III LANGSCAPE SYMPOSIUM

Dynamics of multilingualism in the digital public space

Venue and period of the event:
University of Siegen, 27-29 May 2021 [online]

Presentation

The conference has an interdisciplinary and international focus. It is the result of cooperation between literature, cultural and media studies, linguistics and the didactics of Romance languages in Siegen and it is based on the work of the LANGSCAPE research network and the EU-funded project ENROPE (European Network for Junior Researchers in the Field of Plurilingualism and Education).

With the concepts *multilingualism* and *digital public space*, the conference brings together areas that are dynamically interrelated and mutually dependent. The public space can be described topographically and architecturally as living spaces created by societies inclusive of dynamic social, political, artistic and media practices. The public space is thus understood as an essential category of social life. The term *public sphere* can be used to describe the constitution and dynamics of (multilingual) communication, of linguistic and cultural attitudes and practices of lifestyle and coexistence, as well as the changes in urban and rural space, milieus, (educational) institutions and the relationship to the private sphere or to others.

The transformation of the socio-cultural and political public sphere can currently be observed through new forms of participation and communication in digital spaces. Closely related to this are the concepts of *agency* and *connectivity* (cf. Thacker 2004, Yashima 2013), which are to be defined in an interdisciplinary way and also refer to social participation and critical engagement. By the network of communicating participants in digital social media, the relationship between the public and private spheres is recalibrated (König/Oloff 2019). Hauser, Opilowski & Wyss (2019) have recently spoken of digital "alternative public spheres", which in contrast to the "classic" mass media public sphere are produced by non-institutional actors. In the digital public space, new forms of dialogicity and specific possibilities of self-manifestation and positioning and the negotiation of identities and relationships are thus emerging. These new forms and possibilities also stimulate aesthetic processes in literature and other arts, challenging literary and media studies to expand the theories of intertextuality and intermediality developed in the 20th century. In the course of this dynamization of the traditional literary system, terms such as "digital" or "electronic" literature have become established in current research discourse (cf. Winko 2016). It is precisely the literary adaptation of digital spaces, e.g. through the staging of chat communications in narrative or poetic texts, that allows a new, digitally influenced language of literary communication to emerge, which can be analysed on the basis of discourse-analytical, semiotic and stylistic aspects, among others. If the transformation of traditional genres can be observed on a genre-theoretical level, digitally published literature projects based on reception-theoretical and literary sociological approaches invite the investigation of digital reading communities. In the context of literature published on the net, the text type of the literary blog plays a special role with regard to the potential of the subject constitution/auto-representation of authors (cf. Folger 2008; Gatzmeier 2010), whose virtual "posture" (cf. Meizoz 2007) can help shape public discourse and create identification patterns for their readers.

For the modelling of linguistic-cultural educational offers, which aim to consider the multilingual and multicultural identities of learners and to develop comprehensive linguistic-cultural as well as digital competences for action or multiliteracies, the question of ways of opening up lessons to the digital public space as a learning location is highly relevant. The possibilities of including and designing digital spaces open up new educational scenarios and must be accompanied by media-critical and media-ethical questions in order to enable learners to participate linguistically and culturally. The critical handling of offers of public opinion formation in social networks is part of school media education. With web 2.0 applications, learners can also become actors themselves in the digital public space. This can take place in the creative use of digital (literary) texts or through the communicative use of languages and multilingualism (*translanguaging*, cf. Canagarajah 2013, García/Wei 2014, Pennycook 2007). As this takes place in public space, it can be introduced into the classroom, for example, via *linguistic landscapes*, as well as through the individual design of digital multilingual spaces. As linguistic landscape research in the wake of Landry/Bourhis (1997) shows, multilingualism is an ubiquitous feature of urban linguistic landscapes in particular, and is now also present in digital public spaces in which linguistic and cultural diversity is represented and negotiated semiotically. This then becomes the subject of classroom reflection on digitally mediated multilingual practices and dynamic identity constructions (cf. Lahire 2011) and is also important for teacher education in terms of attitudes towards multilingual dynamics.

Analysing the creation, structuring and use of digital public spaces and their impact on or interaction with multilingual dynamics in all their complexity is an interdisciplinary task of linguistics, literature, media, cultural studies and foreign language didactics. The aim of the conference is to systematically bring together the respective perspectives on the subject of multilingualism and digital public space. The aim of the organisers is to advance theory-building and research practice in an interdisciplinary way and to provide insights into internationally ongoing projects from the above-mentioned disciplines.

Organisers

Prof. Dr. Dagmar Abendroth-Timmer, Didactics of French and Spanish Language and Culture, University of Siegen
Dr. Tobias Berneiser, Romance and General Literature Studies, University of Siegen
Dr. Christian Koch, Romance Applied Linguistics – Didactics, University of Siegen
Prof. Dr. Britta Thörle, Romance Applied Linguistics, University of Siegen

Cooperation partners

LANGSCAPE – Networking the International Research Community on Language Acquisition and Language Learning, International Research Network, https://blogs.hu-berlin.de/langscape/langscape/

ENROPE – European Network for Junior Researchers in the Field of Plurilingualism and Education (Erasmus+ funded), https://enrope.eu/

Conference programme: https://www.uni-siegen.de/phil/langscape/programm/?lang=de

Conference registration: https://www.uni-siegen.de/phil/langscape/anmeldung/index.html.en?lang=en

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