

## COLLOQUIUM

# TRANSLATION, INTERACTION AND CONTEXT CROSS-DISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES

Organized by:

William F. Hanks, University of California, Berkeley, USA  
in collaboration with Valentina VAPNARSKY

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### Conference theme

This international colloque brings together researchers from a range of disciplines and approaches, broadly focused on the analysis of human interaction in its social, cultural and cognitive contexts. Recent advances in several fields converge on elements, levels and dynamics of social interaction, and provide the opportunity for new ways of modelling human expression and communication, in the context of cross-cultural variability (implying comparison, translation and possibly typology) and intra-cultural social embedding (implying ethnology, fieldwork, theories of context).

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**Gabriella AIRENTI,**

**Université de Turin, Italia**

**Dealing with truth and sincerity in adult/children interactions**



The transmission of knowledge from adults to children mainly takes place in everyday interactions. This process can be viewed in two ways. A first

way is to analyze how transmission is explicitly conceived by adults. Adults have hypotheses on children's mental world and face the challenge of transferring knowledge to children in a way that may be comprehensible to them. In this sense one may say that they engage in a translation task. A second

way is to consider how the implicit part of transmission works. Through the interactions they perform with adults and peers, children acquire the conditions of knowledge use in communicative situations. In this paper I shall focus on the question of truth and sincerity. From the point of view of adults it is very difficult to teach children to be sincere: young children's conception of truth is confused and they often tell lies. So the adults' task is to explain the importance of truth both on factual grounds, as no confusion is admitted between fantasy and reality, and in moral terms since being sincere is right and being insincere is reprehensible. However, in every-

day interactions a number of communicative games can be played involving different relations with truth and sincerity as it occurs in white lies, joking, boasting, pretending, bald-faced lies, etc. In fact, truth and sincerity are concepts deeply depending on the communicative games played. These games, when children are concerned, are characterized not only by the immaturity and lack of knowledge shown by children but also by adults' contradictions and ambiguities. Children have then the difficult task to reconcile what they are explicitly taught and what they acquire from the communicative situations in which they are engaged.

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**Jacopo BARON,**

**EHESS, France**

**Ephemeral geographies. An analysis of sand drawings from Western Ambrym (Vanuatu).**



Ni-Vanuatu sand drawing has been declared a masterpiece of the oral and intangible heritage of humanity by UNESCO in 2003, but despite such a recogni-

tion – and the fact of having been mentioned in academic works since the 1920s – this ephemeral practice has never undergone an in-depth, ethnographical analysis. In a recent meeting held at the UC Berkeley's Social Science Matrix I presented a preliminary study about this Ni-Vanuatu iconographic tradition. After ten months of research, I am now

returning to the subject with an analysis of the data collected on the field. I will focus on the information gathered in the Western region of the island of Ambrym, and will try to answer three main questions: What a sand drawing is? How does it work? And, finally, what could be its cultural premises?

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**Paul CODJIA,**

**EHESS, France**

**Control fear to meet an arutam spirit. Some steps toward a pragmatic approach of emotions in Wampis rituals (Jivaro).**

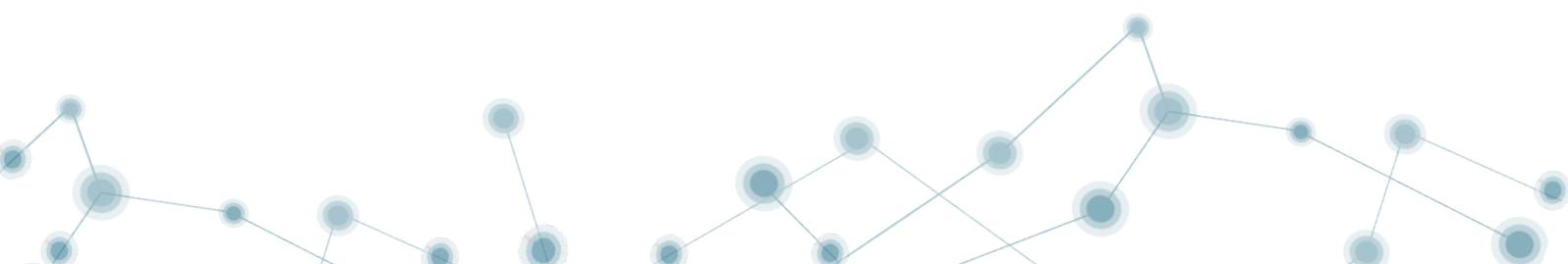


Wampis men and women perform rituals and magical songs anen to attract arutam spirits which give them the power to accomplish their wishes. Wampis say that an arutam never gives his power to a coward. The spirit presents itself in psychotropic-induced visions and at first always as a scary entity: as a big jaguar or as a de-

capitated head rolling on the floor. The seeker of such visions has to hit this entity until an ancient dead strongman's spirit or its voice appears.

This presentation aims to explore the pragmatic devices which allow Wampis to control and overcome fear in face of an arutam. I will study two different ritual contexts, waterfalls ritual and collective drinking of psychotropic substances. I will show that it is by singing magical songs anen and voluntarily adopting a specific psychophysical state that Wampis

learn to control fear and to face the danger. I will propose that a pragmatic approach needs to consider the emotions both as felt signs of specific relational contexts and as motives for action. This initial exploration is an attempt to understand more generally how emotions and their meaning can be contextually generated and construed.



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## Jean-Pierre DESCLES

Sorbonne University, France

### Abstract locating relations in the theory of enunciation



Identification (=), differentiation (¹) and disconnection (#) are abstract locating relationships characterized by mathematical properties such that they are organized as an abstract locating system. According to different areas where they are used, these relations take more specific forms; for instance, different examples of the differentiation, characterized by the non symmetry, has as instances the more specific relationships: the belonging to an object to a class, the inclusion between classes, the mereological between a part and a whole, the relationship of location between topological places. In the theory of enunciation (in following the works of Buber, Bühler, Bally, Benveniste, Culioli...), the enunciator EGO differs (by ¹) in the dia-logical interaction with the co-enunciator YOU, while HE, «the missing person» in the dialogue between EGO and YOU, is disconnected (by #) both from EGO and YOU. It is necessary to note that the enunciative parameters EGO, YOU and HE should not be confused with the referential and pragmatic instances of a speaker, a listener and an nominal substitute because these parameters represent different roles in a enunciative act; moreover, the grammatical markers I / you/he are the linguistic traces of an identification (=) and, respectively, a differentiation

(¹) or a disconnection (#), the exact values of these relationships being specified by the context. This enunciative organization is composed with the topological places HERE / THERE / / ELSEWHERE which are organized around the enunciator EGO and YOU (\*). It is also the logical basis of an articulation between different temporal frames where the situations (i.e. references of utterances) are actualized. Indeed, each enunciative act (an act which produces an utterance) constructs an enunciative temporal frame (especially a temporality represented by a natural language) where the situations are identified by a concomitance relation (an identification) or by anteriority/posteriority (an differentiation) relative to the enunciative situation (the situation of uttering) determined by EGO in a dia-logical interaction with YOU. This enunciative temporal frame acquires its autonomy by a disconnection (#) from the external temporal frame (the physical time or temporal relations of the annals of historical events and calendars...) or from other temporal frames, such as the temporal frames organized (independently of their sayings) by a narration of successive events, or also from the temporal frames of the situations which are only envisaged, mythical, hypothetical, possible... Although belonging to different temporal frames, some situations can be also synchronized by identification (=); this synchronization process allows to give an economic and explicative description of many grammatical

meanings observed in natural languages (for instance : historical present, counterfactual situations, verbal threats...). The system {=, ¹, #} underlies the structuring of different grammatical categorizations of numerous natural languages: the system of the persons, the system of spatial deixis, the system of temporal relationships between situations; it explains as well different uses of negation in natural languages and also the structuring of various objects (typical, atypical, exceptions) in the extension of a concept... (\*\*). We will not develop the theory of enunciation but we will illustrate different locating systems by help of some examples in order to do understand the descriptive, theoretical and cognitive relevances of locating relations in the study of natural languages.

(\*) Desclés J.P., Guibert G., (2011) *Le dialogue, fonction première du langage*, Paris : Honoré Champion.

(\*\*) Desclés J.P., Guibert G., Sauzay B. (2016) *Calculs des significations par une logique d'opérateurs*, volume 2, Toulouse : Cepadué, (p. 57-82 ; p. 283-304).

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## Michel DE FORNEL / Maud VERDIER

EHESS, France / Université Paul Valéry, Montpellier, France

### Semiotic transposition and the transitional body: the case of pain consultations for non-verbal and poly-disabled children



In a recent book (Fornel & Verdier, 2014), the authors have emphasized the semiotic and interactional resources participants rely on in

pain consultations for non-verbal and poly-disabled children. This presentation focuses on the multimodal characteristics of the different gestural configurations during the anamnesis and physical examination phases, when participants are asked to account for a child's pain. To address this problem fully, a better specification of the multimodal concept of semiotic transposition is in order.

This approach allows one to analyze how the bodies of the parents and the medical

team may constitute a "transitional body": to account for past symptoms and suffering incurred by the patient, caretakers of the child experiencing pain set up a participatory framework that includes the elaboration of a multimodal fictitious integrating space. This in turn constitutes a powerful semiotic tool to depict and negotiate, in an inter-subjective way, both the generic characteristics and the singular expression of these symptoms.

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## Mark DINGEMANSE

Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, Netherlands

### Negotiating mutual understanding in interaction



Understanding is not a state that automatically comes about when information is imparted from one person to another. It is co-constructed, built turn-by-turn, by participants in interaction. One of the places where this comes to the fore is in interactive repair, the collaborative resolution of trouble in social interaction. Repair is astoundingly common: a study of informal conversation

in 12 languages around the world found that clarification requests occur on average every 84 seconds (Dingemanse et al. 2015). Here I discuss the implications of this system and its frequency for our understanding of interaction in context. I review evidence for three universally attested repair formats: ways of asking for clarification that appear to transcend languages and cultures. As choices in social interaction, these formats provide people with flexible ways to minimize effort and maximize coordination. As pragmatic universals, they can serve as tools for language learning,

benchmarks for dialogue systems, and variables in experimental studies. Interactive repair involves language turning back onto itself and reveals the fundamentally cooperative nature of human communication.

Dingemanse, Mark, Seán G. Roberts, Julija Baranova, Joe Blythe, Paul Drew, Simeon Floyd, Rosa S. Gísladóttir, et al. 2015. "Universal Principles in the Repair of Communication Problems." PLOS ONE 10 (9): e0136100. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0136100.

[Mark Dingemanse had to cancel his participation for personal reasons]

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## Benjamin DWYER

Middlesex University, School of Media and Performing Arts, UK

### An aesthetics of damage: Modelling cultural loss through Music



'There can be no reconciliation [...] if there has not been a sundering' Stephen Dedalus tells us in Joyce's *Ulysses*.<sup>[1]</sup> Irish cultures have indeed been 'sundered'— by colonialism, by the Church, by the new state. This presentation examines the artistic processes of 'sundering' and 'reconciliation' employed in my composition for solo viola, imagines *obesae et aspectui ingratae* ('coarse images with displeasing aspects'). This music emerges out of a deep meditation

upon the so-called *sheela-na-gigs*—stone carvings of naked female figures that prominently depict the vulva, which are found on medieval churches, castles, wells and town walls in Ireland. The meaning, dating and origin of these enigmatic and often crudely carved figures are disputed. However, they lend themselves to a musical exploration of Irish cultures due to their semiotic complexity and (often) damaged condition, reflecting the 'sundering' unleashed upon various elements of ethnic Gaelic civilization by outside forces. They have further encouraged my embracement of an 'aesthetics of damage'—an attempt to create music that, like the *sheelas*'

crude abjection, is antagonistic to notions of what Walter Benjamin calls auratic art, that is, works that emerge out of a creativity self-conscious and desirous of a heightened aesthetic essence, which has been Western civilization's cult of beauty. The arts are traditionally harnessed to reflect the beauty of human existence and the heights of human creativity; but such auratic art is often employed to conceal deliberate cultural erasure. Without an art that confronts such sundering, reconciliation will be impossible. This paper explores how cultural loss, embedded in one form of cultural expression, may be remodelled through another.

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## Terra EDWARDS

Saint Louis University, USA

### What can materials do?: The mutual restructuring of language and infrastructure among DeafBlind people in Washington DC



This presentation is concerned with the re-channeling of language. It asks: how do you turn a language for the sighted into a language for the blind, and what role does the material environment play in that process? In order to pursue this question, I examine the mutual restructuring of language and infrastructure among DeafBlind people at Gallaudet University—the world's only liberal arts institu-

tion for the Deaf. At Gallaudet since 2005, new walkways, buildings, furniture, systems for modulating light flows, and other aspects of the local urban landscape have been re-configured with the practices of Deaf people in mind. Only recently, however, have these changes begun to incorporate DeafBlind perspectives thanks to the "pro-tactile" social movement, which has now touched down on campus. This movement, which began in Seattle in 2007, is based on the idea that all human activity can be realized via touch—that hearing and vision are not necessary

for co-presence, navigation, interaction, or communication. In order for pro-tactile practices to develop, however, grammatical pointing systems ("deixis") and other parts of the grammar must be rooted in and reinforced by environments that are knowable through kinesthetic, tactile, olfactory, and thermal senses. Most urban environments fall short; they contain large expanses of unknowable and dangerously unstructured space. At Gallaudet, however, new infrastructure is being designed with these problems in mind. Protactile design is emerging in the context

of large-scale urban development, which is subsuming and transforming Gallaudet's infrastructure as part of broader efforts to open up routes for, and intensify, the circulation of commodities, people, languages, and novel sensory experiences. Developers take nearby Union Market as a model for what Gallaudet's neighborhood should become. At Union Market, Deaf and hearing people interact so frequently that the market's employees and regular patrons can talk about coffee, Korean tacos, sea urchins, and the weather in cobbled-together, sign-language-like ways. Investors have seized on this communicative matrix as a unique kind of cultural value. People love San Francisco, they say, because there are distinct cultural districts (i.e. no one would confuse Chinatown for the Castro), and because of this distinctiveness, each district counts as a consumable, valuable, cultural experience. When people come to Union Market, they are consuming

culture. They are at the edge of a Deaf world, peering in—experiencing its rhythms, its patterns of response and adjustment, and the consistent “hum” of visual chatter.

Meanwhile, across the street at Gallaudet, leaders of the protactile movement are asking the University to incorporate protactile ways of being on an institutional scale. Under pressure from both sides, designers, planners, and architects are asking new questions: Why are walls flat? Why not carve contours into them, which, like a riverbed, draw your hand to all the relevant things: the fire alarm, the window, the door knob. Since we plant grass, and we know people walk on it, why not plant herbs, which release fantastic smells when walked on? If we built floors out of materials that were more sensitive to vibration, might they extend the “sensory reach” of those standing on them? Would American cities be more beautiful if they were designed to be felt and not just seen? These

questions arise out of a curiosity about how infrastructure might support emergent protactile practices, while also generating value in a broader network of exchange.

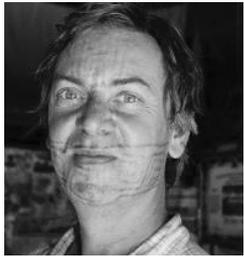
The aim of this paper is to explore the potential impact of these changes on the language of the DeafBlind community at Gallaudet. In particular, I focus on the areas of the grammar that have a direct link to perceptual-motor systems: deixis and phonology. I sketch the emergent structure of these systems, while exploring the pressures exerted by the urban environment in which they are developing. In doing so, I contribute to current debates in anthropology about how patterns in perception, language, and interaction are shaped by, and respond to, the technologically saturated material structures undergirding modern life.

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## Philippe ERIKSON,

Université Paris Nanterre, Laboratoire d'ethnologie et de sociologie comparative, France

### The multifarious semiotics of body art: an Amazonian example



Until fairly recently, the Matis, a small group of hunter-horticulturalists living in the Brazilian rainforest, wore very elaborate body ornaments. Day in

and day out, they bore spectacular lip, nose and ear plugs made of shell, feather or palm wood, elaborate face tattoos, bead collars, woven wrist and ankle bands, etc. They also performed sophisticated ritual masquerades, featuring supra-ornamented representations

of spirits. Finally, their main weapons were carefully made and sumptuously decorated blowpipes, clearly perceived as extensions of their owners' bodies, just as their ornaments were clearly perceived (among other things) as culturally produced extra body parts.

This paper will focus on the interplay between explicit and implicit semiotics accompanying the display of such “artefacts”. The very material chosen for such or such an item, the design patterns, the size, shape and sheer number of ornaments each “have something to say” about the meaning of Matis body ornaments. Yet, explicit speech has its own

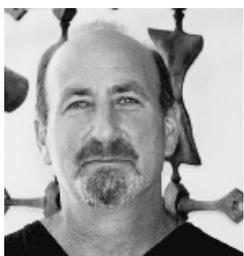
way of telling the story, and if overt interpretations often corroborate covert ones, this paper will suggest that discourse analysis and visual semantics can sometimes produce conflicting, or at the very least complementary narratives. The conclusion will ponder on the challenge this poses for anthropological analysis and, hopefully, suggest a few hints on how this hurdle might also be used as a springboard.

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## Neil GOODMAN

Indiana University Northwest, USA

### Marking Time



As an artist, I strive to create the work that reflects who I am, what I want to achieve, and what I want to leave behind. My sculptures are three dimensional

journals, physical records of my thoughts, and markers of my journey as an artist.

My lecture will address the fundamental questions about being an artist “what am I trying to say, how can I achieve my goal, and how do I get there and what does getting there mean? In this way, my thought process is relevant and relational to other disciplines, yet my working process is physical and the forms are material. Sculptures have their own language, in which ideas create form, and form embodies ideas.

My talk will explore several of the concepts that have guided my work over the years. I believe these concepts are both universal in scope, relevant to other fields, yet at the core of what I hope to communicate through my work.

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**Jennifer GREEN,**

**University of Melbourne, Australia**

### Drawn from the ground: Multimodality in Central Australian sand stories

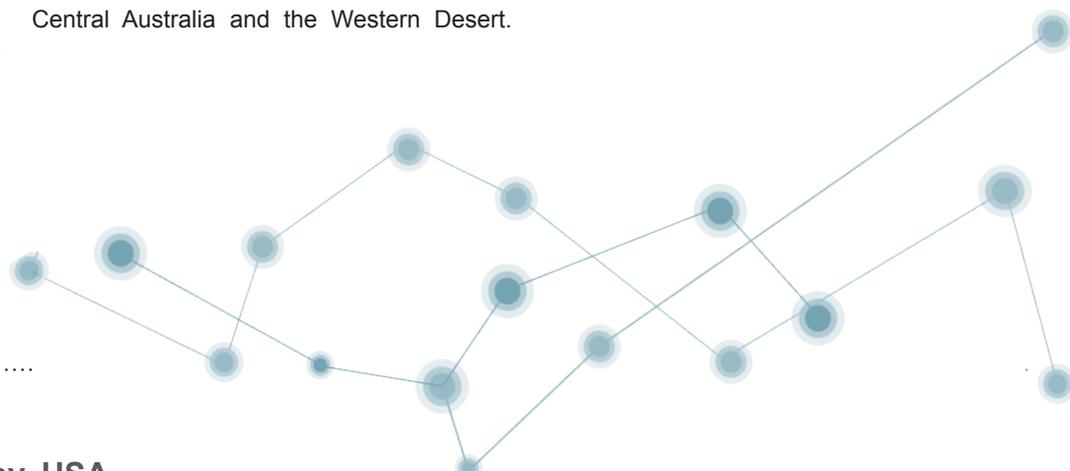


Indigenous sand stories from Central Australia are a complex and aesthetically rich exemplar of a multimodal verbal art form. Skilled storytellers, primarily women and girls, incorporate speech, song, sign, gesture and drawing (Green 2014; Wilkins 1997; Munn 1973; Kendon 1988). Sand stories begin with the clearing of a space on the ground in front of the narrator. The resultant drawings and mini-installations of objects are both product and process, and involve a complex interplay between dynamic and static elements. Some graphic traces depict memories of movement, re-enacting ancestral pathways or representing everyday journeys (Ingold 2007; Munn 1973; Green 2014). A small set of semi-conventionalized graphic symbols and lexical signs are also embedded

in a complex semiotic field that includes various other types of expressive action as well as speech and song. Between 'scenes' or 'episodes' the seated narrator wipes the space on the ground in front of them clean before beginning to draw again. Bringing an analytic perspective to understanding how the complexity of sand stories works raises methodological and conceptual challenges. At the micro-analytic level, disassembling sand stories into a series of semantically coherent action units or 'moves' calls into question preconceived notions of what 'drawing' or 'gesture' might be. When it comes to the audible aspects of the stories, parallel challenges arise in determining the boundaries between speech and song, and context-specific motivations for the use and interpretations of either. This paper addresses these issues, drawing on examples of sand stories from Central Australia and the Western Desert.

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**William F. Hanks**

**University of California, Berkeley, USA**

### Utterance context through the lens of *Basho*



This paper will present a conceptual analysis of *basho*, a Japanese concept originally developed by philosophers of the Kyoto School (Nishida, Tanabe, Nishitani among others), and subsequently applied in a range of fields. The term is variably glossable in English as 'place, space, locus, field.'

The interest of *Basho* for linguistic anthropology is that it is, in effect, a theory of contextual interdependence, and it speaks directly to what we commonly call 'situatedness, indexicality, co-presence, context' and 'common ground.' Moreover, It was developed

in intensive dialogue with some of the same strands of Euro-American thought from which we draw, including phenomenology and pragmatism, and there is much in practice theory that resonates with *basho* theory. This makes it all the more productive to compare the resulting approaches.

*Basho* is also grounded both historically and conceptually in Asian thought, notably Zen Buddhism and (by some thinkers) Shinto. As a result it makes different claims than Euro-American theories of language, it asks different questions, and even when convergent with more familiar western philosophy, it usually differs in emphasis and is in several ways actually contrary to it. In other words, *Basho* is a hybrid concept born of translation between Asian and Euro-Ameri-

can philosophy. This paper is concerned with the generality of the concept and its potential application in cross-linguistic comparison of the broad family of processes we might call «contextualization.» I will argue that *basho* makes a unique contribution to our theories of social context, and with that, to how we do field research as anthropologists.

Key Terms: Indexicality, Context, Repérage, Translation, Pluralism in pragmatics

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## Sachiko Ide

### Japan Women's University, Japan

#### Eloquence and persuasion are not valued by speakers of Japanese: Language and communicative interaction in terms of *ba* based thinking



Why is it that eloquence and persuasion are not considered virtues in Japanese language practice? It is because the Japanese language is characterized by context dependency. Edward T.

Hall (1989) called Japanese culture a high context culture. There are a number of features in Japanese that are left unexplained under the frameworks of pragmatic theories that originated in the west. These features, which appear somewhat mysterious from the perspective of European languages, include the lack of subjects, rich varieties of personal pronouns, obligatory use of modalities,

among which honorifics play a key role, and conversational features that enhance merging among participants. This paper argues that the way to give a fair account of these features in communicative interaction can be found in *ba* theory, an innovative way of thinking that is complementary to the traditional scientific reductionism.

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## Yasuhiro Katagiri

### Future University Hakodate, Japan

#### Collective agency in 'Ba'



Comparative analysis of consensus-building dialogues in Mister O corpus strongly suggested variations in functions and manifestations

of agency in joint problem solving activities across different language users with different cultural backgrounds. Conventional theories

on joint agency rely on the idea of individual rational deliberative agency in combination with devices for jointness, such as dialogue scoreboard (Lewis 1979) or joint intentional attitude (Bratman 2014).

This paper is an attempt to provide an alternative picture of joint agency based on the conception of 'Ba.' Ba, as a Japanese word means 'place' or 'field', is a theoretical construct denoting a situation, both physical and mental, in which an interaction event

takes place. Ba affords an assumption of and orientation for collective agency.

Each participant in Ba is expected to follow quasi-deliberative situational Wakimae (discernment) of Ba, which provides a normative baseline for behaviors of each participant. Participants, on top of Wakimae, collectively engage in open-ended joint inquiry, which can range over multiple levels: pursuit of jointness, means-ends adequacy and choice of goals.

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## Masha KHACHATURYAN,

### University of Helsinki, Finland

#### Translation and linguistic redundancy



The purpose of this paper is to develop the idea expressed by Hanks (2014) that a prerequisite of translation are specific properties of the

target language. While for Hanks, the capacity of self-interpretation is central, I will focus on the existence of series of functionally equivalent texts and on internal heterogeneity within the target language. All three features, metalinguistic properties of the language, possibility of creation of several, not one, functionally equivalent texts, and existence of multiple varieties within one language, point to the intrinsic redundancy of the human language. It is this redundancy that allows the language to adapt to intercultural translation. On the one hand, I will argue that the exist-

tence in the target language of a series of terms which are partially equivalent with each other and with the source term can compensate a lack of a straightforward equivalent. The ideal of translation is a one-to-one source-to-target relationship. Instead, dictionary entries usually suggest a one-to-many relationship: a series of terms which are only partially equivalent with each other and with the source term. Similarly, target texts may exist in intertextual series of specific types, namely, bodies of functionally equivalent versions. While each version is only partially equivalent to the source text, a much fuller equivalence is achieved through agglomeration of versions.

On the other hand, I will argue that internal heterogeneity of the language allows for it to adapt to the commensuration process. As Weinreich et al. (1968) observed, language is

not a homogenous entity with random variation: the linguistic heterogeneity is structured, as variation is patterned into social groupings of various kinds. To sociolinguistic variation can be added variation between registers and styles. Commensuration which accompanies translation brings about language change, which doesn't occur at the level of the language as a whole, but first of all, at the level of the register. Commensuration may create a whole new register which will be but another register available to the speakers. An adequate target language must therefore be already internally heterogeneous in order for the commensuration process to be successful.

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**Cyril MENTA,**

**EHESS, France**

**Ritual transmission and transmutation of the cross among the Pankararu and Pankararé Indians, Brazil.**



Abstract: In the Northeast region of Brazil, a recent process of ritual convergence succeeded to a historical movement of religious conversion among indigenous

populations. Since the 1970s, numerous populations came forward on the national poli-

tical scene to obtain official recognition and land demarcation. As a result, the FUNAI (National Indian Foundation) imposed on them the knowledge of the toré ritual observed, among others, by the Pankararu Indians. By virtue of their common origin – the Jesuit mission of Curral dos Bois – the Pankararé Indians have requested the Pankararu's help. Yet, the symbol of the Cross lies in the midst of this ritual organization and practice. It once

facilitated the acceptance and stabilization of these new cultural elements among the Pankararé Indians. In this paper, I analyze how the Pankararu Indians transformed – transmuted – the Cross within their ritual system and how its various occurrences were transmitted to the Pankararé Indians, leading to new transformations.

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**Norihiro SADATO,**

**National University Sokendai, the Graduate University for Advanced Studies, National Institute for Physiological Sciences, Japan**

**Across-brain networks emerged from face-to-face social interactions probed by hyper-scanning fMRI**



Face-to-face interactants can share attention through eye contact and joint attention that are tightly coupled. Hyper-scanning fMRI in pairs of adults

conducting joint attention showed the inter-individual neural synchronization in the right inferior frontal gyrus after all the task-related effects were modeled out. To explore how

the joint attention and eye-contact generates the state of shared attention, we conducted hyper-scanning fMRI in which pairs of participants performed a real-time mutual gaze before and after the joint attention. During mutual gaze, eye-blink synchronization, a behavioral index of shared attention, increased after the joint attention. The increment of eye-blink synchronization was positively correlated with the increment of the inter-individual neural synchronization within the right inferior frontal gyrus during mutual gaze. This

enhanced neural synchronization was also positively correlated with enhanced eye-blink synchronization during the previous joint attention. Thus shared attention is represented and retained by pair-specific neural synchronization of the right inferior frontal gyrus that cannot be reduced to the individual level. This inter-brain effect highlights the role of the right inferior frontal gyrus in the execution and learning of attentional coordination and sharing attention with self and others.

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**Carlo SEVERI,**

**CNRS, EHESS, LAS (Collège de France), France**

**Their Way of Memorizing**

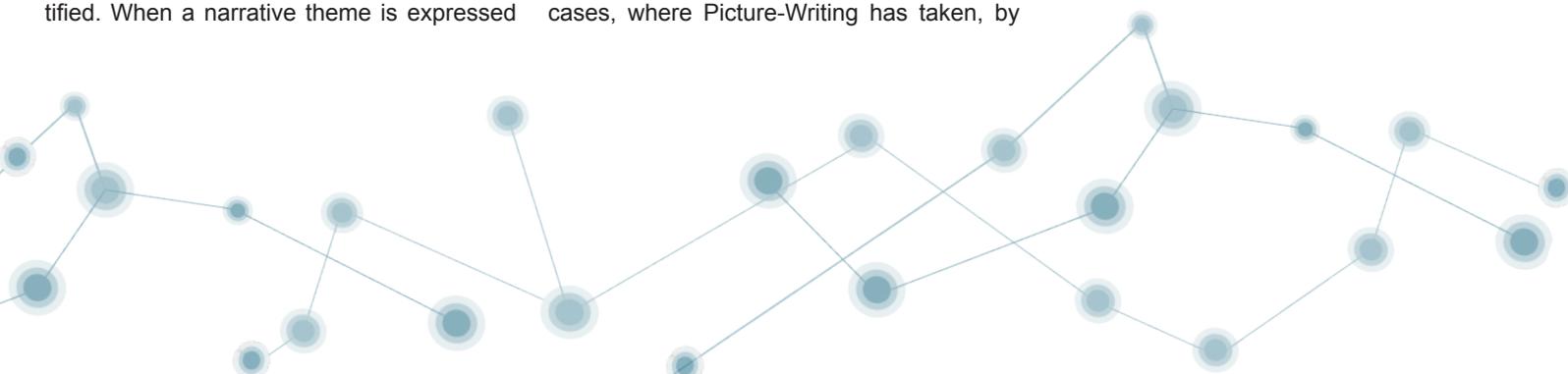


Native American Arts of Memory and Mesoamerican Writings The principles that preside over transmutation from words to images in a number of Amerindian

picture-writing systems may be clearly identified. When a narrative theme is expressed

in the form of a song, where certain formulae are constantly repeated and a series of variations introduced one after another, the function of a pictographic image is to confer mnemonic salience upon the variations of the text. This function of « transcribing variations » in oral parallelistic structures has been studied in many Native American cultures with the explicit exception of the Nahuatl and Maya cases, where Picture-Writing has taken, by

far, a more complex form. In my presentation, I would like to show how a rarely-attempted comparison with other Native American pictographic systems might suggest a new interpretation of Mesoamerican Writings.



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**Sara SHROUKH,**

**EHESS, France**

**Missionary theater and early colonial Maya Passion reenactments. Ritual gestures, memorization and cultural variation**



This paper deals with the early colonial Maya's capturing and transforming some of the fundamental representations and discourses of the European-Christian

world. I will dwell in particular on the translation, into the Mayan symbolic universe, of the transformation of the person of the priest into a complex image of the Messiah which is realized through the Eucharistic prayer. To account for this aspect, special attention will be paid to the relationship between colonial missionary tools for conversion linked to the

re-enactment of Passion iconography and the indigenous dramatic representations of Christ's Passion that Indians began to perform in the century following the Conquest (the so called *Pasiones indígenas*).

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**Sotaro KITA,**

**University of Warwick, UK**

**Design Features of Language 2.0**



What makes human language unique among animal communication systems is an important question in linguistics. Hockett (1960) listed thirteen "Design

Features", including vocal-auditory channel, arbitrariness, discreteness, duality of patter-

ning, etc. Hauser, Chomsky and Fitch (2002) suggest recursion is the only core feature that distinguish human languages from other animal communication, which triggered active discussions in the literature (e.g., Pinker & Jackendoff, 2005). These previous proposals are limited in their scope in that they focus on grammar (Hauser et al., 2002) and vocal language (1960). However, the more recent literature highlight multi-modality (e.g., sign

language, speech-accompanying gestures, Perniss, Thompson, & Vigliocco, 2010, Holler & Levinson, 2014), iconicity (e.g., sound symbolism, Imai & Kita, 2015), and structure of conversation (e.g., turn taking; Levinson, 2006) as important features of human language. I will propose a new set of design features of human language in light of more recent development.

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**Valentina VAPNARSKY,**

**CNRS, Laboratoire d'ethnologie et de sociologie comparative, France**

**The Janus Bifrons effect in bilingual Mayan poetics**



Present-day Mayan poetry is always bilingual, from its writing process to its publication and oral performances. Whereas the Spanish translation sometimes seems to simply make the Mayan text

accessible to non-Mayan speakers, for some authors the Maya and the Spanish versions

in fact form two indivisible faces of a single work, joined by a strict sequentiality, and by a maximal distance between the linguistic, rhetorical and vocal processes in play. We will argue that the processes used to maximize the distance between the two versions instantiate in creative ways three fundamental semiotic and performative principles found in more traditional ritual genres, performed by specialists who are also recognized as experts in oratory art: 1) captation and appro-

priation of a foreign language; 2) parallelism and meaning compositionality; 3) polyrhythmy and processes of synchronisation/asynchronisation of text and voice.

More than an operation of commensurability, transposition and, in fine substitution, the translation becomes generative of an additional semiotic modality, completing the flesh and the meaning of a text for which a single language would not suffice.

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**Jef VERSCHUEREN,**

**University of Antwerp, Belgium**

**Translatability and 'meaning potential'**



This contribution will present work in progress which re-defines meaning in a theory of pragmatics/language use in terms of 'meaning

potential.' This is an attempt to come to terms with the fluidity and negotiability of contextual indexing in interaction. In particular, the variability of the related processes across languages will be focused on, and its implications for translation or, rather, translatability. It will be shown why and how telling the

'same' story in two languages seems virtually impossible.





194, rue de Rivoli Paris 1<sup>er</sup>  
01 42 97 53 16  
[infos@fondationfyssen.fr](mailto:infos@fondationfyssen.fr)

[www.fondationfyssen.fr](http://www.fondationfyssen.fr)