New Media, New Audiences

NewMA 13 April, 2013

International Workshop & Discussion Forum

Programme & Discussion Topics

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New Media, New Audiences NewMA 13 April, 2013

New Media, New Audiences
NewMA 2013
workshop & discussion forum
When: 13 April, 2013 (Saturday), 10:00 am - 5:00 pm
Where: University of Lodz Conference Centre, Kopcinskiego 16/18, Lodz, Poland
Participation in the workshop is free and open to general public

Linguists from the Institute of English Studies of Lodz University, active in the COST Action IS0906 Transforming Audiences, Transforming Societies, are pleased to invite you to a workshop and a discussion forum on New Media, New Audiences NewMA to discuss language-related issues of media users and audiences within a changing media and communication environment in the contemporary world. Corpus and web-based tools will also be presented, which handle the parsing of web-site specific comment and user discussion structures for efficient retrieval and processing.

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COST Action IS0906, TRANSFORMING AUDIENCES, TRANSFORMING SOCIETIES
PRZEMIANY W POSTRZEGANIU RZECZYWISTOSCI A JZYK NOWYCH MEDIOW, MNiSW Nr. 740/N-COST/2010/0.

University of Lodz team members:
Barbara Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk (co-ordinator), Mikolaj Deckert, Łukasz Drozdz, Monika Kopytowska, Piotr Pezik, Jerzy Tomaszczyk, Jacek Walinski

Workshop Secretaries:
Joanna Pawliczak and Mikołaj Deckert
New Media, New Audiences NewMA 13 April, 2013

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NewMA 2013

PROGRAMME & DISCUSSION TOPICS

13 April, 2013 (Saturday), 10:00 – 17:30
University of Lodz Conference Centre, Kopciskiego 16/18, ód, Poland

9:30–10:00 NewMA registration

10:00–10:25 Barbara Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk: Welcome and Introduction of the Workshop Topic

10:25–11:00 Paul Wilson “38 Degrees: Green Shoots of a New Democratic Process?”

11:00–11:30 Coffee break

11:30–12:05 Barbara Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk “Public internet space & a new democracy”

12:05–12:40 Monika Kopytowska “Politics in (New)MediaSpace: prosumption, e-democracy and political blogging”

12:40–13:15 Monika Gregorowicz-Cap “Politeness in Internet discourse”


13:50–14:25 Jerzy Tomaszczuk “Day-to-day language monitoring and the NKJP”

14:30–15:30 Lunch

15:30–16:05 Agata Klimeczak “Facebook in education: attitudes and thoughts from Lodz”

16:05–16:40 Jacek Walinski “Electronic media creation and sharing in Linguistic Landscape approach for Intercultural Competence Development”

16:40–17:30 tea/coffee and General Discussion Forum:
TRANSFORMATIONS in NEW MEDIA Audiences/Societies
Welcome to NewMA 2013 Workshop and a Discussion Forum

It is our great pleasure to welcome participants of the workshop and a discussion forum on New Media, New Audiences, organized on 13th April, 2013 by the University of Lodz COST Action IS0906 team members Transforming Audiences, Transforming Societies.

1. Focus of interest

The University of Lodz project team is particularly interested in the transformation taking place at present across communication contexts in terms of language-related changes, a focus on the Information Communication Technology and the use of computer-mediated communication with reference to the identification of new types of the Author(s) – Audience(s) relationships, as well as evolving social relationships. A parallel Polish research project, Przemiany w postrzeganiu rzeczywistości a język nowych mediów ‘Changes in the perception of reality and the language of new media’ (Polish Ministry of Science & Higher Education), investigates the language of the outside world event description as used in the Polish media discourses juxtaposed to the English ones.

The Lodz University COST team is engaged in developing electronic corpora relevant to the research topics in the projects: Polish blogs, Polish and English online newspaper comments, and English Usenet data collected in electronic corpora acquired from pertinent websites. We have also been developing related corpus tools together with a system of data tag-sets.

2. Tools and resources development

2.1. Web crawlers for Polish and English web media content

A number of web-crawlers have been developed for Polish and English web media contents. In addition to handling basic web-page scraping these tools are customised to handle the parsing of website specific comments and user discussion structures. The tools are used to parse, normalize and insert textual contents into databases which are indexed for efficient retrieval and processing.

2.2. Emergent identity and internet emotion studies

A series of research papers has been prepared on the application of an Interconnectivity Value (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk 2012), understood as a sum total of the number and type of discourse links among participants of the same discussion thread as an indicator of CMC users' emotional involvement in the events and emerging group identities. This is argued to lead to the development of a new sense of the internet-bound democracy (e-democracy) in contemporary societies (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk this volume, Kopytowska this volume, Gregorowicz-Cap this volume, Wilson this volume).

2.3. Sentiment-annotated corpus of comments to articles in Polish and American online newspaper websites.

A comparable corpus of readers’ comments to online Polish and American newspaper articles about the 2012 US presidential elections has been developed. Each comment is manually classified for pro- or anti-Obama sentiment. Keywords and phrases were extracted and aggregated automatically over each article
and cross-linked between languages. The annotation tier of the corpus will be made available under an open CC-like license, together with pointers to external copyrighted contents (which cannot be redistributed as such).

2.4. Graph databases of Polish political blogs

A graph database model of social media textual data has been developed within the project. The model is capable of scalable storing and retrieving mixed social interaction and textual data. Applications of this model for the analysis of new media discourse were presented in 2012 at the HLTDays conference in Warsaw.

3. Public dissemination and social impact

Public relations professionals and media communication experts could benefit from the results of research on the formation of online emotion patterning, formulaic sentiment markers in online discourse in general (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk 2012 and this volume) and online political discourse (Deckert, Pzik and Dród, forthcoming). Their study, using a novel method of phraseology extraction (Pzik, forthcoming), shows that the advent of electronic and social media has brought new mechanisms of instant formulaicity and idiomatization, which play an important role in linguistic appraisal. For stakeholders, there are potentially very practical implications of understanding the linguistic aspects of the influence internet memes and idiomatic soundbites have on the evolution of opinion and sentiment in today's highly interactive media and web-based social networks. The results of those investigations will also be highly relevant to the members of civil society such as journalists for whom detecting evaluation in language – whether in their own output or in the sources they work with – is a major issue. Similarly, media companies will benefit from such sentiment analyses because they are a vital means of learning about the audience’s or clients’ preferences or needs which get coded linguistically and organised in patterns that can be uncovered with the use of corpus techniques supplemented with qualitative insights.

There are still other types of impact worth emphasizing. One involves using the internet resources and tools in intercultural contexts (Walinski this volume) and language pedagogy (Klimczak this volume). One of the professional duties of linguists is also to monitor the flow of language, the changes that take place in it, on an on-going basis. The results of a comprehensive examination of language in the process of change are relevant, and of direct or indirect interest, to all language users, i.e. the society at large, above all to educators, media people, public policy planners, the legal profession, politicians etc. (Tomaszczyk 2012). What makes such work as we do particularly pertinent is that there exist a wide range of myths and misconceptions concerning language in general and language change – especially lexical innovation – in particular.

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Politeness in Internet discourse

Electronic communication via chatgroups, instant messages, social network services and other Web communicators in many ways bears huge resemblance to real life communication. Electronic media provide a person-to-person interaction with its social character. The aim of my presentation is to analyse the semantic content and the pragmatic properties of the selected chat transcripts in order to show that despite the high costs of being polite the users of “netspeak” do take an effort and act according to the rules of pragmatic politeness.
The world-wide embracement of New Media, and especially Social Media have been presenting teachers with countless opportunities for stimulating learners’ language learning processes alongside fostering intercultural communication. Nearly 9 million people in Poland are active Facebook users (according to www.socialbakers.com) – perhaps only a drop in the sea of what has been estimated at 500,000,000 active users world-wide (data from 2011 provided by www.onlineschools.org), but still an impressive number. It has been well documented that the Internet plays a significant role in everyday lives of Europeans of all ages, and that Europeans do share a number of tendencies in their online behaviour (see e.g. Eurobarometers 125 (2002), 248 (2008), 313 (2011), 359 (2011)). Yet do language teachers take advantage of this fact?

The present study focuses on Social Media and particularly Facebook. Facebook, more than any other Social Media has become engrained in everyday lives of millions of people and has been changing the way we communicate, search for information, learn, construct our identities and develop friendships to name just a few. It is the impact Facebook has on language learning and language teaching that this paper also focuses on. A questionnaire study has been conducted in order to a) establish the level of awareness and attitudes Polish teachers of English have regarding Social Media, and particularly Facebook – do they know what potential lies in incorporating them into their courses, do they know how to use New and Social Media to aid language learning; and b) what attitudes learners exhibit regarding the use of New and Social media in their education. The results show show an interesting discrepancy between what teachers believe are students’ attitudes and what they really are as the students prove reluctant to allow education to invade Facebook – their “private world where adults are not allowed”.

Facebook in education: attitudes and thoughts from Lodz
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Politics in (New)MediaSpace: prosumption, e-democracy and political blogging

The emergence and rapid development of new media and the growth of political blogosphere have over the last decades become a key concern of theorists, journalists and policy makers, stimulating research in the socio-political potential and communicative nature of cyberspace. The near-instantaneous, dialogic, and decentralized nature and interactivity make this part of MediaSpace an ultra-attractive site for extended political debate, citizen participation, and a more direct and effective communication between political elites and the rest of the society (McKenna and Pole 2008; Keren 2006, 2010; Coleman and Wright 2008; Coleman and Blumler 2010; Street 2011). At the same time, hybridization of (online) genres, non-linearity of textual forms, and a new dimension of interactivity and intertextuality, have brought about, to use Kress’s (2005) words, the “crisis” of the traditional status quo within the domain of representation and communication, creating the need for redefining traditional forms and for generating new methods of critical study to be applied to texts structurally and functionally different from the (political) genres traditionally studied in the past.

The study takes under scrutiny political blogs with a view to establishing their status within MediaSpace (Couldry and McCarthy 2004) and their generic profile, both in terms of structure and functions. Blogging discourse is understood here as both “product” and “process”; hence the analysis encompasses the motivations behind producing a blog, blogging practices, and blogger-audience interaction. This relatively new genre in political communication is discussed in the context of “mediatization”, a meta-process transforming the relationship between media, society and politics through creating a common spatiotemporal, cognitive and axiological sphere of shared experience, and supplementing the social activities which previously took place only face-to-face with virtual interaction (Krotz 2007, 2009; Strömbäck 2008, 2010, 2011; Hepp 2013), and the related phenomenon of “prosumption” (Ritzer and Jurgenson 2010).

On the theoretical level, the paper offers a new integrated approach towards discourse of the political blogosphere, combining CDS and cognitive linguistic perspectives with insights from social semiotics and media studies (including the theories of MediaSpace and mediatization). Quantitative (e.g. keyword analysis, concordance analysis, semantic vectors) and qualitative methods are used to explore the discourse of political blogs written by active party politicians: the corpus of Polish and English-language data comprises the two most prominent political blogs in each country along with their readers’ comments from the left and right ends of the political spectrum. Since the four blogs were established at different times, to normalize the data from 8 corpora (with separate corpora created for each blogger’s posts and subsequent comments), the material analyzed is limited to blogs posted between 1st January 2010 and 31st July 2011.
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Public internet space & a new democracy

I focus in the paper on the idea of a new democracy as observed in the internet communication and exemplify it with a discussion and comments of different groups of users on events presented in on-line press.

What is of particular interest is the dynamics of the participants' attitudes and stance which are uncovered or arise in connection with a particular event. They potentially spread in the audiences and affect the participants’ identity development and maintenance with reference to the given issue and can bring real effects in the outside world. On the basis of the data I identify online communication types, expressed in the use of a set of particular discourse strategies and their linguistic realization as well as with the character and structural type of what I propose to be called (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk 2012) the users' exchange Interconnectivity Value, understood as a frequency and type of interactional contacts a given user starts and maintains with other users, participating in a given discussion.

The process of particular importance in this context involves the mechanism of emergent identity formation in Computer-Mediated Communication, grounded in a sense of common emotionality around various issues, predominantly of social and political character. An analysis of the dynamics of such discourses, exemplified by the comments to online newspaper articles, will be presented to instigate a discussion of what can be observed as a new order of practicing democracy in the contemporary society.
In this talk we discuss a sentiment-centred study of naturally-occurring online political discourse as represented in user comments posted with reference to articles published around the 2012 US presidential election. The data were acquired from major American and Polish news websites – CNN.com and gazeta.pl respectively.

We used an automatic method of extracting, labelling and ranking formulaic lexical and lexico-grammatical sequences, which made it possible to identify what can be termed “formulaic sentiment markers”. In addition to discussing our methodological approach, we will look into a number of such evaluative phraseological formations to show that the linguistic coding of sentiment tends to be correlated with language use automaticity. Another focus will be on patterns that have been observed to emerge from the data collections suggesting some cultural transfer across languages.
The purpose of the work to be reported is to establish how NKJP (National Corpus of Polish) materials can be of use in interpreting the (highly opportunistic) data I have been collecting to investigate the ways in which speakers of Polish have been responding to changes taking place in the country since 1989. At the moment I focus on metapragmatic comments speakers make on selected lexical items in (media) conversational Polish. Specifically I look at comments which convey temporal information about lexical items, as illustrated by the example below:

"... in particular the Orient, what we now call the Middle East, was heavily influenced by a string of colonial administrations (xix c., BBCWS, 2004, M50, historian)"

Of interest in cases such as the one above is not just that *(the) Orient* is felt to be dated but that the speaker felt it necessary to share his feelings about it with his interlocutor and the BBC listeners. (The behaviour seems to be more common in Polish than in English.) In other examples an item is said to be new, the group including vague words. Also of interest is the extent to which such and similar sentiments are shared by other members of the speech community and the role disclaiming, or flagging, plays in lexical development.

The longer term project is to trace the transition from idiolects to convention.
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Electronic media creation and sharing in Linguistic Landscape approach for Intercultural Competence Development

The Web 2.0 paradigm, which is prevalent in modern online services, enables learners to participate in the learning process through exchange of information (learners act as both content consumers, and content creators). This study demonstrates an application of the Linguistic Landscape approach to exploration of objective cultural diversity implemented with Google Maps service. The application demonstrates how to employ media creation and sharing in Linguistic Landscape approach to hands-on examination of cultural diversity through the pedagogical perspective of authentic, informal, and situated learning conducted in the framework of connectivism.
38 Degrees: Green Shoots of a New Democratic Process?

38 Degrees is a British organisation with over one million members that campaigns on a number of diverse issues, including the environment, climate change, corporate tax dodging, and opposition to the privatisation of the National Health Service (NHS), the police and the fire service. Most of the activity takes place on the Internet, which allows members to discuss and vote on the issues that they campaign on together. 38 Degrees members can also suggest new campaigns on the 38 Degrees website, the most popular of which are voted on through regular polls of 38 Degrees members. The main focus of most campaigns are e-petitions, which are delivered to MPs. Other activities include meeting government ministers, sending emails to 38 Degrees members’ local MPs, publishing adverts in national newspapers and putting up posters all over Britain. Since its launch on 26th May, 2009, 38 Degrees has achieved success in a diverse range of campaigns, such as scrapping plans to sell-off British national forests to private firms, exposing the billions of pounds that are lost a year because of tax dodging, granting asylum for Kiana Firouz, and forcing the Lib Dem Health Minister, Norman Lamb, to revise the first version pro-privatisation NHS regulations. 38 Degrees claims to be strengthening democracy by ensuring that its members’ voices are heard at regular, frequent intervals rather than only once every five years at general elections. The potential for organisations like 38 Degrees to develop and improve the democratic process by empowering individual citizens is central to their ability to transform societies.
Select references:


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University of Chemnitz conference Culture in Language: Language in Media, Variation in Research July 13-15, 2012, Lodz Transforming team

University of Chemnitz conference Culture in Language: Language in Media, Variation in Research July 13-15, 2012Language, Culture & Film: Monika Kopytowska, Matthias
Hofmann, Sascha Schmidt, Michaela Brüll, Annabel Haseloff, Lisann Hartmann, Ilknur Gürses


University of Chemnitz conference Culture in Language: Language in Media, Variation in Research July 13-15, 2012 Language, Culture & Internet: Josef Schmied, John Osborne, ukasz Dró d


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Summer Institute Languages and Cultures in Contact www.silcc.pl (Ege University, Izmir, Turkey) The cyberpragmatics of blogs (workshop, Dr. M. Kopytowska)
Summer Institute Languages and Cultures in Contact www.silcc.pl (Ege University, Izmir, Turkey) Linguistic and cultural response to globalisation

Summer Institute Languages and Cultures in Contact www.silcc.pl (Ege University, Izmir, Turkey) English lexical loans in the Polish press 1972-2005 (workshop, Mr. J. Tomaszczyk)

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