

## **Orality, literacy – and the digital?:**

### **New perspectives on language of immediacy and language of distance**

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#### **Panel description**

‘Language of immediacy’ and ‘language of distance’ (Koch and Oesterreicher 2012) describe the properties of conceptually spoken and conceptually written language. While spoken language can be quite distant (e.g. in the courtroom or speeches), written language may also be quite immediate (e.g. in personal letters); boundaries are sometimes fuzzy. This has repeatedly been observed in earlier research (e.g. Schaefer 1992) and has become increasingly true in language use as to be found in digital media communication. Digital media provide us with new, unprecedented opportunities to communicate. Based on these new opportunities, research on language of immediacy and language of distance currently experiences a revival: Social media platforms and apps such as *Facebook* and *WhatsApp* allow us to communicate in a way that is closely linked to language of immediacy (despite being in the written mode) and offer new ways of expressing non-verbal and paraverbal signals as well. Analysing digital communication through the lens of orality and literacy is, essentially, “a philosophical move to investigate unstable and richly semiotic communicative and interactional events through the paradoxically traditional keyhole of verbal language” (Sindoni 2013: 2).

The panel picks up on and expands the interest in the topic and provides an opportunity to reassess, rethink, and (re-)apply the notions of orality, literacy, language of immediacy, and language of distance by considering texts from various domains. While a strong focus of the panel is on digital and computer-mediated communication (CMC) (see Krefeld 2016), we also invite contributions which analyse language of immediacy and language of distance from a diachronic and/or a World Englishes perspective.

Central questions related to the panel are the following:

- How are varieties and their features realised online? In which ways do speakers of a variety imitate the way they speak in online communication?

- Which intentions or aims do speakers pursue in digital communications (e.g. exploiting linguistic resources, code-switching and -mixing as a means of expressing multilingual identities, creating in-group identities etc.)
- Which role do emojis play in communicating para- and non-verbal features?
- Which insights can be gained by applying different conceptual models (e.g. Jucker 2018; Koch and Oesterreicher 2012) to the digital realm?
- How does that connect to earlier/traditional attempts to imitate spoken language in, for example, plays and other literary texts in the history of English?

### Call for contributions

We invite contributions (20min. presentation+10min. discussion) on the abovementioned topics or other topics which address questions related to the panel. Please send a one-page abstract to

Dr. Sarah Buschfeld ([sarah.buschfeld@ur.de](mailto:sarah.buschfeld@ur.de)) and

Dr. Sven Leuckert ([sven.leuckert@tu-dresden.de](mailto:sven.leuckert@tu-dresden.de)).

The deadline for abstract submission is **January 15, 2019**.

### References

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