

-- Final program, Aug. 29 2017 --

Question-answer sequences

6-8 Sept 2017

Hôtel La Tour d'Aï (Leysin)

<http://www.hoteltourdai.ch/>

Wednesday Sept. 6

- 10h30 *Welcome coffee*
- 11h00 Opening & short bio presentation by the Guests & PhD Students
- 11h15 Plenary lecture:
Herbert H. Clark, Stanford University:
Questions, answers, and framing
- 12h15 Discussion
- 12h45 *Lunch*
- 14h15 Work-in-progress presentations by PhD students:
Burak Tekin, University of Basel:
Doing teasing with interrogatively formulated utterances
Jakub Mlynar, Université de Fribourg:
Proleptic and analeptic tying devices in oral history interview
- 15h45 *Coffee break*
- 16h15 Data sessions:
Katarzyna Pitrowska, Université de Fribourg:
radio interviews
Laura Delaloye, Université de Lausanne:
work meetings
- 17h45 End-of-day discussion
-18h15 (chair: group of PhD students - A)
- 19h00 *Dinner*

Thursday Sept. 7

- 8h45 Plenary lecture:
Mats Ekström, Dep. of Journalism, Media and Communication, Univ. of Gothenburg:
Negotiating political credibility in news interviews
- 09h45 Discussion
- 10h15 *Coffee break*

- 10h45 Data sessions:
 Klara Skogmyr Marian, University of Neuchâtel:
second language conversation
 Clément Zürn, Zurich University of Teacher Education:
second language student interviews
- 12h15 *Lunch*
- 13h45 Plenary lecture:
Tanya Stivers, UCLA, Department of Sociology:
The possibility space for answering polar questions
- 14h45 Discussion
- 15h15 *Coffee break*
- 15h45 Data sessions:
 Audrey Sublon, Université de Neuchâtel:
Speech Therapy sessions
 Alejandra Raziél Vázquez, Université de Neuchâtel:
emergency calls
- 17h15 End-of-day discussion
 -18h15 (chair: group of PhD students - B)
- 19h00 *Dinner*

Friday Sept. 8

- 8h30 Plenary lecture:
Joanna Thornborrow, Univ. de Bretagne occidentale/Univ. of Western Brittany
Rethinking neutralism in political interviews and debates: question/answer
sequences and constructions of stance
- 09h30 Discussion
- 10h00 *Coffee break*
- 10h30 Final round table discussion
 (chair: group of PhD students - C)
- 11h15 End of the doctoral school

Rationale

Question-answer sequences – the prototypical type of adjacency pair – are the basic building blocks of social interaction across a variety of both ordinary and institutional situations, ranging from the classroom, through doctor-patient or mother-infant interaction, to media interviews.

By asking a question, people may merely seek information, but they may also get a range of other things accomplished: they may make an offer, call for an action by others, display their entitlement to ask, or challenge the knowledge of the addressee. By responding to a question, people may comply to the terms of the question or not, and they may enact various degrees of (dis)alignment and of entitlement.

In this seminar, we explore how questions are designed, how they are responded to, and what they accomplish in social interaction across a range of empirical institutional and informal settings. We scrutinizing different design formats of questions involving both linguistic and embodied resources. We ask how, through these designs, speakers display their stance or epistemic entitlement, and how, thereby, they project (or constrain) certain types of responses. And we examine the details of responses to questions in order to tackle how next speakers treat different question formats, challenge questioners' entitlement to ask and/or embody their own stance. Thereby, we also address larger issues pertaining to action formation, intersubjectivity, social coordination, the nexus of social practices involved in sites of engagement, the expectations and institutional norms enacted, (re)constructed and displayed through social interaction, etc.

The seminar comprises 4 plenary lectures by invited speakers, a range of workshop sessions presented by doctoral students, and a final roundtable. The invited speakers discuss question-answer sequences across a variety of settings and languages, and examine both linguistic and embodied resources participants put to use in such sequences. Students present their work in two types of work-in-progress sessions: analysis sessions, in which preliminary results are discussed; 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 any student and researcher concerned with the analysis of social interaction and interested in the fine-grained multimodal resources participants put to use to format their actions and to mutually coordinate their social encounter.

Abstracts

Questions, answers, and framing

Herbert H. Clark, Stanford University

When people ask questions, they take certain information to be common ground with their respondents, and that leads them to frame their questions in certain ways. Respondents, in turn, frame their answers, or other responses, to deal with that framing. In the classic example, when a lawyer asks a witness in court, "When did you stop beating your wife?" the witness might reply, "But I have never beaten her" or "But I don't have a wife" or "But I've never stopped." The framing of questions and answers has a wide range of practical consequences. I will review some of these in eyewitness testimony, survey research, decision making, criminal courts, police interrogations, and cold readings.

Negotiating political credibility in news interviews

Mats Ekström, The Department of Journalism, Media and Communication, University of Gothenburg

The trust/distrust of the political leaders is a key issue in contemporary political discourse. Popular skepticism is most clearly articulated in the rhetoric of the successful populist parties across countries. However, the trust and credibility of the politicians are also more generally foregrounded and challenged in mediated politics. Politicians perform public personalities and develop their reputations in front stage activities in various interactional setting such as for example news interviews. And the critical interrogations, central to the norms and practices of journalism, have in some contexts contributed to more general narratives of political distrust.

In this talk, I relate to previous conversational analytical research on media talk (e.g. Clayman and Heritage, 2002; Tolson, 2006; Montgomery, 2007; Ekström and Patrona, 2011) and focus on how political credibility is challenged and performed in news interviews. Based on examples from different

settings, I will demonstrate and discuss how aspects of credibility – knowledgeability, reliability, status, and popularity – are invoked and questioned in practices of interviewing, and negotiated in question-answer sequences. More specifically, the presentation will explore the design format of questions, answers and follow up questions/responses.

The Possibility Space for Answering Polar Questions

Tanya Stivers, UCLA, Department of Sociology

In this talk I examine the “answer possibility space” for polar questions. I conceptualize this to be the full range of ways that speakers answer such questions in interaction. The focus is on the primary class of answers, “interjections” and we will consider four sub-classes of interjection, both relative to one another and relative the other classes of answer in order to propose what interactional and relational work question recipients accomplish through these answer types. Specifically, I argue that interjections which range from “Yeah” to “Uh huh” to “Probably” and “Of course”, as a class, accept the questioner’s primary question agenda and design as well as the questioner’s agency over the proposition of the question – aspects of the question that other answer classes challenge. However, whereas unmarked interjections such as “Yeah” and “Uh huh” treat the question as unproblematic and deliver an answer as unproblematic, marked interjection sub-classes propose that there is a problem with regard to the asking (upgraded interjections such as “Certainly” or “Of course”) or answering (downgraded interjections such as “Probably” or “Maybe”) of the question with different implications for questioner or question recipient responsibility for the trouble. If time allows we will contrast these with two other types of answers – transformative and repetitional answers.

Rethinking neutralism in political interviews and debates: question/answer sequences and constructions of stance

Joanna Thornborrow, Université de Bretagne occidentale/University of Western Brittany

Neutralism is at the heart of broadcast political interviews, as public service media institutions are constrained by requirements to be fair and unbiased in their representation of political parties, issues and policies. How this neutralistic stance is achieved has been the subject of detailed research in CA and other discourse analytic approaches to interaction over a number of years, notably through the work of Clayman and Heritage (2002), Ekstrom and Tolson (2013), Thornborrow (2002) and others.

The extent to which neutrality is achieved and perceived however is today being questioned from two directions. On the one hand, social media and other digital forums for comment and feedback from a wide, web-based audience often contain and circulate accusations of bias - recent examples can be found in relation to interviews and panel debates with audience participation, where the BBC for instance has been accused of having ‘left-wing audiences’ in debate and panel show like ‘Question Time’ or the Leaders’ debates; while in France, F2 is often accused of favouring some politicians and giving others a much harder time in broadcast interviews. On the other hand, media discourse analysts and political communication scholars have begun to argue that broadcasters’ overriding drive towards neutralism is now detrimental to their rôle as providers of balanced, accurate information about, and in-depth discussion of policies and issues. This was the case in the run-up reporting in the UK Brexit referendum where the primary focus on the ‘punch and Judy show’ campaigning resulted in the real issues at stake going largely unreported and unquestioned by the media. As Jay Blumler (2016) points out, ‘it was as if the public service troika had lost one of its three wheels, running on entertainment and information but not on education!’

So is neutralism in crisis as practices of contemporary broadcasting shift, and what can the analysis of question and answer design and receipt tell us about how stances and positions are being interactionally constructed in such contexts? In this talk I explore aspects of these questions based on the existing literature, and with data collected from recent political events in the UK (the Brexit referendum and the general election in 2017) and in France (the presidential election in 2017).