

-- version1 - 20 Sept. 2021 --

## Gaze in social interaction

Sept. 30 – Oct. 2 2021

Alpine Classic Hotel (Leysin)

<http://www.classic-hotel.ch>

train stop: Leysin-Versmont (It's the second stop in Leysin, after 'village')

### Thursday Sept. 30

- 14h00 Welcome coffee
- 14h30 Opening & short bio presentation by the Guests & PhD Students
- 14h45 Plenary lecture:  
**Geert Brône, KU Leuven – MIDI Research Group – METLab**  
*Exploring the gaze machinery in (inter)action. A state-of-the-art and some methodological reflections*
- 15h45 Discussion
- 16h15 Coffee break
- 16h45 Presentation/data session by PhD students  
**P1**: Bastien Taverney (Uni Fribourg): *Recruitment preambles in hospital nurses' unscheduled corridor interactions (data session)*  
**P2**: Loane Janin (Uni Neuchâtel): *collaborative multimodal explanations in the French L2 classroom (work-in-progress presentation)*
- 18h15 End-of-day discussion  
-18h45 (chair: group of PhD students - A)
- 19h15 Dinner

### Friday Oct. 1

- 9h00 Plenary lecture:  
**Johanna Ruusuvuori, University of Tampere, Finland**  
***Gaze and facial expression in preparing the grounds for delicate activities***
- 10h00 Discussion
- 10h30 Coffee break
- 11h00 Presentation/data session by PhD students  
**P3**: Sophia Fiedler (Uni Neuchâtel): *Direct reported thought in delicate situations and the speaker's multimodal conduct (work-in-progress presentation).*  
**P4**: Laetitia Gern (Uni Lausanne): *presentation of a video-clip : gaze and the construction of dichotomique positions (data session)*
- 12h30 Lunch

- 14h00 Presentation/data session by PhD students  
**P5:** Mélissa Juillet (Uni Neuchâtel): *interactions during a second language 'conversational circle'* (data session)  
**P6:** Virginia Calabria (KU Leuven; Uni Neuchâtel): *utterance co-construction in Italian interactions* (data session)
- 15h30 *Coffee break*
- 16h00 Presentation/data session by PhD students:  
**P7:** Brayan Andrey (UniNE): *an experimental study on attitudes towards African American English* (work-in-progress presentation)
- 16h45 End-of-day discussion  
-17h30 (chair: group of PhD students - B)
- 19h15 *Dinner*

## **Saturday Oct. 2**

- 8h30 Plenary lecture:  
**Wolfgang Kesselheim, University of Zürich**  
*What can eye-tracking tell us about joint attention?*
- 9h30 Discussion
- 10h00 *Short coffee break*
- 10h25 Presentation/data session by post-doc  
**P8:** Laura Delaloye Salilen (Uni Lausanne): *Discussion of a data excerpt: how to distinguish alignment and affiliation in the case of an ambiguous joke*
- 11h10 Final round table discussion  
(chair: group of PhD students - C)
- 11h40 End of the doctoral school

(FYI: trains leave at 59 min after the hour from Leysin-Versmont: 11h59; 12h59, etc.)

## **Groups of PhD students chairing the round-table discussions**

GROUP A (Thursday): Adam Jones, Mélissa Juillet, Laetitia Gern

GROUP B (Friday): Bastien Taverney, Loane Janin, Elodie Fischer

GROUP C (Saturday): Virginia Calabria, Brayan Andrey, Sophia Fiedler

## Rationale

Gaze is amongst the resources through which participants to face-to-face social interaction manage their encounter, coordinate their actions and construct mutually comprehensible social meaning. While the central role of gaze for social interaction has been documented in the classic work of Kendon (1967) and Goodwin (1980, 1981), it is only with the video-turn in the study of social interaction that gaze has become a focal object of systematic analysis. Recent developments in eye-tracking technology have arguably further broadened possibilities for fine-tune analysis of gaze in interaction. And with the advances of digitalization in public and private spaces, the cohabitation of natural and artificial gazes (robots, CCTV devices, drones, driverless cars etc.) implies a shift in participation frameworks and ways of interacting that involves not only (mutual) monitoring amongst participants, but also potentially manipulation and control of people.

Existing work on social interaction has documented the role of gaze in turn-taking and sequence organization. It has been shown that speakers can use gaze directed toward recipient to select an addressee and/or a next speaker (Kendon 1973, Lerner 2003, Streeck 2014, Auer 2017), to invite other-repair (Goodwin & Goodwin) or to elicit a missing response (Stivers & Rossano 2010), and by averting gaze from the recipient they can, amongst others, display 'doing thinking' (Goodwin & Goodwin 1986). Recipients in turn have been shown to often withdraw gaze when delivering or preparing to deliver a dispreferred response (Holler & Kendrick 2015) or when projecting a delicate or tentative turn (Deppermann & Stuckenbrock 2019). Gaze is also related to the organization of larger sequences of interaction. For instance, mutual gaze withdrawal can anticipate sequence closure (Rossano 2012).

The precise timing of gaze, and its synchronization with verbal conduct and turns-in progress are key to the role it plays in social interaction. To give just one example: in multiparty interactions, speaker's selection of a precise addressee tends to involve continuous gaze on that addressee, but next speaker selection is typically done by means of gaze at recipient toward the end of turns (Auer 2017). Finally, sustained gaze on speaker during long turns such as tellings has been shown to be a means of displaying recipient's attentiveness, and gaze withdrawal in that context can be massively consequential for the ongoing interaction (and beyond it).

In this doctoral seminar we explore gaze conduct across a number of social situations, including everyday conversations, workplace interactions and media settings, from broadcast to social media and mobile technology interactions (Facebook, Youtube, Facetime, WhatsApp). We ask how gaze interfaces with other semiotic resources, such as language or gesture, how it is synchronized with the on-line emerging trajectories of turns and larger sequences, how it contributes to meaning-making in social interaction and ultimately to the orderliness of social interaction and the creation and sustaining of mutual rapport. We also raise methodological questions regarding the analysis of gaze conduct and its transcription.

The seminar comprises 3 types of talks: plenary lectures by renowned researchers in the field, a range of workshop sessions presented by doctoral students, and a final roundtable. The invited speakers discuss their findings on the functioning of gaze in social interaction and raise methodological issues. Students share their work in two types of work-in-progress sessions: presentation of their thesis projects, in which preliminary results can be discussed, and data sessions, in which empirical data is submitted to close scrutiny. A final round-table is designed to critically assess the conceptual and methodological implications that ensue from the work presented during the seminar. The seminar will be of interest to students and researchers concerned with the analysis of video-recorded face-to-face interaction across a variety of social contexts.

## Abstracts

### **Exploring the gaze machinery in (inter)action. A state-of-the-art and some methodological reflections**

*Geert Brône, KU Leuven – MIDI Research Group – METLab*

Eye gaze has been described as a powerful instrument in social interaction, serving a multitude of functions and displaying particular patterns in relation to speech, gesture and other semiotic resources. Recently developed data collection techniques, including wearable camera systems and mobile eye-tracking systems, allow us to generate fine-grained information on the gaze orientation of multiple participants simultaneously while they are engaged in spontaneous face-to-face interactions. In a first part of the presentation, I will provide an overview of recent studies using these techniques, situated in different disciplines (including linguistics, social and experimental psychology, HCI research, etc.) and (sometimes radically) different methodological traditions. This state-of-the-art will help in addressing some of the key points of debate in the literature and in assessing the potential of methodological innovations for the study of eye gaze in interaction.

In a second part of the talk, I will zoom in on three sets of studies from our lab at KU Leuven that provide an illustration of how mobile eye-tracking data may be used for both qualitative and quantitative explorations into the working of the 'gaze machinery' in (inter)action. A first study deals with the deceptively simple phenomenon of hesitation markers (or filled pauses, like *uh* and *uhm*) and explores the multimodal correlation and tight temporal synchronization between these markers and particular gaze behaviour on the part of the speaker. What emerges from the analysis are multimodal Gestalts that appear to have a combined cognitive and interactional function that is strongly tied to the sequential and epistemic context they appear in. A second study looks into the role of eye gaze in the negotiation of speakership between multiple participants. More specifically, I explore how eye gaze may function as an overlap resolution device in sequences of competition for talk, when two speakers start talking at the same time. The detailed information on gaze fixations and aversions provided by mobile eye-tracking systems allows for a micro-analysis of the interplay between gaze and participation roles in conversation. A third and final study I will present discusses the complex cognitive-pragmatic phenomenon of indirect speech acts, and more specifically irony in interaction. The intrinsic layered nature of irony (and other forms of interactional humour) requires a form of negotiation between speakers and their addressees, in which eye gaze behaviour (along with other nonverbal resources) seems to play a relevant role. A comparison of both speaker and addressee gaze patterns in ironic vs. non-ironic sequences in spontaneous interactions reveals significant differences that can be attributed to an increased grounding activity between the participants.

I sum, my presentation aims to provide (i) a general picture of the multifunctionality of eye gaze in face-to-face interaction based on the ever-growing body of empirical studies, and (ii) an illustration of how studies can be designed using a form of multifocal eye-tracking, in which multiple participants' eye gaze is simultaneously captured.

### **Gaze and facial expression in preparing the grounds for delicate activities**

*Johanna Ruusuvuori, University of Tampere, Finland*

Delicate activities, such as troubles telling or complaining, involve revealing one's affective stance towards the object of talk. This may constitute a social threat of unwanted extent of self-disclosure, and consequently, of loss of face. Reaching a joint understanding about the appropriate *conduct in situ* demands intricate monitoring of the other participant's vocal and non-vocal actions, and carefully adjusting one's own actions according to those.

This talk describes the interplay of gaze and facial expression in paving way for delicate activities in interaction, using complaining as example. It will be shown how gaze and facial expression are involved in building joint understanding of the appropriateness of complaining about a third party in two environments: in dyadic everyday conversations over lunch and in an institutional situation of performance appraisal interview between the employee and the manager at the workplace. In the more hierarchical situation of performance appraisal interviews, there seems to be an increased need for careful preparation before entering the complaint proper. Attention will be drawn to the importance of paying attention to subtle and reciprocal affective cues, and the relevance of gaze and facial expression therein, in studying delicate and affect-intensive activities such as complaining.

### **What can eye-tracking tell us about joint attention?**

*Wolfgang Kesselheim, Language and Space Lab, University of Zürich*

How can we use eye-tracking glasses to study processes of joint attention in interaction? At first glance, the answer to this question seems straightforward. We can observe joint attention in our eye-tracking data by measuring when two people are looking at the same point in space. In many eye-tracking studies this is done working with so-called “areas of interest” (or “AOIs”). These AOIs are typically defined by the researcher prior to the start of the study, based on the experimental task the participants are asked to perform. In my talk, I will argue that this static conception of AOIs prevents us from achieving a better understanding of the construction of joint attention in social interaction. I will illustrate what we can gain with an alternative understanding of AOIs as flexible, emic units that are constructed, negotiated and re-negotiated by the participants to an interaction in accordance with the changing needs and goals of the ongoing joint activity (see Stukenbrock, 2020). Based on eye-tracking and video data from a museum setting, I will show that this process of negotiation is not accomplished by gaze alone, but by a broad range of concurrent multimodal means including language (see Mondada 2014, Kidwell & Zimmerman 2007).

#### References

- Kidwell, Mardi, and Don H. Zimmerman. 2007. “Joint attention as action.” *A body of resources – CA studies of social conduct* 39(3): pp. 592–611.
- Mondada, Lorenza. 2014. “Pointing, Talk and the Bodies: Reference and Joint Attention as Embodied Interactional Achievements.” Pp. 95–124, In *From Gesture in Conversation to Visible Action as Utterance: Essays in Honor of Adam Kendon*, edited by M. Seyfeddinipur and M. Gullberg. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Stukenbrock, Anja. 2020. Deixis, Meta-Perceptive Gaze Practices, and the Interactional Achievement of Joint Attention. *Frontiers in Psychology* 11, Art. 1779.