3rd Fictive Interaction symposium

Zhejiang University, China

Co-organizers: Esther Pascual, Xiang Mingjian, and Zhao Yushan

Monday 13 June

10:00 - 11:00 am: – Esther Pascual, Room: Qinghe, School of International Studies

‘Fictive interaction and the conversation frame: From theory to practice’

11:00 - 1:00pm – Brunch

Room: Yuanzheng Qizhen Hotel, 4th Floor, Lizhou Hall

1:00 -1:50 pm – Stef Spronck

‘Fictive Interaction as a framework for explaining verbal categories’

1:50 - 2:40 pm – Gusztav Demeter

‘Multimodal Fictive Apology Constructions’

2:40 - 3:00 pm – Coffee break

3:00 - 3:50 pm – Todd Oakley

‘Multimodal Rhetorical Criticism’

3:50 pm - 4:40 pm: Sergeiy Sandler

‘Language as literature: Action, character, and plot in conversation’

4:40 pm - 5:50 pm Kevin Newhams

‘Clear Eyes, Full Hearts, Can't Lose: The Child as a Fictive Character in Persuasive Writing’

7:00 pm. – Dinner Xixi park wetland

Tuesday 14 June

9:00-10:30: Todd Oakley (Room 201 School of International Studies)

‘Deixis and Personhood: Autism and Intersubjectivity and the Fluidity to Inelasticity Hypothesis’

11:00 - 1:00 pm – Lunch

Room: Yuanzheng Qizhen Hotel, 4th Floor, Lizhou Hall (圆正启真酒店四楼梨洲厅)

1:00 -1:50 pm – Zhao Wei and Dr. Chen Gunning, Zhejiang Normal University

‘Analysis of Pragmatic Functions of Echolalia in Autism（Aging from 6 to 8)’

1:50 - 2:40 pm –Aline Dornelas and Esther Pascual

‘When 'Alô!' means telephone: An elicitation study of fictive speech by autistic children and controls’

2:40 - 3:00 pm – Coffee break

3:00 - 3:50 pm –Zhao Yushan and Prof. Ma Bosen

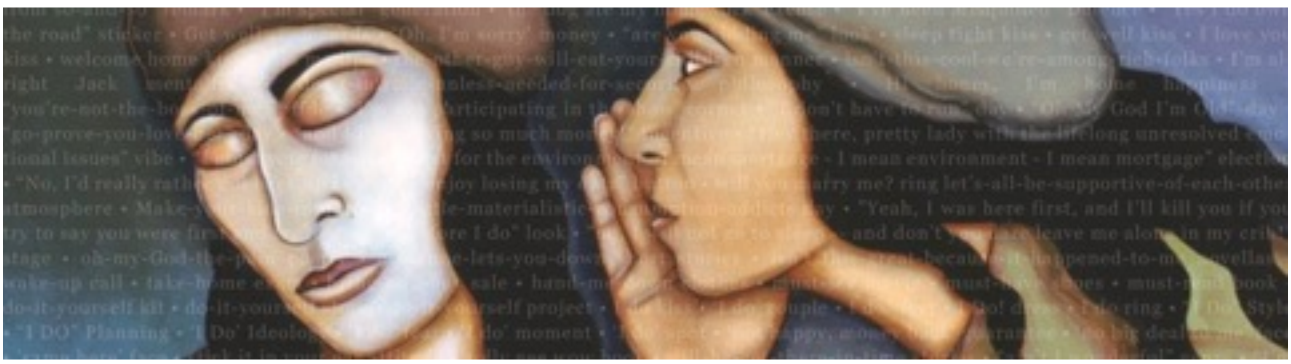
‘Echolalia as Referential Resource by Chinese Autistic Children: A Preliminary Study’

3:50 pm - 4:40 pm: Xiang Mingjian and Prof. Ma Bosen

‘How can I persuade you? A cognitive rhetorical analysis of the use of fictive questions in an Old Chinese text’

4:40 pm - 5:50 pm: Discussion: Todd Oakley

7:00 pm. – Dinner near Zijingang campus



Abstracts

'Fictive interaction and the conversation frame: From theory to practice'

Esther Pascual, Zhejiang University, China

Stemming from the assumption that social interaction is an essential aspect of human existence, I present the argument, discussed throughout the workshop, that there is a conversational basis for thought and language. Specifically, I discuss the latest research on *fictive interaction* (Pascual 2002, 2014), that is the use of the frame of ordinary conversation as a means to structure: the conceptualization of reality (construing dance as a conversation), discourse (monologues organized as dialogues), and grammar ("*why me?* attitude"). I suggest that fictive interaction is a fundamental cognitive phenomenon, a ubiquitous discourse-structuring devise, a possibly universal linguistic construction, and an effective communicative strategy in both expert communication and language pathology. To support this claim, and occasionally referring to work by the other workshop participants, I present a cross-linguistic study involving a wide variety of unrelated languages (spoken and signed, with and without a written code) and modes of communication (oral, written, visual). The communicative data discussed ranges from literature (and literary translation), legal argumentation in high-profile criminal trials and marketing (i.e. advertisement and branding) to language pathology (i.e. conversations by adults suffering from Broca's aphasia and children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder). I hope to show that the intimate relation between language and interaction is reflected in cognition, discourse, and grammar, and that the study of fictive interaction has both important theoretical implications and practical applications.

Fictive Interaction as a framework for explaining verbal categories

Stef Spronck, University of Leuven, Belgium

One of the most reliably universal properties of language is that every language allows its speakers to discuss thoughts or utterances that do not originate with themselves. Reported speech constructions, the grammatical construction type dedicated to this function, display a range of rather idiosyncratic properties and have a remarkable tendency to develop secondary functions (cf. Pascual 2014, ch. 4). These functions, however, are also limited to a remarkably consistent set of meanings, which show similarities across languages that cannot simply be attributed to language contact or substrate influence.

In this talk I start with a discussion of the polyfunctionality of reported speech constructions, and particularly of the matrix verb SAY, in 15 languages from around the Papua New Guinea region and subsequently place these findings in a wider typological context.

I argue that the displayed functions can be related to several core verbal categories and present a reinterpretation of the description of these verbal categories in Jakobson (1957) that characterises the relation between these categories and non-quotational reported speech. Although I mainly discuss examples of clausal fictive interaction, the talk also draws parallels with other types of fictive interaction, such as fictive address forms and fictive (rhetorical) questions.

References

Jakobson, R. 1957. *Shifters, verbal categories and the Russian verb*, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University.

Pascual, E. 2014. *Fictive Interaction: The Conversation Frame in Thought, Language, and Discourse*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Multimodal Fictive Apology Constructions

Gusztav Demeter, Case Western Reserve University

Previous work has shown that fictive apologies are instantiations of the construction [Explicity-Apology NounOfAddress] (Demeter, 2011, In Press) in terms of the Construction Grammar theory advocated by Goldberg (1992, 1995, 2003, 2006) and Croft (2002, 2005), among others. In the interaction, this construction marks the beginning of the fictive interaction in which the fictive apology occurs. Moreover, the noun of address in the construction is crucial as it marks the role shift of discourse characters to addressee of the fictive apology (Demeter, In Press). In written discourse, the linguistic construction is the only indication of both the fictive apology and the fictive interaction in which it occurs. However, unlike written discourse, spoken interaction is by nature multimodal as it includes voice pitch, intonation, gestures, and other non-linguistic manifestations, that contribute to the construal of meaning. Therefore, constructions are themselves multimodal (Steen & Turner, 2012). Some of the questions that arise when comparing fictive apologies in multimodal communication to those occurring in written discourse are i) To what extent do non-linguistic features of communication such as gestures, gaze, intonation, and visual clues contribute to the meaning of fictive apologies and/or to construing the frame needed to understand their discourse function? and ii) What multimodal constructions are used to express fictive apologies?

This presentation will attempt to answer these questions by analyzing fictive apologies occurring in the UCLA NewsScape Archive of television and video news programs facilitated by the Distributed Little Red Hen Lab, co-directed by Francis Steen and Mark Turner. The analysis shows that non-linguistic features of communication are indeed part of a multimodal construction used to express fictive apologies. Consider the following example from the television show *Late Show with Stephen Colbert*: "Now, ending testing on lab chimps is great news for everyone, except, of course, for lab rats. **Sorry, guys**, we're downsizing" (2015-11-26_0735_US_KCBS_Late_Show_with_Stephen_Colbert). The apparent apology is addressed to the lab rats for not being included in stopping lab testing alongside chimps. However, both the interaction and the apology are fictive, as the intended main function of the utterance is humor. Figure 1 is a screen capture at the moment the fictive apology "sorry, guys" is uttered.

Figure 1. 2015-11-26_0735_US_KCBS_Late_Show_with_Stephen_Colbert.1748.jpg. Los Angeles, California. UCLA NewsScape Archive, 2005-present. Available at <http://newsscape.library.ucla.edu/>

As can be seen in Figure 1, the fictive apology is accompanied by an image of a lab rat on the screen. The speaker turns towards the image and points to it, which marks the shift of the lab rat from topic of the discourse to that of addressee. Besides these gestures, there are also changes in pitch and intonation, which mark the fictive interaction. The linguistic expression "sorry, guys" together with the gestures, changes in voice pitch and intonation, as well as the on-screen picture contribute to the construal of the fictive apology and form a multimodal construction.

In conclusion, this presentation adds another dimension to the analysis of fictive apologies by investigating multimodal communication. As the discussion shows, fictive apologies are also expressed by multimodal constructions that contain both linguistic and non-linguistic elements.

Multimodal Rhetorical Criticism

Todd Oakley, Case Western Reserve University

This talk explores the role fictive interaction plays in two recent political speeches during the 2012 election year in the United States. The first, and most famous, is actor Clint Eastwood's keynote address to the Republican National Convention in which he engages in a fictional conversation with President Barack Obama; and the second is by Mark Sanford, former Republican governor of South Carolina and candidate for US Congress who stages a fictive debate with Democratic representative and minority party leader, Nancy Pelosi. Eastwood's performance was roundly criticized in the media by partisans, pundits, reporters, and analysts across the political spectrum, many of whom openly speculated that the 82-year- old was exhibiting signs of senescence. Sanford's performance did not receive the publicity of the former, but was viewed by voters of South Carolina, and represents a much tighter and effective form of fictive interaction, eventually leading to his election to congress, despite the national coverage of a sex-scandal that forced him to resign from the governorship a year before. The factors contributing to the failure of Eastwood's performance and and those contributing to success of Sanford's will be the focus of this analysis. Special attention will be paid to the multi-modal dimensions of each performance, particularly matters of gesture, use of props and staging devices, and camera work. Ultimately, the goal of this presentation is to demonstrate how of cognitive linguistics and construction grammar inform and deepen rhetorical criticism.

Language as literature: Action, character, and plot in conversation

Sergeiy Sandler, Independent Scholar

Works of fiction have *characters*, who perform *actions*, which make up the *plot* of the story. In this chapter, following some recent work in cognitive linguistics, I develop a tentative qualitative analytical framework for using the categories of action, character, and plot to analyze the meaning of ordinary language utterances. I propose a preliminary list of action levels, character types, and plot functions, which can be used in analyzing discourse using this framework, and apply this apparatus to the analysis of two conversation transcripts. Examining ordinary talk in the terms proposed here helps substantiate a radically enactivist and dialogic conception of linguistic meaning by extending an action-based account of the meaning of full linguistic utterances to also cover utterances' content.

Clear Eyes, Full Hearts, Can't Lose: The Child as a Fictive Character in Persuasive Writing

Kevin Newhams, Case Western Reserve University

This presentation will argue that a child can be used as a fictive character in persuasive writing by citing examples from five pieces across four mediums: a print article, two online articles, a satirical twitter post, and a play. In these pieces, children are used as a fictive character in the role of addresser and addressee in a fictive trialogue between the writer, the child, and the bystander/audience. The child/ren represents a factive character whose views have not yet been influenced by the world at large (not yet biased) and have a simple mind (in the sense that children can only understanding things that are obvious. These factive characteristics inform two distinct characteristics associated with the child as a fictive character: because the child is unbiased, their viewpoint is the correct viewpoint and if the child can reach this conclusion, this conclusion should be obvious to an adult. As a result, the child as a fictive character can be used in persuasive writing to tell the audience that the side represented by the author is the right side when bias is stripped away and that the conclusion should be obvious to anyone who can think on or above the level of a child. Additionally, using a child to deliver one's message makes it difficult for someone who disagrees with the position being taken to craft an effective response as they would immediately be seen as arguing with a child, which demeans their argument before they even start. The paper then discusses possible uses for this phenomenon in everyday discourse and future research that could be done on the phenomenon.

Deixis and Personhood: Autism and Intersubjectivity and the Fluidity to Inelasticity Hypothesis

Todd Oakley (with Đorđe Vidanović), Case Western Reserve University

We present the broad outlines of theory of intersubjectivity as it pertains to the production and understanding of deixis in discourse produced by two verbal autistic subjects. After a brief philosophical and linguistic overview of deixis, we provide an outline of the intersubjectivity matrix as it normally develops. We then use this framework as a heuristic for assessing the performance of our participants as they conversed with typically developed counterparts about specific video clips. Verbal autists possess many of the intersubjectivity skills required for normal conversation but lack the ability to deploy stable reference points when using the deictic scheme to communicate about situations in which either the topic or the audience are displaced in time and space. We present the Fluidity to Inelasticity Hypothesis (FIH) in which an initially fluid and chaotic use of deictic forms settles into a stable but inflexible deictic scheme.

Analysis of Pragmatic Functions of Echolalia in Autism（Aging from 6 to 8）

Zhao Wei and Chen Guanxing, Zhejiang Normal University

Echolalia is a prototypical characteristic of autistic children's language. The majority of available research has examined echolalia —both immediate and delayed echolalia— as isolated phenomena, rather than as integral parts of the developing linguistic and cognitive system of autistic children. Also, much attention has been paid to the eliciting factors of echoic utterances, but their pragmatic functions were not fully described. This study constitutes a preliminary attempt to investigate how autistic children use echolalia in naturalistic communication with the researcher. By comparing the experimental group of autistic children and the control group in terms of number of incidences of echolalia and the distribution of its functions, the study shows that individual differences among three autistic children are extremely apparent. Moreover, the echolalia produced by each child has a specific pragmatic function. There are significant differences in functions of immediate echolalia between the two groups, and significant differences in functions of delayed echolalia between the two groups, as well. Based on the results of this study, we suggest that teachers and researchers should first find out the specific function of a given child's echolalia, and then meet the child's needs. They also need to implement trainings in language recognition and understanding of these children so as to improve their ability to respond appropriately.

'When 'Alô!' means telephone: An elicitation study of fictive speech by autistic children and

controls'

Aline Dornelas, Federal University of Juiz de Fora, Brazil, and Esther Pascual, Zhejiang University, China

It is well-known that reported speech is rarely a verbatim representation of prior discourse (Tannen 1986, 1989; Clark and Gerrig 1990). What is less known is that literal quotations are often used fictively, for more than reproducing past discourse. Examples of such 'fictive direct speech' are: "*I Have A Dream* foundation', in which King's famous words metonymically are used to present an ideology, or "*I do* kiss", in which the wedding vow serves to refer to that ritual (Pascual 2014).

Children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder often use verbatim or paraphrased repetitions of previous interactions or formulaic expressions as communicative strategy. Instances are saying "*Alô!*" to refer to a telephone or "*Goal!!*" to refer to a football match (Dornelas & Pascual forth.). This seems to be successfully used as conversational strategy by autistic children and young typically developing children, and be used as a pragmatic option by non-autistic children over six years of age (Dornelas, Pascual & Oakley in prep.).

This study compares such usages of direct speech for non-reports by five Brazilian Portuguese children with autism and ten controls, one control group matching the autistic group in chronological age (6 to 11 years) and one matching it in cognitive age (2 to 4 years). We prepared two data elicitation activities based on the occurrences of a previous naturalistic study (Dornelas & Pascual forth.). The stimuli for the first activity consisted of twenty pictures of objects, five objects directly related to communication and five objects not directly related to communication, each depicted both in isolation and in its contextual usage. For each picture the children had to answer: "What is this?", and "What is it for?" or "What are they doing?". The second stimuli consisted of six pictures of facial expressions and the video of a practical joke with two facial expression close-ups.

In both activities we observed that autistic children used more instances of verbatim speech as communicative strategy than the children in the two control groups. Autistic children and young controls produced only literal reported speech, while older controls used literal as well as creative enactments (e.g. "face of *'Oh! My God! What now!'*" to describe a scared face). There was no significant difference between the numbers of productions referring to objects directly or not directly related to interaction.

Echolalia as Referential Resource by Chinese Autistic Children: A Preliminary Study

Zhao Yushan and Prof. Ma Bosen, Zhejiang University

Direct speech can be used fictively in various genres of discourse, such as literature, law, or marketing (Pascual 2014). An example is "*I do* ring", in which the wedding vow is used to refer to the entire ritual of getting married. In everyday as well as professional communication, such fictive speech is used only for restricted purposes, for instance for creating beauty or a humorous effect.

However, children suffering from Autistic Spectrum Disorder seem to use this strategy more widely. What is called 'echolalia', manifested as the literal quotation of the speech of others, is in fact a prototypical characteristic of autism and can be used to achieve various communicative ends (Prizant and Rydell 1984; Sterponi 2013). Instances are quoting the words of a movie narrator (e.g. "*Thomas and Percy are a pair of good friends*") to refer to the cartoon movie or saying "*Wish you happy birthday"* to refer to a birthday cake. In this study, we explore how widely verbal autistic children use echolalia as a means to refer to different types of actual and imaginary entities and individuals, and whether they do so successfully.

The subjects involved in our study are eight Chinese verbal autistic children above six years of age, all of whom produce echolalic language. We will video-tape the children in an elicitation picture-naming task. The stimuli for the activity consist of twenty drawings of entities and individuals in two versions each (twenty in isolation and twenty contextualized). Each subject will be given twenty pictures of all entities (ten in isolation and ten used in context) by their therapist during their weekly individual therapy session. For each picture, they will need to answer the questions "Do you know what this is?" or " Do you know who he/she/it is?", posed by their therapist.

For the data analysis, we will manually transcribe all instances of referential expressions used by each child and calculate the percentage of echolalia. We hypothesise that echolalia is a useful resource for identifying various entities and individuals by verbal autistic children, which may thus serve as criterion for diagnosis.

How can I persuade you? A cognitive rhetorical analysis of the use of fictive questions in an Old Chinese text

Xiang Mingjian and Prof. Ma Bosen

School of International Studies, Zhejiang University, China

This paper deals with the use of non-information-seeking questions in the entire *Zhuangzi*, a foundational text of Daoism (4th century B.C.). These questions are: rhetorical questions ("Why bother?") and expository questions ("Why do I say this? Because...") (Xiang & Pascual 2016). Despite their interrogative forms, these questions are fictive, since their corresponding answers are either presupposed or provided in the immediate discourse. Critically, they are highly successful rhetorical strategies and thus important for structuring the text and/or presenting its argument (Pascual 2002, 2014).

Our corpus search suggests that out of the 965 questions in the *Zhuangzi* text, 405 are rhetorical questions and 229 expository questions. The abundant use of fictive questions in the text serves a variety of pragma-rhetorical functions (cf. Lou & Zeng 1987; Ilie 1994, 1999; Shao 1996; Badarneh 2003). This paper draws an analogy between the rhetorical use of fictive questions in the *Zhuangzi* text and interrogative-related figures in Greek and Roman rhetoric, such as epiplexis, erotesis, hypophora and ratiocinatio (Lanham 1991). We argue that the ubiquitous rhetorical use of fictive questions in ancient written texts across languages and cultures (e.g. Miller 1996; Badarneh 2003; Xiang & Pascual 2016) is closely related to basic human cognitive capacities such as attention (cf. Oakley 2009), memory, mental simulation and perspective taking. Fictive questions are produced to draw the readers' attention (Lv [1942] 2002; Ilie 1994; Shao 1996) and reiteratively used for mnemonic purposes. While reading these questions, readers will mentally simulate the questioning (Bergen 2005, 2012; Xiang & Pascual 2016), thereby taking the questioner's perspective, and come up with possible silent answers in their mind, which generally contribute to getting themselves convinced through self-persuasion (Nienkamp 2001).