



Centre for Language and Communication Research

Research Seminar Series

Autumn 2014-15

ENCAP

Any questions?
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Introduction

Seminars take place on Wednesdays from 12.10pm to 1pm in Room 3.58 in the John Percival (Humanities) Building of Cardiff University - Building no 16 on the map at:

<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/locations/maps/index.html>

(Please note the time and location change for Theo van Leeuwen's seminar on 10th December.)

Welcome to the 2014-15 CLCR Research Seminar Series!

This abstract booklet is intended to enable you to pre-plan your attendance at seminars. You're welcome to attend every one and we hope that you will, though each is independent.

These seminars are open to all and **everyone is welcome** - undergraduate, postgraduate students and staff from anywhere in the University, visitors, guests from other universities, people who've never been into a university before... If the talk sounds interesting, just come along!

We have a rich programme this semester covering a wide range of topics that link into a variety of research interests in the Centre for Language and Communication Research at Cardiff University.

Each session typically consists of a presentation from the speaker of around 40 minutes with 10 minutes for questions and discussion from the floor.

SUMMARY OF THE PROGRAMME

Wednesdays 12.10 - 13.00; Room 3.58

- October 15th **Gwen Awbery** (independent researcher)
Who Taught Henry Sweet to Speak Welsh?
- October 29th **Natalie Schilling and James Fitzgerald**
Uncovering staged suicide: Case studies in authorship attribution
- November 5th **Korina Giaxoglou** (Kingston University London)
'Everywhere I go, you're going with me': semiotisations of time and space in Web 2.0 entextualised moments of mourning
- November 12th **Mercedes Durham** (Cardiff University)
Understanding language change through attitudes: How #sexy is the Welsh accent?
- November 26th **Rod Walters**
A study of the segmental and supra-segmental phonology of Rhondda Valleys English
- December 10th
(Wednesday
13.10-14.00
room 2.01) **Theo van Leeuwen** (University of Southern Denmark in Odense)
'Looking good: Can function follow form?'

October 15th Gwen Awbery
Who Taught Henry Sweet to Speak Welsh?

Henry Sweet's pioneering study of a Welsh dialect, "Spoken North Welsh" (Transactions of the Philological Society, 1882-84) has been an important influence on Welsh dialectologists over the years. Very little attention has been paid, however, to the social context in which he carried out the fieldwork on which it is based. Using documentary sources normally associated with research on family history, it is possible to explore how he interacted with the local community, and to cast light on the background of the people who helped him to learn Welsh and research the dialect. It appears that the informants who worked with Henry Sweet were respectable and prosperous members of the community, and do not conform to the stereotypical expectations of more recent dialect surveys, which assume that informants should be of the older generation, have little or no education, and have always lived locally. A similar exploration of the context in which other pioneering dialectologists worked may lead to a better understanding of the early development of the field.



Gwen Awbery is a native speaker of Welsh, and studied linguistics at Cambridge, gaining a PhD for a thesis on Welsh syntax. She worked as a lecturer in the Phonetics Department of Leeds University, then returned to Wales as Assistant Keeper in the Welsh Folk Museum, St. Fagan's, with responsibility for the sound archive and dialect studies. After a period of freelance work, she became Co-ordinating Lecturer for Welsh in the Centre for Lifelong Learning at Cardiff University (LEARN). She has now retired, and works as an independent researcher. She has published widely on a range of different aspects of

Welsh linguistics, including syntax, phonology, dialect variation, language shift and the impact of equal opportunities legislation on Welsh usage.

October 29th **Natalie Schilling** (Georgetown University) and **James Fitzgerald** (The Academy Group, Inc.; FBI [ret.])
Uncovering staged suicide: Case studies in authorship attribution

Although the academic analysis of suicide-related communications often centers on attempting to identify indicators of victim intent (e.g. actual suicide vs. ‘cry for help’), it is more important to first determine whether such communications were indeed authored by the victim or whether the apparent suicide and related communications were staged in an attempt to cover up a murder or attempted murder. Hence, alleged written suicide communications should never be assessed in isolation but rather in comparison with known writings of the victim and, if the investigation dictates, with the known writings of others who may be suspects in the authorship of the communication and/or the actual death.

In 2007, three separate homicides/homicide attempts in Pennsylvania, New York, and Virginia were initially handled as suicides, as each crime scene included an alleged suicide communication. However, in each case factors emerged that suggested homicide (and, in one case, attempted homicide). In each case, forensic linguistic comparison of the alleged suicide communication with documents known to be authored by the victim and by suspected perpetrators yielded invaluable evidence indicative of inconsistency of the ‘suicide’ notes with the victims’ known writings and/or consistency with those of the suspects. Each case resulted in an arrest for the charge of homicide and the eventual successful conviction of each.

In this presentation, we outline the forensic linguistic analyses conducted in connection with these cases, demonstrating the efficacy of qualitative and quantitative forensic stylistic methods of authorial attribution focusing on such features as punctuation, orthography and lexical usages. We highlight linkages between forensic stylistics and sociolinguistic studies of stylistic variation and authorial imitation, as well as recent computational linguistic methods in authorial attribution of computer mediated communications, thereby demonstrating the solid linguistic basis as well as practical utility of the authorial attribution methods used in these three cases.



Natalie Schilling is an Associate Professor of Linguistics at Georgetown University and head of the Language and Communication in Washington, DC (LCDC) research project at Georgetown University. She specializes in the study of language variation and change in American English dialects, including regional, ethnic and gender-based language varieties. Her main expertise is stylistic variation: how and why individuals use different language styles as they shape and reshape personal, interpersonal, and group identities and relations. She conducts forensic linguistic investigation of speaker and author profiling

and authorship attribution. She is the author of *Sociolinguistic Fieldwork* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), co-author of *American English: Dialects and Variation* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2nd edition 2006; 3rd edition in press), and co-editor of the *The Handbook of Language Variation and Change* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2nd edition 2013).



Jim Fitzgerald remains an active criminal profiler and forensic linguist with The Academy Group, Inc., even after retiring with 20 years in the FBI, as well as 11 years before that as a police officer/detective/sergeant. During his law enforcement career he successfully investigated numerous homicides, sexual assaults, and other violent crimes, as well as matters of international notoriety to include the Unabom, Anthrax, and DC Sniper cases as profiler and/or linguist. Jim serves as adjunct professor at two U.S. universities, lectures at others both nationally and internationally, is one of two technical advisors for CBS-TV's *Criminal Minds*, and is co-host and executive producer of A&E's *Killer Profile*.

Jim's memoir of his early years, *A Journey to the Center of the Mind, Book I*, was published in September 2014 by Infinity Publishing, Inc.

November 5th **Korina Giaxoglou** (Kingston University London)
'Everywhere I go, you're going with me': semiotisations of time and space in Web 2.0 entextualised moments of mourning

Digital environments for mourning offer new domains for portraying the deceased's past life, for publicly staging grief and interacting with the dead. According to recent research on digital mourning practices, Web 2.0 environments expand mourning and grieving socially, temporally and spatially (Brubaker et al. 2013) via the participatory entextualisation of shared moments (Giaxoglou 2014) and can be useful in helping the bereaved cope with their loss (Williams and Merten 2009). This presentation will discuss narrative affordances (Georgakopoulou 2013) for semiotising time and space (place) in shared moments of mourning on a Facebook Rest in Peace (R.I.P.) memorial group site. The analysis will show how online mourners plot temporal and spatial imaginings and frames in tribute wall events (Androutsopoulos 2014) on the facebook group's timeline. It will be argued that the different kinds of construed spatiotemporal imaginings and frames are used by the networked bereaved as resources for (i) the negotiation of their relationship with the dead, (ii) the articulation and development of different forms of digital affectivity across time and (iii) the creation and maintenance of ambient affiliation with the networked group members. The analysis of narrative emplotments of time and space as meaning-making resources will be linked to socio-discursive practices and ideologies of mourning, shedding light to users' death-related affective practices in digital contexts and interactions.

References

- Brubaker, J., G. Hayes and P. Dourish. 2013. Beyond the Grave: Facebook as a site for the expansion of death and mourning. *The Information Society* 29 (3), 152-163
- Giaxoglou, K. 2014. "R.I.P. man...u are missed and loved by many": entextualising moments of mourning on a Facebook Rest In Peace group site. Special Issue on Death, mourning and the internet: death cultures in web environments (ed. A. Haverinen), *Thanatos* 3 (1), 10-28.
- Williams, A. and M. Merten. 2009. Adolescents' Online Social Networking Following the Death of a Peer. *Journal of Adolescent Research* 24(1), 67-90.
- Georgakopoulou, A. 2013 Plotting the 'right place' and the 'right time': Place and time as interactional resources in narrative. *Narrative Inquiry* 13 (2), 413-432.
- Androutsopoulos, J. 2014 (in press) Moments of sharing: Entextualization and linguistic repertoires in social networking. Special Issue on Participation & New Media (eds. P. Blivtich & P. Bou-Franch), *Journal of Pragmatics*.



Korina Giaxoglou is Senior Lecturer in English Language and Communication at the Department of Linguistics and Languages at Kingston University London, where she also leads the MA programme in Language & Society. Her research interests include the analysis of entextualisation in oral poetics, narrative and verbal art circulation, sociocultural practices and representations of mourning and grief, digital storytelling and the communication of affect.

November 12th Mercedes Durham (Cardiff University)
Understanding language change through attitudes: How #sexy is the Welsh accent?

Research suggests that examining linguistic attitudes makes it possible to gauge how dialects are viewed in terms of perceived superiority, social attractiveness and dynamism (Zahn and Hopper 1985) but also in terms of which social groups are frequently associated with specific dialects. Tied to this, an understanding of language attitudes can also often help predict or explain shifts in use (Durham 2014), which is valuable in countries, such as the UK, where widespread dialect levelling is underway. This paper will present the results of a study examining attitudes towards the Welsh English accent on Twitter and, as well as establishing what the main associations and impressions are, it will attempt to determine what effect, if any, these attitudes have on actual speakers. The high volume of messages sent on Twitter makes it a valuable tool to consider linguistic attitudes (Campbell-Kibler and Torelli 2012) as it offers opportunities to collect material quickly and across extended periods of time. This study involves an analysis of a corpus of tweets containing the terms *Welsh* and *accent* posted between September 2012 and May 2013. The overall corpus comprises over 87000 tweets and includes replies to other tweets and retweets, so the main analysis relates to a subset of original tweets (the same four days for each month representing over 30 days of tweets). Each of these 6232 tweets was coded for whether the attitudes in it were predominantly positive towards the Welsh accent (as in example 1), negative (2), whether it made some other type of comment on the accent (3) and finally whether it demonstrated some kind of performance of the Welsh accent (4).

- (1) If the Welsh accent was a person we would be dating.
- (2) anyone with a welsh accent i wanna punch in the face
- (3) Mums on the phone to her friend and all I can hear is her welsh accent haha
- (4) *in my best welsh accent* I just munched on a peanut butter nature valley bar! TIDYYY

References

- Campbell-Kibler, K. and Torelli, A. (2012) Tracking enregisterment through online social media. Paper presented at Regional Varieties, Language Shift and Linguistic Identities conference, Aston, Birmingham.
- Durham, M. (2014) 30 years later: Real-time change and stability in attitudes towards the dialect in Shetland. In R. Lawson (ed.) *Sociolinguistics in Scotland*. Palgrave MacMillan. 296-318.
- Zahn, C. and Hopper, R. (1985) Measuring language attitudes: the speech evaluation instrument. *Journal of language and social psychology* 4(2): 113-123.



Mercedes Durham has been at Cardiff University since 2012. Before that she was a lecturer in English Linguistics at the University of Aberdeen. Her research interests include sociolinguistics, language variation and change, English as a world language, dialects of English and the acquisition of variation. She has written articles for *Linguistics*, *English Language and Linguistics*, *Language Variation and Change*, *Journal of Sociolinguistics* among others. She recently published *The Acquisition of Sociolinguistic Competence in a Lingua Franca Context* with Multilingual Matters.

November 26th

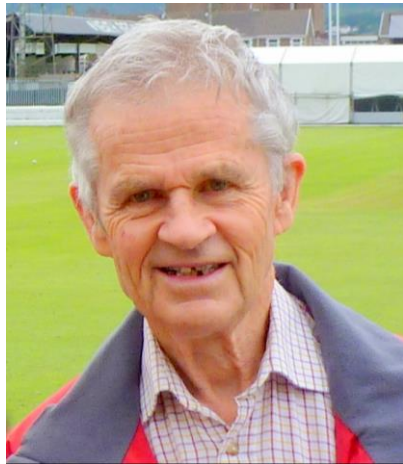
Rod Walters (University of Glamorgan [ret.])

A study of the segmental and supra-segmental phonology of Rhondda Valleys English

The research is a study of male working class pronunciation in the Rhondda Valleys, South East Wales in the late 1990s. Its aim was to describe the main segmental and suprasegmental (prosodic) features of the accent. Recordings were made of 60 permanently resident, working-class males, divided into two age-groups: “the over 60’s” and “the 30’s”. They were interviewed in pairs at Working Men’s Clubs in three different townships of the Rhondda: Treherbert (Rhondda Fawr), Maerdy (Rhondda Fach) and Porth (Lower Rhondda.)

Segmental features were captured mainly via responses to a questionnaire in the form of a quiz (a popular form of club entertainment) and prosodic features via free conversations centred round large photos of Rhondda, past and present. Interviewing the informants in their local Club rather than in a studio produced a variable quality of recordings, but they are adequate on the whole. There are 30 hours of recording, consisting of (for each pair interviewed) (1) responses to questionnaire, and (2) conversations. There are also sound clips embedded throughout the text in chapters of the research (Vowels, Consonants & Prosody).

Rod Walters was born in Neath, South Wales in 1939. He has spent most of his working life overseas, including as Director of a private language school in Almada (Portugal), Head of an EFL department in King AbdulAziz University Jeddah, English Language Advisor to the University of Aleppo, Head of the English Specialism Department in Ta’iz Faculty of Education, and English Language Curriculum Advisor to the Ministry of Education, Sana’a. Returning to Wales in 1990, he worked until retirement in 2004 as a senior lecturer in the University of Glamorgan (now University of South Wales), lecturing in EFL, English Linguistics, History of English and Applied Dialect Studies. While there he completed a study of the phonology of ‘Rhondda Valleys English’ (doctoral thesis, University of Glamorgan 1999.)



He has found that the features which contribute most strongly to the accent are prosodic, and that they are strongly influenced by the Welsh Language.

December 10th **Theo van Leeuwen** (University of Southern Denmark in Odense)
'Looking good: Can function follow form?'

(Please note: This talk will take place 13.10-14.00, in room 2.01!)

Today, writing must do more than communicate, it must also 'look good'. New technologies provide templates for a wide range of document genres which all focus on presentation rather than content.

What does it mean to 'look good'?
Why has it become so important and ubiquitous?
Can it be analysed? Should it?

The paper will explore these questions, first by revisiting Prague School aesthetics and the aesthetics of Charles Morris and Umberto Eco, so as to focus on the key themes of aesthetic theory - the foregrounding of form, pleasure and transgression, and identity - then by asking whether the largely formalistic heritage of rhetoric and literary stylistics can be reconfigured as a social semiotic and systemic-functional approach to the contemporary multimodal aesthetics of 'looking good'



Theo van Leeuwen worked as a film and television producer in his native Holland and Australia. Later he studied linguistics in Sydney and Paris, and variously taught film production, media studies and semiotics at Macquarie University, the London College of Printing and Cardiff University. Between 2005 and 2013 he was Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Technology, Sydney, and since September 2013, he is Professor of Language and Communication at the University of Southern Denmark in Odense, Honorary Professor at Lancaster University and Visiting Professor at the Institute of Education, London. He has published widely in the areas of social semiotics, critical discourse analysis and multimodality. His books include *Reading Images - The Grammar of Visual Design* (with Gunther Kress); *Speech, Music, Sound; Introducing Social Semiotics*; *Global Media Discourse* (with David Machin); and *Discourse and Practice - New Tools for Critical Discourse Analysis* and *The Language of Colour*. With Carey Jewitt, he is a founding editor of the international journal *Visual Communication*.