Professor of Linguistics in the "Applied Foreign Languages" Department of the Université de Lorraine in Metz (France) and a member of the IDEA research centre. His research focuses on language practices, policies and ideologies in globalised and globalising professional contexts, such as tourism, higher education, institutions linked to migration, and transnational businesses. He explores how linguistic and social aspects interact

in these intense spaces of multilingualism and language contact, and has published extensively on these topics in both French and English in a wide range of international journals.

6. Goranka Rocco (University of Ferrara)

Common ground on conscientious objection (Kriegsdienstverweigerung, Wehrdienstverweigerung) in German speaking countries from a discourse linguistic perspective

The introductory part of the paper discusses the applicability and meaning of the concept of *Common ground* in Discourse Linguistics and, in particular, interlingual and intralingual Comparative Discourse Linguistics. The point of departure is Stalnakers *Common ground* as presumed background information or mutually presupposed knowledge shared by participants in a conversation (2002: 701f., 716) which, according to Spitzmüller and Warnke, can be understood as a mental text-world model (*Text-Welt-Modell*) and is implicit in discourse, since *Common ground* is an intertextual effect, a common basis for the validity of many statements (2011: 150).

The paper then addresses the following questions:

Firstly, how has the *Common ground* on conscientious objection/objectors and on associated concepts such as masculinity, heroism, war and peace developed after the Second World War in West and East Germany and subsequently in united Germany up to the present day? What was the impact of international and national legislation and regulations (e.g. *Bausoldatenanordnung*, directive on „construction soldiers" in German Democratic Republic) and of single events and movements (e.g. the German deserteur monument movement)?

Secondly, in which presuppositions, argumentation patterns, topoi, buzzwords, deontic words, dysphemisms and verbal or visual metaphors does the specific *Common ground* manifest itself?

Thirdly, how can the change in *Common Ground(s)* on conscientious objection and masculinity negotiated in discourses over time on the one hand, and the differences between national-political contexts (FRG vs. GDR, Germany vs. Austria/Switzerland) on the other be traced corpus-linguistically and lexicographically?

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Goranka Rocco is professor for German Language and Translation at the Department of Humanities, University of Ferrara. She also taught at the universities of Trieste, Bologna, Düsseldorf and Duisburg-Essen. Her research interests lie in the fields of discourse linguistics, sociolinguistics, text linguistics, interlingual and intralingual translation, fictive orality and

translation. Ladislao Mittner Prize for Translation science in 2018; fellowships in Germany (DAAD, StayConnected@HHU Programme of Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf, co-sponsored by the Foundation Alexander von Humboldt); one of the founding members of the *network comparative discourse studies*; author of numerous articles in the peer-reviewed scientific journals and volumes and of several scientific monographs, furthermore autor and co-autor of manuals for German as a Foreign language (Duden, Verlag Liebaug-Dartmann).

7. Jiapei Gu (Lingnan University)

Anti-Black and anti-African sentiments as a common ground: A critical discourse analysis of digital representations of Blackness and Africanness in China

In China, racial issues remain relatively under-investigated, while grassroots anti-Black and anti-African hostilities are becoming increasingly salient. Drawing on Okonkwonwoye Case, where a Nigerian man brutally attacked a Chinese nurse in 2021, this study examines how the knowledge (in a Foucauldian sense) of Blackness and Africanness are represented, instrumentalised, and negotiated discursively and dialogically in the Chinese digital space. Deploying keyword tracking, I first tracked the hashtags on the events on Weibo, one of the most popular microblogging platforms in China. Then, using Octoparse, a web scraping tool, I automatically extracted 2517 posts and 21,995 comments under the hashtags, which are all naturally occurring. Taking a social constructionist (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) and a symbolic interactionist perspective (Mead, 1934), I view discourses as social practices through which the knowledge of the objects is systematically and intersubjectively formed, disseminated, and conventionalised. Accordingly, "race" is a flow of knowledge constructed and reinforced in and through discourse, which is usually based on distorted social realities (Nahs, 1989). A critical discourse analysis of data reveals that using the predicate "bite" and animal metaphors, Blackness is associated with animality and is therefore represented as brutal and less evolved; the concept of suzhi, translated as "quality", serves as a determinant distinguishing Self from Other, allowing Weibo users to evaluate Black people based on ethnocentric standards. Meanwhile, drawing on suzhi, Weibo users also attribute the cause of discrimination toward Black people to their low qualities, shifting the responsibility of discrimination to the victims. Potentially, this anti-Black sentiment functions to solidify a Self-identity in relation to an Other-identity in a time of health crisis. Additionally, the findings suggest the discourse of African immigrants is always associated with illegality, generalising African immigrants as synonymous with illegal immigrants. Though this derogatory representation is challenged by some internet users, demonstrating a contested and heteroglossic nature of meaning-making in cyberspace, these voices remain subtle and mitigated compared with the quantitively significant xenophobic discourse in the data, implying xenophobic ideas, once considered socially unacceptable, seem to have become a normalised common ground in Chinese social media.

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Jiapei Gu is a Ph.D. candidate at the Department of English, Lingnan University, and also a Fung scholar. Her current research interests lie in critical discourse analysis, discursive representation, and social stigmatisation. Her recent publications have appeared in *Social Semiotics* and *Discourse Studies*.

8. Yanyan Li (University of Warwick)

Achieving Common Ground to Manage Relationship Work During Off-topic Talks in Classroom Group Work

Humans interact for socio-relational demands rather than informational exchange (Stivers, 2008). Research (e.g. Enfield, 2020) frames common ground as affording relationship building and management. Specifically, during multiparty classroom group work (CGW), learners need to do on-task talks. However, there is a dearth of research focusing on learners' possible off-topic moments during the task when they spare themselves to communicate information like personal feelings, experiences, knowledge and perspectives unrelated to the task. Such non-transactional agenda can have a purpose for conducting CGW, namely, nurturing group relationships. Particularly, relationship is an interactional accomplishment realised via participants' interactional conducts (Glenn, 2003). Hence, this study explores how common ground is achieved in moment-by-moment group interaction, and offers the interactional details of its socio-relational functions (i.e. relationship building and management) in enacting CGW. Using multimodal conversation analysis, this study explores the interactional processes where peers achieve common ground to undertake relationship work in classroom group interaction. Video and audio recordings of six groups of four Chinese 17-year-old Senior Two students who learned English as a second language in a China's high school were collected. With silence timed by the software ELAN, data was transcribed according to Jefferson's (2004) transcription convention with other embodied actions described below the verbals at the specific places where they appear. Preliminary findings illuminate learners' strategic management and achievement of common ground during off-topic talks, with which learners display recognition and emphatic communion, co-construct collaborative collusion, and establish group memberships. This research shows the importance of achieving common ground in off-topic talks as a meaningful non-transactional agenda in operationalising CGW, and contributes to the research of the socio-relational consequences of common ground.

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Yanyan Li is a PhD candidate in Applied Linguistics, University of Warwick. Her research interests cover multimodal communication, conversion analysis, social interaction, group work and classroom discourse. In her PhD research, she delves into the multimodal interactional processes where peers undertake relationship work during group interaction. My supervisors are Professor Tony Liddicoat and Professor Steve Mann.

9. Ludivine Crible (Ghent University), Loulou Kosmala, (Université Paris Nanterre)

Marking alignment and affiliation through multimodal feedback responses in French interactions

The notions of alignment and affiliation have been studied across different theoretical fields, from conversation analysis (e.g. Stivers, 2008) to psycholinguistics (e.g. Pickering & Garrod, 2021) with regards to audible but also visual forms of cooperation (Bertrand & Goujon, 2017). While alignment is often considered at the structural level (i.e., marking recipiency and understanding), affiliation is more commonly associated with the affective level (i.e., displaying agreement and appreciation).

The present study deals with the emergence of alignment and affiliation in spontaneous face-to-face interactions within the context of feedback responses. Such responses, which can either be generic or specific (Bavelas et al., 2000), positive or negative (Pickering & Garrod, 2021), unimodal or multimodal (Boudin, 2022) are generally deemed "secondary" contributions on the listeners' part, but they also provide opportunities for listeners to display forms of alignment and/or affiliation and thus allow the interaction to carry on smoothly. The aim of our study is to investigate the contribution of feedback processes in interaction with regards to their value (positive or negative), form (generic or specific), multimodality (unimodal or bimodal) and type (alignment and/or affiliation), where alignment and affiliation are considered functions of feedback.

The analyses are conducted on the DisReg Corpus (Kosmala, 2020) which comprises semi-spontaneous interactions between French students at University (N=12). All the feedback responses (N=431), ranging from continuers such as 'mm' 'ok', head nods, laughter, to more specific responses (e.g. "oh you went to this place?") were identified by two independent coders.

Overall, preliminary observations reveal fewer cases of affiliation than alignment within the feedback responses. Recurrent forms were found to be associated with alignment, mainly acknowledgment tokens ('mm', 'ok', yeah' etc.) smiles, head nods, or a combination of the three. Affiliation, on the other hand, was not necessarily associated with specific forms or patterns (with the exception of laughter). This suggests that affiliation is more context-bound while alignment relies on recurring conventions, which leads us to consider affiliation as a subtype of alignment.

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Ludivine Crible's research deals primarily with the cognitive processes of speech production and comprehension and their linguistic traces in the speech flow, focusing on disfluencies and discourse markers. She uses corpus-based and experimental methods to address issues such as first and second language fluency and conversational alignment. She has also developed a number of methodological frameworks to systematically explore the forms and functions of these elements in spoken corpora.

At the UGent, she is an assistant professor of French Linguistics, Business Communication in French and French for specific purposes.

Loulou Kosmala is a Lecturer in English Linguistics and Phonology at Paris Nanterre Université. Interested in multimodality, interaction, and feedback processes in L1 and L2. You can find more detail about her on this link: https://louloukosmala.wixsite.com/loulou-kosmala

10. Asya Achimova, Michael Franke, Martin V. Butz (University of Tübingen)

Probing the state of common ground through indirectness

Common ground – shared beliefs and assumptions of conversation partners (Stalnaker, 2002, 2014) – sets the backdrop for the interpretation of utterances during conversation (Clark, 1996). Indirect utterances appear special in this regard since their interpretation can be radically different depending on the beliefs of the speaker. For example, the speaker may express either a positive or a negative evaluation in (1).

(1)   The election outcome was interesting!

In this paper, we look at indirectness as a tool for common ground management (Krifka, 2008). We maintain that indirect utterances allow the speaker to withhold her true beliefs and observe the interpretation of the utterance by her conversation partner before exposing her own beliefs.

We adopt an experimental approach and evaluate how conversation partners (1) choose utterances depending on their own beliefs and beliefs of their conversation partners; and (2) how speakers infer beliefs of the speaker upon observing how she interpreted an utterance. In **Experiment 1**, we establish a baseline of simplified utterance meanings by asking the participants (n = 50) to evaluate statements, such as (1) on a scale from 1 (negative) to 5 (positive). In **Experiment 2**, we ask the participants (n = 98) to choose among 5 alternative utterances (from strongly negative to strongly positive) to express the belief of a simulated speaker given the beliefs of her conversation partner. The experiment demonstrates that participants choose indirect expressions (e.g., saying *rather bad* when the true opinion is actually *terrible*) when the beliefs of conversation partners diverge. Finally, in **Experiment 3** the participants (n = 286) evaluated a two-turn interaction between conversation partners and were asked to infer the true belief of the second speaker.

(2)   a.   Speaker A: The election outcome was amazing!
        b.   Speaker B: I found it decent.

The results show that if speaker B chooses an expression that was less positive than speaker A's utterance (*decent* vs. *amazing*), participants inferred that the actual true belief of speaker B was more negative than what she stated explicitly. This inference pattern also holds for corresponding negative utterances. We conclude that indirectness can act as a tool to verify whether particular beliefs are shared, and therefore, belong to common ground.

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Asya Achimova is junior research group leader at the department of General and Computational Linguistics at the University of Tübingen. Her research focuses on modeling the processes of speech production and comprehension. She combines tools from experimental linguistics and computational modeling in her work.

Michael Franke is a cognitive scientist working on language use and linguistic interaction, using experimental approaches and formal/computational modeling. He has a PhD in philosophy from The University of Amsterdam and is currently a professor of linguistics at the University of Tübingen.

Martin V. Butz is a Professor of Computer Science and Psychology at the University of Tübingen. He is the director of the Cognitive Science Center and the Neuro-Cognitive Modeling Group. He uses Bayesian and deep learning modeling approaches to study human cognition and to develop cognitively-inspired deep learning architectures.

11. Olivier Divin (Université Paris Nanterre)

Building on quicksand: Topic discontinuity and the construction of common ground in stand-up comedy performance

The construction of common ground plays a key role in stand-up comedy, where, laugh after laugh, small disparate groups of people come together as one, updating an understanding that is critical to the pursuit of the performance. Audience laughter has been described as an expression of shared values (Mintz 1985), an alignment with the comedian's worldview (Quirk 2015), or as arising from the realisation of the cultural status of previously thought-to-be-private mental representations (Yus 2005). Few studies, however, offer insight into how this bond is built, let alone explore the linguistic or other communicative resources that performers marshal in the process.

As a genre, stand-up comedy is intrinsically heterogeneous (Chauvin 2017), with comedians regularly jumping from one topic to another. Based on empirical data gleaned from a collection of stand-up shows and a performance by British character comedian Troy Hawke (Milo McCabe) filmed at Liverpool's Hot Water Comedy Club, we argue that topic discontinuity creates a need for common ground to be re-negotiated at the beginning of a new sequence.

Drawing on previous research in the fields of Interactional Linguistics (Auer 2005, Mondada 2008) and Emergent Grammar (Hopper 2011), the present study suggests that audience affiliation is built incrementally, as topics are introduced, laying out a necessary foundation for humor to succeed. In a first part, we will discuss different group-bonding strategies used by comedians. We will then go on to provide a multimodal analysis of two excerpts of Troy Hawke's performance, using time-aligned annotations created with ELAN, as well as prosodic data extracted from PRAAT. This will involve a step-by-step description of how the comedian establishes common ground with the audience, from efforts to secure joint attention to linguistic and embodied practices designed to elicit affiliative responses in the build-up towards the opening punchline.

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Olivier Divin is a doctoral candidate at Paris Nanterre University, France, where he teaches linguistics and phonology in the Department of English Studies. His research interests include on-line syntax, interactional linguistics and multimodal discourse analysis. His dissertation explores the interactional dynamics of British comedy club stand-up through a micro-analytical lens, aiming to develop a multi-level model that accounts for gesture-into-speech integration across the syntax/pragmatics interface.

12. Sabina Tabacaru (Université Paris 8 Vincennes-Saint-Denis)

Common ground and humor: how humorous meanings are created and understood in interaction

Common ground and social context play a fundamental role in the way meaning is created in interaction. In humor specifically, meaning can be explained using different concepts, such as Clark's (1996) joint action hypothesis, Baron-Cohen's theory of mind (Baron- Cohen, 1995; Tomasello, 1999), and intersubjectivity (Zlatev et al., 2008). These all play a role in how speakers coordinate their meanings in interaction as speakers act on what they assume they have in common with the hearers. Inferences are thus exploited for a humorous outcome, which Yus (2003: 1308) called "mind-reading ability" because the speaker is already aware of the cognitive processes the hearers will go through to interpret their utterances.

The examples presented come from different sources: political debates, television series and shows, stand-up comedy, etc. in order to show how layered mental spaces are created in humorous interactions. I use Brône's (2008) account of humor, which combines both Clark's (1996) layering model and Fauconnier's (1984) mental spaces theory, to explain these humorous exchanges using a layered mental space configuration, showing the link between the common ground (discourse base space) and the pretense space created among speakers. Multimodality plays an important role in switching from the discourse base space to the pretense space on which humorous implications depend, as speakers use multimodal markers (such as facial expressions, for example, see Tabacaru 2019) to guide the hearers to the interpretation of their message/s. Thus, common ground is exploited in these interactions, playing on the different assumptions and inferences the audience makes.

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Sabina Tabacaru - is Associate Professor of Linguistics at Université Paris 8 Vincennes-Saint-Denis. Her research interests include sarcasm, discourse analysis, gender, multimodality, and emotion from the perspective of Cognitive Linguistics.

VENDREDI 24 AVRIL 2024

FRIDAY, APRIL 24TH

13. Amandine Robert (Université de Strasbourg)

« Waffeln, genau! » ou comment le marqueur de discours allemand *genau* dit ce qu'on a en commun.

A partir d'un corpus constitué de réunions citoyennes enregistrées à Berlin en 2022, cette contribution analysera la manière dont le recours au marqueur *genau* (littéralement : « exact » / « exactement ») – en forte expansion en allemand oral contemporain – jette et renouvelle des fondements communs dans l'interaction et dans la relation intersubjective. Les occurrences retenues, relevant aussi bien de la position réactive que de l'emploi monologique, témoigneront de la diversité de ce que locutrices et locuteurs sont susceptibles de partager : un savoir extralinguistique, l'appartenance à une même communauté linguistique (en l'espèce, la langue allemande), une manière de raisonner et d'inférer, l'adhésion aux règles qui régissent l'interaction (notamment le principe de collaboration dans la co-construction énonciative) et la vie en société (travail de figuration) ou encore une histoire interpersonnelle antérieure à la situation d'énonciation (expression de la connivence).

S'appuyant sur les concepts de common bélier et présupposition accommodation tels que développés chez Stalnaker (2002), l'analyse montrera qu'en plus de véhiculer du common ground, le marqueur entérine des croyances partagées – quand bien même celles-ci s'éloigneraient du common ground – et qu'il signale la reconnaissance des intentions de communication de l'autre. Tout en mimant un faible degré de planification conversationnelle (*genau* joue l'inspiration subite), la personne qui parle se positionne dans une logique d'acceptation du point de vue de ses interlocuteurs.

Enfin, l'exposé ouvrira une perspective contrastive en proposant des équivalents français aux différentes situations d'emploi de *genau*, notamment en fonction de l'orientation épistémique spécifique à tel ou tel marqueur discursif.

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Amandine Robert est actuellement inscrite en thèse, sous la direction de Mme Odile Schneider-Mizony, et travaille sur les marqueurs de discours exprimant l'accord en allemand et en français, selon une approche pragmatique et contrastive, à l'Université de Strasbourg, LiLPa, UR 1339.

14. Françoise Doro-Mégy (Université de Paris Est Créteil)

Présupposé et préconstruit dans le fonctionnement des adverbes *décidément* et *finalement*

Common ground, connaissances partagées, présupposé et préconstruit constituent autant de concepts ayant à la fois des caractéristiques communes et des traits singuliers pour renvoyer à « l'acquis ». Nous proposons d'interroger la notion « d'acquis » en sémantique (acquis pour qui ? acquis comment ?) à partir de la distinction entre présupposé et préconstruit. Ces problématiques sont abordées à partir d'une étude comparative des adverbes *décidément* et *finalement* dans un corpus littéraire contemporain (majoritairement extrait de FRANTEXT).

Après un bref aperçu des problématiques de classification des adverbes dits d'énonciation, nous présentons les fonctionnements « clôturants » de *décidément* et *finalement* pour en dégager leur spécificité par rapport à la notion de « préconstruit ».

En effet, *décidément* renvoie à une énonciation fondée sur la reprise d'une série d'éléments appartenant à un même paradigme, construite antérieurement à une situation repère. Par exemple, dans :

(1) Sa modestie **décidément** nous plaisait.

décidément implique une accumulation d'occurrences comparables préalablement considérées comme hétérogènes avant d'être regroupées de façon homogène et construire une valeur d'inattendu. En revanche, *finalement* implique une contradiction entre une valeur p posée antérieurement à un moment repère et révisée dans une « rétro-interprétation » (Schelling 1982) ; la validation de p' entraîne un effet clôturant :

(1') Sa modestie **finalement** nous plaisait.

Cette distinction est synthétisée dans PERRIN (2013 : 192) :

« (…) la confirmation conclusive que manifeste *décidément* est une forme de consécution différente de ce qu'indiquerait *finalement,* qui marquerait alors une sorte de révision conclusive. *Décidément* implique en effet indirectement une subjectivité empreinte de fatalisme, relative à l'opération de confirmation conclusive qu'il instaure. »

Ces adverbes, catégorisés comme « mots du discours », impliquent une reconstruction de l'antériorité, qui, selon les paramètres en jeu, entraine différents degrés d'engagement énonciatif.

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15. Andreas Kehl, Amelie Rüeck, Birgit Rapp, Sam Featherston & Susanne Winkler (University of Tübingen)

Effects of perspectivity on acceptability and surprise judgments of locative inversion: Common Ground and non-canonical word order

In locative inversion (LI), given information precedes new information, deviating from the canonical SVO order (Drubig 1988; Bresnan 1994; Bruening 2022). The view that we investigate empirically is that LI provides a straightforward Common Ground (CG) update from the agent perspective (Chen 2003; Langacker 1985); see (1):

(1) Context: Mary entered the dark room.
    1. A lamp was in the corner. [SVO]
    2. In the corner was a lamp. [LI]
       (see Bresnan 1994)

The inversion in (1b) with a sentence-initial PP improves discourse coherence because *the corner* is a subpart of *the dark room* and thus cognitively better anchored in the CG established by the context.

We are interested in whether the CG management properties of LI have an effect on the acceptability of logophoric pronouns (Zribi-Hertz 1989) and whether this effect is related to the suprisal function of LI (cf. Celle & Lansari 2017). In two pilot studies, we examine the effects of LI and logophoricity in contexts such as (2), where we manipulate WORD ORDER (SVO/LI) and the NOMINAL (pronoun/reflexive); we also examine control conditions with a proper name:

(2) Context: Sarah took Tim's phone and opened Instagram;
    1. a picture of {her/herself/Lisa} was on the discovery page. [SVO]
    2. on the discovery page was a picture of {her/herself/Lisa}. [LI]

The experiment was conducted with two different measurement scales: acceptability (*How natural do you find this sentence?*) and surprisal (*How surprising do you find this sentence?*).

The results indicate that there was no significant difference in acceptability between the target and control conditions (Figure 1), but a noticable difference in terms of surprisal (Figure 2): the control conditions with a proper name (Cont/SVO & Cont/LI in Figure 2) were judged less surprising than the respective target conditions, where the subject of the context remains the same. These results indicate that (i) (LI) is unmarked (in terms of acceptabil- ity) in a context that respects an ideal addition of new information to the CG, and (ii) that a coherent perspectivity in terms of nominal referents increases surprise, independently of logophoricity and word order. We concentrate on these differences between target and control conditions in terms of acceptability/surprisal in future research.

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**Figure 1.** Results of acceptability experiment.

Figure 2. Results of surprisal experiment.
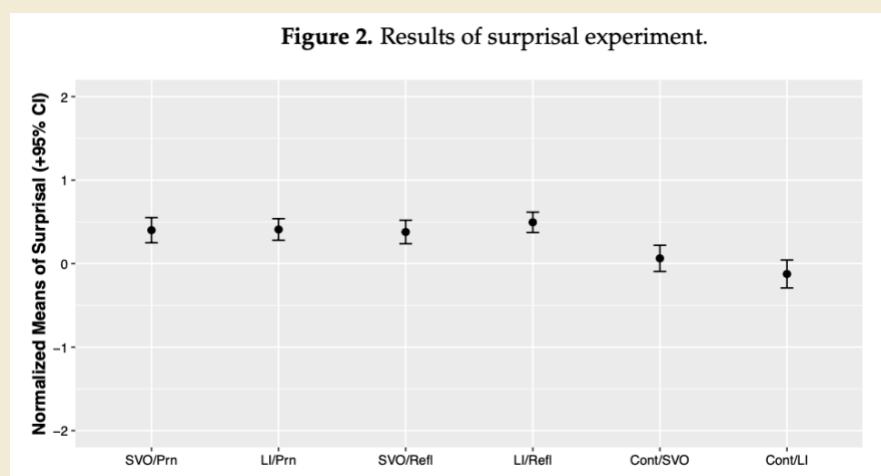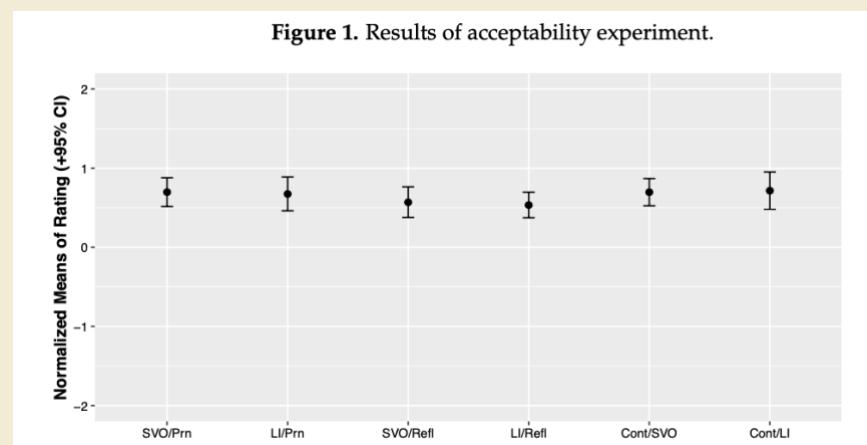
Andreas Kehl is a postdoctoral researcher at the chair of English Linguistics at the University of Tübingen. His primary research interests include syntactic island configurations, the relation of non-canonical word orders to common ground, and the syntax-pragmatics interface.

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Birgit Rapp is a PhD student at the University of Tübingen. Her dissertation project focuses on the use of rhetorical questions in the German debate on gender.

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16. Grigory Agabalian

Common ground, connaissance partagée, opposition, compétition, stéréotype, prototype, implicite

Dans cette présentation, j'exploiterai la notion de « common ground » au sens d'ensemble de connaissances génériques que les membres d'une communauté linguistique partagent à propos du monde. Parmi ces connaissances génériques, je soutiendrai qu'il y a le fait de savoir, par exemple, que les chiens et les chats, la ville et la campagne, être beau et être intelligent « s'opposent ». La présentation aura, alors, pour objectif d'identifier des énoncés, mais aussi des lexèmes, dont l'interprétation exige systématiquement que ces oppositions – que je qualifierai de « pragmatiques » – soient convoquées au titre de « common ground ».

Après avoir précisé que l'opposition pragmatique ne se confond pas avec une opposition paradigmatique (du type antonymie) et qu'elle recouvre une diversité de relations (l'opposition entre *rose* et *bleu* n'est pas du même type que celle entre *chien* et *chat*), je limiterai la suite de ma présentation aux seules oppositions pragmatiques caractérisables comme des relations de compétition : les référents sont connus, à tort ou à raison, comme des animés cherchant à se vaincre l'un l'autre (*chien/chat*, *ouvrier/bourgeois*, *juif/musulman*...) ou comme des réponses concurrentes à une question portant sur ce qui est bien, important ou efficace (*ville/campagne*, *quantité/qualité, esprit/matière*...).

Je ne chercherai pas à retracer les mécanismes d'émergence ou de consolida4on des relations de compé44on, fussent-ils discursifs. Je me situerai bien plus en aval du phénomène en me8ant en évidence la nécessité de convoquer ces relations au titre de connaissances génériques pour interpréter trois observables linguistiques choisis pour leur produc4vité :

1) les motifs phraséologiques N$_{ANIM}$ *être plutôt* N *ou* N (*Vous êtes plutôt bain ou douche ?*) et N$_{ANIM}$ *être plus* N *que* N (*Je suis plus cinéma que théâtre*), avec des fréquences calculées à partir de plusieurs corpus compilés pour iden4fier les paires de noms les plus récurrentes dans ces motifs ;

2) le syntagme *le clivage* Lex/Lex, en particulier pour adopter une posture qui surplombe la relation de compétition (*dépasser le clivage gauche/droite*; *au-delà du clivage Paris-province*...), avec des exemples tirés de différents corpus ;

3) les noms de doctrine ou d'attitude en *-isme* (*capitalisme* ← *capital/travail* ; *égoïsme* ← *moi/autrui*).

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17. Anna Kutscher (Bielfeld University)

Co-construction of new expressions in a dialogue

In the formal tradition of semantics and pragmatics, the understanding of common ground (CG) is directed towards the legitimation of propositions. Following Stalnaker (2002), Farkas & Bruce (2010) and others, recent work (cf. Burgess & Sherman 2014; Gutzmann 2015; Koev 2018) that focuses on the indispensability of CG as a basis for facilitating understanding, acknowledges the relevance of the interlocutors' interaction and their linguistic strategies. However, the focus is mainly on the communicated sentence- or proposition-dependent relevance. The consistent idea is that the participants bring individual beliefs and commitments to a conversation and align them with a shared set of commitments known as CG. Since the linguistic structures, (word order, modal particles, etc.) serve as tools to achieve the CG, they are not considered to be part of it. This assumption is questionable if we consider the vagueness of expressions and the urge to have a common meaning of what has been said in order to create CG.

In this talk we will focus on the process of creating such a shared understanding of linguistic units. We will provide evidence for the negotiation of form and meaning of expressions as part of an ad hoc created CG. Our evidence comes from a German corpus of medical consultations between patients with seizure disorders and a doctor. The challenge for both interlocutors is to find the most efficient expression to describe something that is highly individual and has no lexical entry. Instead of inventing a new lexeme, patients use conventional metaphors, e.g. *'I had a blackout '*, and/or create new metaphors, e.g. *'thoughts that cross, that don't get along'*. The challenge for the doctor is to 'jump on the offered train' and to negotiate the details. We will focus on the negotiation process as a dynamic development of a CG, which leads to a shared understanding of the seizure, but also consists of new and efficiently created referential expressions for the disorder, such as the *'thought cross'* for the example above.

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Anna Kutscher is a linguist, researcher, and lecturer at Bielefeld University (Germany). The research examines the optionality of linguistic structures, specifically the factors that influence how speakers use modification via adverbs, adjectives, or particles to clarify their intentions and ad hoc meanings. She is currently focusing on creativity at the interface of semantics and pragmatics in idioms and other multi-word expressions.

18. Nicolás Rivera Bodadilla (Universitat Pompeu Fabra)

Expressive interjections as managers of the common ground: a case study of Chilean Spanish

Expressive interjections are interactional particles that serve to express the speaker's attitude towards a proposition or event (Ameka, 1992). In doing so, they update the interactants' knowledge and beliefs about one another while conversing (Dingemanse, 2021). Still, there is no consensus on how to describe interjections, and their relations with the propositional structure are still in debate. To tackle this issue, the present work aims to describe the function and content of two strikingly similar interjections in Chilean Spanish: *pucha* and *chuta*. To gather data, I extracted three hundred occurrences of these forms from X (a.k.a. Twitter). I analyzed each utterance based on epistemic and emotive dimensions (hedonic valence, (un)expectedness, and previous knowledge) to describe the speaker's attitude towards the proposition under discussion. In addition, I annotated the discursive action in which the speaker's utterance was situated along two dimensions: (dis)agreement (Sacks, 1987) and (dis)affiliation (Lindström & Sorjonen, 2012). The results showed that speakers use both interjections as a reaction to new information and to express negative emotive states. The difference concerns the fact that *chuta* also expresses an epistemic state of unexpectedness. From these results, I propose that the interjections' function is to signal the speaker's unawareness about the proposition shared in the interactional context. The lexical content of these words allows them to express emotive and epistemic attitudes towards that realization and to participate in actions of (dis)affiliation and (dis)agreement. Thus, speakers use these words to share their feelings and thoughts about propositions, with the aim of updating shared knowledge. With this work, I aim to discuss how common ground is constructed and updated through the use of interactional particles, how fundamental culture-specific knowledge is to analyze them, and how interactants share and evaluate information in a technologically-mediated social environment.

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