



Spring School on Social Media as Arguments: Linguistic and argumentative approach in the studies of social media (April 25-27, 2023)

In the context of *LAND: Doctoral Programme in Applied Linguistics: Managing Languages, Arguments and Narratives in the Datafied Society*

- **Place:** East campus USI/SUPSI: Via la Santa 1, Lugano 6900; room: D0.03 and D0.02
- **Lecturers:** Katarzyna Budzynska, Sara Greco, Paola Pietrandrea, Daniel Perrin, Eva Kuske
- **ECTS:** 1.5 (courses) or 2 (courses and presentation)
- **Evaluation:** The evaluation of the participants' work will be based on his/her contribution as pass/fail. 1.5 ECTS can be gained for active participation in the four courses offered by the spring school. 2 ECTS can be gained for active participation at the four courses offered by the spring school, plus a poster presentation at the PhD event (EpiDay, April 26), organized by USI.

Topic focus

The spring school's topical focus is research on argumentation in social media. Being an important part of contemporary society and a key source for capturing reasoning patterns in communication, social media also constitute an infrastructure for interdisciplinary research. Courses offered during Spring School will show how we can incorporate the features of social media in linguistic analysis and see how people reason and persuade in those platforms.

As a practical toolkit, students will be introduced to the main idea and concrete techniques for the transdisciplinary presentation of their research. This is a continuation of our practices from the winter school 2023, where students had an opportunity to introduce their data to senior researchers in the field. As we look at the research from a transdisciplinary perspective, we also need skills to show our findings to an audience beyond our expertise.

The school will be collocated with the PhD event EpiDay, which will take place on April 26th. During the event, USI PhD students with different backgrounds will introduce a poster presentation on the topic of their PhD, which will enrich the experience from the workshop.

Program description

Courses: three short courses on various aspects of research on argumentation in social media: Katarzyna Budzynska (WUT, Poland), Sara Greco (USI, Switzerland), Paola Pietrandrea (L'Université de Lille, France)

Workshop: Workshop on data presentation across disciplines: Daniel Perrin, Eva Kuske (ZHAW)

EpiDay event: Participation and/or poster presentation during the USI EpiDay



Detailed program

Attention: all courses are going to take place at the USI/SUPSI campus in Lugano-Viganello
(Campus Est) Via la Santa 1, 6962 Lugano

Tuesday, April 25th

8³⁰ -12³⁰

Daniel Perrin (ZHAW), Eva Kuske (ZHAW):
Transdisciplinary Communication Coaching
Room: D0.03

12³⁰ -14⁰⁰

Lunch

14⁰⁰ -18⁰⁰

Katarzyna Budzynska (WUT, Poland):
Communication (mis-) behaviour on social media
Room: D0.03

19⁰⁰

Social Dinner: Anema and Core
Via Pietro Capelli 2, 6962 Lugano

Wednesday, April 26th

8³⁰ -12³⁰

Paola Pietrandrea (L'Université de Lille, France)
*Preserving public and private debate in a datafied society:
lessons from linguistics*

Room: D0.03

12³⁰ -14⁰⁰

Lunch

14⁰⁰ -16³⁰

USI Epi Day
Room: Aula Magna; Via Giuseppe Buffi 13

Thursday, April 27th

8³⁰ -12⁰⁰

Sara Greco (USI)
*Digital activists' argumentation: Opening new spaces for
public discussion*

Room: D0.03

12⁰⁰ -14⁰⁰

Lunch

14⁰⁰ -17⁰⁰

Eleonora Benecchi (USI)
*Platformization: how technology is impacting the
way we talk and interact*

Room: D0.02



Seminar descriptions

Eleonora Benecchi (USI): *Platformization: how technology is impacting the way we talk and interact*

The development of new technologies is directly related to the emergence of user practices and new types of content, at the same time one cannot underestimate the importance of the technological structure and business model of the platform, which in turn can influence its users. We are in a platform society in the sense that digital platforms have penetrated so deeply into every sector of our society that they have disrupted markets, labor relations, institutions, and are transforming our social and cultural practices as well as political processes. While studying the interactive and discursive processes that social media and other digital communication platforms solicit and facilitate, or conversely make more difficult, it is also critical to understand the infrastructural and technological context in which these interactions move. This module therefore seeks first to deconstruct platforms to their constituent components to analyze them both as technological and cultural constructs and as socio-economic organizations. Then because the individual platform is part of an ecosystem of platforms linked to each other, studying the ecosystem or the rules and mechanisms that guide the construction of online sociality and creativity.

Katarzyna Budzynska (Warsaw University of Technology, Poland): *Communication (mis-) behaviour on social media*

Digitalisation is rapidly transforming our societies, transforming the dynamics of our interactions, transforming the culture of our debates. Trust plays a critical role in establishing intellectual humility and interpersonal civility in argumentation and discourse: without it, credibility is doomed, reputation is endangered, cooperation is compromised. The major threats associated with digitalisation - hate speech and fake news - are violations of the basic condition for trusting and being trustworthy which are key for constructive, reasonable and responsible communication as well as for the collaborative and ethical organisation of societies. These behaviours eventually lead to polarisation, when users repeatedly attack each other in highly emotional terms, focusing on what divides people, not what unites them. In this course, we will analyse cases from social media to observe typical patterns of such communicative misbehaviour as well as harmful polarisation effects that this misbehaviour aims to achieve. We will use Inference Anchoring Theory (Budzynska and Reed, 2010) in order to unpack argumentative structure and reveal mechanisms underlying such misbehaviour.

Sara Greco (USI): *Digital activists' argumentation: Opening new spaces for public discussion*

It has been acknowledged that social media activism may influence public discourse by changing the issues that are discussed and "reintroducing and reframing issues for the public that have been either misrepresented or ignored in the mainstream public sphere" (Jackson, Bailey & Wellies, 2020, p. 185). This course takes an argumentative perspective on social media (Twitter and Instagram in particular) used by digital activists to open new spaces for public argumentation and introduce new discussion issues. We take the example of the controversy concerning sustainability in the fashion industry as a case in point.

The course has a double aim. First, at the level of content, we reconstruct how digital activists open new discussion issues. Second, at the methodological level, we discuss how social media argumentation needs to be understood in an inter-textual perspective, i.e. in the context of a polylogical discussion that happens in different venues (Aakhus & Lewiński, 2017).



Daniel Perrin, Eva Kuske (ZHAW): *Transdisciplinary Communication Coaching*

How to get my message across? In this workshop, we develop our repertoires of text production strategies that boost our oral and written contributions to academic and public discourse. Get professional feedback on both an academic and a public sphere presentation and discuss your performance and learnings with peers and the coach. To ramp up for the coaching sessions, have a closer look at the Human Writer's Toolbox: <https://tinyurl.com/writers-toolbox> . Anything waiting for you there?

Paola Pietrandrea (L'Université de Lille, France): *Preserving public and private debate in a datafied society: lessons from linguistics*

With the advent of Web 2.0, as is well known, public and private communication has shifted massively to a digital, horizontal and commercial platform, whose socio-semiotic structure and economic model contribute to distorting the flow of information, changing the functioning of public debate and thus imposing, more or less implicitly, a partial view of reality. A solid linguistic education can help citizens regain control over a debate that seems uncontrollable. Awareness of the basic semiotic structure and inherent limits of communication processes can help to easily detect linguistic and discursive manipulations that undermine references, predications and the coherence of discourse. After a theoretical introduction, we will present examples, exercises and case studies based on the analysis of public and private discussion forums in social networks.

Bio notes/ Profiles

Eleonora Benecchi Eleonora Benecchi, PhD, is a lecturer and researcher (MER) at Università della Svizzera italiana. Her main research interests include Internet fandom, participatory culture about the diffusion of pop culture contents through social media and the media consumption of young generations. She has published scholarly articles and contributions in the field of digital culture, online fandom, and participatory culture in top-tier journals such as *Media Culture and Society* and *New Media and Society*. Since 2012 she is responsible for the Italian part of Switzerland for the national research MIKE and JAMES, which investigate the relationship between young people and media. She is currently collaborating to the project financed by the Swiss National Fund The origins and spread of the World Wide Web, directed by Gabriele Balbi. In the audiovisual field she is responsible for IMeG for the organization of the Documentary Summer School at Locarno Film Festival. At Università della Svizzera italiana she teaches Digital Cultures and Audiovisual Theory and Production (BA) and Social Media Management (MA).

Katarzyna Budzynska (Kasia for short) is an associate professor (senior lecturer) in the Faculty of Administration and Social Science at the Warsaw University of Technology (Poland). She is head of the Laboratory of The New Ethos and an honorary senior lecturer in the Centre for Argument Technology at the University of Dundee (UK). Budzynska studies argumentation and persuasion linking philosophy, linguistics and AI. She has published 2 books and over 90 peer-reviewed papers including 23 papers in international journals. In 2008, she co-founded, and in 2008-17 has coordinated the activities of nationwide ArgDiaP Association. Its main goal is to support the cooperation of representatives of the Polish School of Argumentation.



Sara Greco is associate professor of argumentation at USI – Università della Svizzera italiana and vice-director of the Institute of Argumentation, Linguistics and Semiotics. She has published widely on argumentation theory, focusing on argumentation as an alternative to conflict and on the analysis of public controversies; on these topics, she has directed research projects and PhD dissertations. She is the President of the Swiss Society of Linguistics and the Chair of the European Conference on Argumentation (ECA).

Eva Kuske holds a PhD in English languages and literatures with a focus on Sociolinguistics. As a research associate at the Zurich University of Applied Sciences, she manages the Doctoral Programme in Applied Linguistics Managing Languages, Arguments and Narratives in the Datafied Society. She teaches courses on academic English writing for the Bachelor, PhD and postdoc level.

<https://www.zhaw.ch/de/ueber-uns/person/kusk/>

Daniel Perrin is Professor of Applied Linguistics, Vice President at Zurich University of Applied Sciences, Past President of the International Association of Applied Linguistics AILA, as well as Editor of the International Journal of Applied Linguistics and the de Gruyter Handbook of Applied Linguistics series. His areas of research include media linguistics, methodology of applied linguistics, text production research, and analysis of language use in professional communication.

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Paola Pietrandrea is a professor of Language Sciences at the Department of Linguistics of the University of Lille, Paola Pietrandrea holds a degree in philosophy from the University of Rome La Sapienza, a doctorate in linguistics from the University of Roma Tre and a habilitation à diriger des recherches from the University Sorbonne Nouvelle in Paris. Her current research interests focus on the democratisation of public debate, as a natural extension of her work proceeding on the co-construction of shared epistemic judgements in interaction. He applies corpus linguistics methods to data drawn from social media.