Language & Space *News*

Spatial Reference in Postcards

The project "The evolution of genres between standardization and variation: The case of picture postcards" uses the most recent methods that corpus linguistics offers to evaluate richly annotated texts in an automated manner. The project aims at empirically determining the general patterns of the text type "postcard" and the characteristics of spatial references within this type of text.

Heiko Hausendorf

In the last third of the 19th century, the trend began of no longer sending postcards in envelopes, but open. Already by the beginning of the 20th century, the "picture postcard" with an image on one side and text on the other had proved to be a successful innovation in the field of distance communication, namely commercially successful as well as in respect of its impact on everyday culture. The pattern of a not only readable, but also viewable "postcard" turned out to be the means of distance communication par excellence, especially at a time of emerging tourism: the front side with its photographic picture of the holiday destination (the "sight"), and the reverse side with its defined areas for the address, stamps, and messages of all kinds ("holiday greetings"). At the beginning of the 20th century, the area for messages did not yet exist, so that it was not uncommon to write a few lines on the image side. Finally, these texts got their own area on the reverse of the postcard, typographically separated from the other elements.

The project focuses on the linguistic manifestations found in these textual messages. Led by Heiko Hausendorf (UZH) and Joachim Scharloth (TU Dresden) and in cooperation with Noah Bubenhofer (UZH), the project draws on a text corpus of approximately 12 000 postcards, mostly provided by individuals and covering the years from 1898 to 2015. The messages are examined for recurring patterns from text-linguistic as well as corpus-linguistic perspectives. What do you write on a picture postcard? How do writers refer to space and which formulations are characteristic of these texts related to a (holiday) location? How did the general patterns of "holiday greetings" change over the decades? These are central questions to Kyoko Sugisaki, Nicolas Wiedmer (both UZH), Dewi Josephine Obert, and Michaela Schnick (both TU Dresden), further collaborators on this joint SNSF-DFG project.

www.spur.uzh.ch/en/postcards
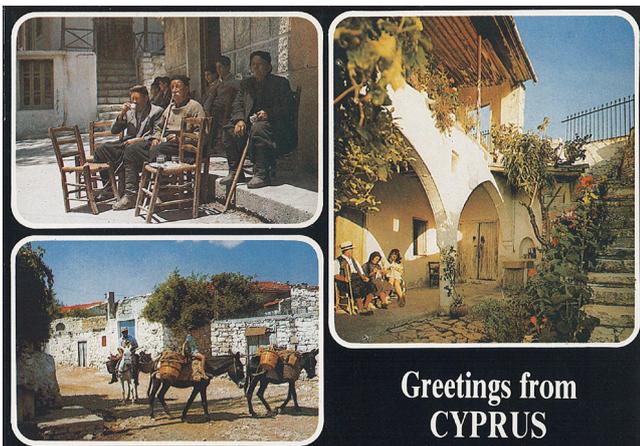
The picture postcard emerged at the turn to the 20th century. Examining the holiday greetings on the reverse side is of great corpus- and text-linguistic interest.

First Release of the ArchiMob Corpus

More than ten years after its conception, the ArchiMob corpus of spoken Swiss German is ready for sharing. This is the result of a long design process, intensive manual work, and computational processing.

Tanja Samardžić

The corpus consists of transcriptions of interviews with Swiss citizens who witnessed the Second World War, covering topics such as political wrangling, daily life and even illicit love affairs during wartime. The interviews, mostly one to two hours long, are collected by the ArchiMob association in an oral history project. The informants come from all linguistic regions of Switzerland and represent both genders, different social backgrounds, and different political views.

The compilation of the corpus started as part of Matthias Friedli's PhD project, supervised by Elvira Glaser, when the video collection from the ArchiMob association was obtained. The videos have been transcribed ever since through small-scale, part-time engagement of a number of collaborators. Work on the corpus intensified with the support of the Zurich Center for Linguistics (ZüKL) and, especially, with the start of the URPP *Language and Space*.

The URPP's CorpusLab has recently taken the role of the main coordinator of the work on the ArchiMob corpus. In collaboration with the Zurich-based start-up company "Spitch," we have transcribed 11 new documents, to reach the current size of 34 transcribed documents (corresponding to around 500000 tokens). Our collaborators Noëmi Aepli, Fatima Stadler, and Phillip Ströbel have taken care of data consolidation, formatting, annotation, and documentation.

The corpus is suitable for studying regional linguistic variation, taking into account the use of words in the context and syntactic phenomena. Such studies are facilitated by the two layers of word-based annotation provided in this release: normalisation of writing, which allows flexible word search, and part-of-speech tagging, which allows searching for formal patterns. The annotation is performed manually in around one-third of the documents and automatically in the rest.

In the process of automatic annotation, we have developed the tools that can now be used to process other Swiss German texts. Both the part-of-speech tagger and the normalisation system (developed in collaboration with Yves Scherrer from the University of Geneva) are based on general machine learning algorithms trained on our manually annotated documents. They currently reach an accuracy of slightly over 90%.

A special feature of the corpus is text-to-sound alignment at the level of 4 to 8 seconds long segments. This alignment is not only useful for in-depth research of spoken language phenomena, but also for training speech-to-text conversion programs.

The corpus is available in two forms: for online corpus querying via a corpus search engine and as an XML archive for download. The online search is currently possible with the system SketchEngine, whose developers, following our request, implemented a special feature to allow flexible word search. In addition to SketchEngine, we will compile the corpus for other, freely accessible systems such as ANNIS or IMS Corpus Work Bench.

www.spur.uzh.ch/en/departments/korpuslab.html

Help with Big and Not so Big Data in Linguistics

Following the initiatives of Martin Volk and Elisabeth Stark, the CorpusLab and the Zurich Center for Linguistics (ZüKL) have joined forces in order to provide support in collecting, processing, storing and querying data for linguistic research.

Tanja Samardžić

Depending on the nature of your data and of your research question, specialized software might be available that can help you encode and retrieve your data in an efficient and standardized way. With our help, you will get to use the up-to-date technology with little or no effort. The support is available for projects ranging from individual student papers to large grant proposals.

The ZüKL and the URPP's Corpus-Lab work in collaboration, providing complementary expertise. The main focus of the CorpusLab support is on data-driven methodology and general data management. The ZüKL is in charge of providing hardware and software for web-related data management. Both provide help in running specialized language processing tools.

To obtain the support, simply send a request to the head of the CorpusLab, Tanja Samardžić (tanja.samardzic@uzh.ch). After the initial request, you will have an appointment to further specify your needs and actions to be taken. The support will be realised either by Alexandra Bünzli (ZüKL) or by some of the CorpusLab's members, depending on the defined actions and the availability of the collaborators.

For more details about the tasks for which support is available, please visit the CorpusLab web page:

www.spur.uzh.ch/en/departments/korpuslab.html

Exploring the Potential of 360° Cameras

In recent years, numerous technological innovations originally invented for scientific purposes were later adopted for a use in the leisure sector. Sometimes, however, this process can also be reversed, and this is the case with the VideoLab's most recent technical acquisition: a 360° camera.

Wolfgang Kesselheim and Christoph Hottiger

360° cameras have evolved from action cameras, which are used to document sports activities from the participants' perspective, and have undergone an incredibly rapid development over the last few years. Today, 360° cameras have become relatively cheap, small and unobtrusive. Currently, the members of the VideoLab are exploring the possibilities such cameras might offer for research on the role of space in interaction.

So, how does a 360° camera work? The idea is fairly simple: Two objectives, which both record an angle of 190°, are placed at opposite ends of the camera and the resulting video streams are stitched together by a software program using the overlap between the two streams. This results in a spherical video, which can later be navigated by the user.

The use of such a camera is especially interesting if one is interested in investigating transient short-term interactions, such as encounters in public squares, which often consist of little more than a gaze, withdrawn when the other person notices this gaze, or a slight correction of a trajectory to avoid a collision. Furthermore, a 360° perspective could also be highly beneficial for investigating multi-party interactions with a variable focus of attention or with two contrasting foci (e.g. the lecturer's vs. the students' perspective in a university seminar), which are difficult to document adequately with traditional video equipment.

Trial runs with this new equipment have shown great analytical promise: They allow researchers to choose the perspective from which they want to observe the documented interaction *after the recording*, i.e. during the analysis of the recorded video. The same sequence can be analyzed repeatedly, focusing on each participant, one after another. This brings us closer to understanding how different positions in space are related to different ways of participating in an interactional event.

Up until now, all the perspectives of the 360° camera have been 'tied' to the same point of departure, namely the camera location. But the next 'big thing' in consumer electronics is already close: Who knows if virtual environments in combination with VR glasses will soon enable us to 'fly through' our videotaped spaces, allowing for new ways of 'immersive analysis' of space in interaction.

www.spur.uzh.ch/en/departments/videolab.html
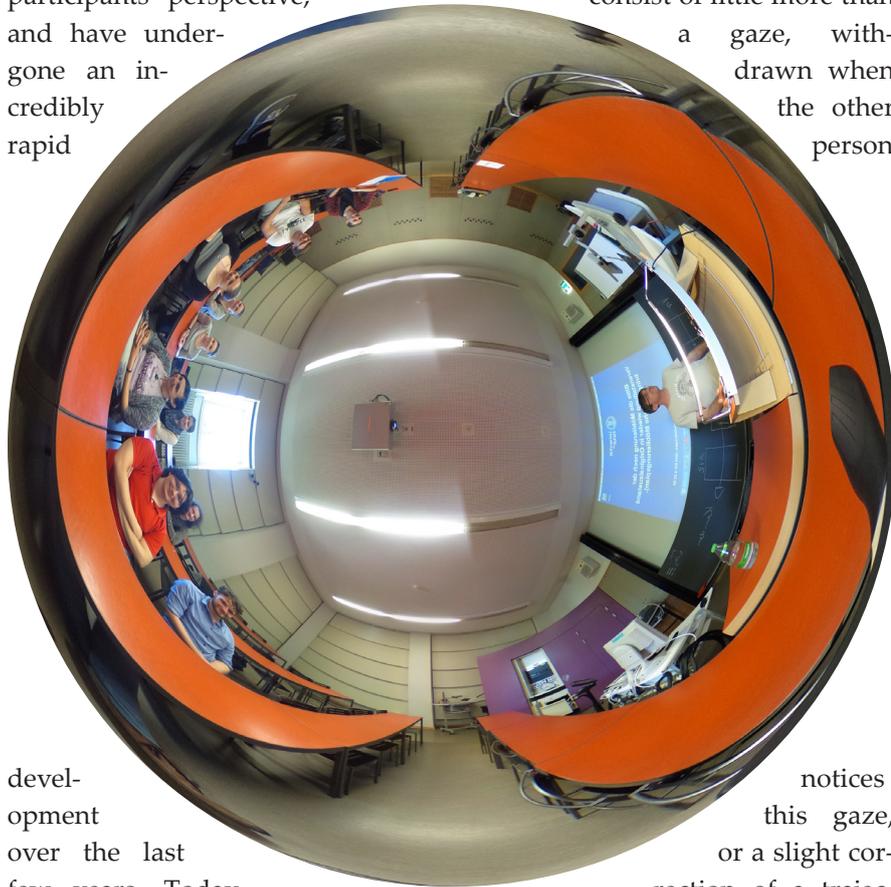
New Perspectives on Boundaries

We are happy to announce the international and interdisciplinary conference "Boundaries and transitions in language and interaction: Perspectives from linguistics and geography," co-financed by the Congressi Stefano Franscini (CSF, ETH Zurich).

Charlotte Meisner

During the conference, four key topics with regard to boundaries will be addressed, namely the respective role of spatial boundaries within linguistic areas, human geography, interactional spaces, and GIScience. Four thematic sessions are dedicated to different types of boundaries: physical and socio-cultural boundaries in linguistic areas and in language and interaction, shifting boundaries in time and space, and the role of boundaries with regard to encoding of space in language. The conference also offers a one-day hands-on workshop with the title "Inferring and visualizing boundaries from empirical data."

One major objective is the launch of a profound interdisciplinary debate on the issue of spatial boundaries by exploring why and how the construction of linguistic, natural, and social boundaries change and how communicative spaces work.

Plenary speakers are Christian Berndt (UZH), Nick Enfield (MPI Nijmegen), Tom Güldemann (HU Berlin), and Dan Montello (University of California, Santa Barbara). Ruth Wodak (Lancaster University) will give a public talk.

The conference is organized by Elvira Glaser, Heiko Hausendorf, (both UZH) and Paul Longley (University College London).

Dates: April 23 (Sunday) to April 28 (Friday) 2017
Venue: Monte Verità, Via Collina 84, 6612 Ascona

www.spur.uzh.ch/en/boundaries

New PhD and Postdoc Projects

Tatiana Soldatova Ruzcics, University of Zurich and research assistant in the CorpusLab since november 2015, has been appointed as PhD student in May 2016. Tatiana started to work on her dissertation with the working title "Morphological typology through massive parallel corpora" (Supervisors: B. Bickel, professor of Comparative Linguistics, M. Volk, professor of Computational Linguistics, and T. Samardžić, director of the CorpusLab).

Teodora Vuković, University of Belgrade, has received a Swiss Government Excellence Scholarship to realize her dissertation project "Torlak vernacular: corpus creation and corpus-based morphosyntactic analysis," starting in fall 2016 (Supervisors:

B. Sonnenhauser, professor of Slavic linguistics and member of the research group "Linguistic Areas," and T. Samardžić, director of the CorpusLab).

Anita Diensthuber, Universtiy of Zurich, has received a grant from the URPP *Language and Space*, to complete her dissertation project "Greetings in groups – openings in interactions at social events" (Supervisor: A. Linke), starting from July 2016.

Tabea Ihsane, University of Geneva, will start to work as postdoc researcher in the URPP project "Partitivity in Romance and beyond" (PIRAB) and will join the research group "Linguistic Areas" in August 2016.

Kloster Kappel, 4–9 September 2016
1st International Summer School
Language and Space
Organizers: Andreas H. Jucker, Barbara Sonnenhauser, Elisabeth Stark
Deadline for late applications:
June 30, 2016
www.spur.uzh.ch/summerschool

Events

June 28, 2016
"Thank you and goodbye!" – Closings at the counter
Workshop with Christian Heath (King's College) and Lorenza Mondada (University of Basel)
Organizer: Adriano Sabini
Contact: adriano.sabini@uzh.ch

September 12–14, 2016
Repenser la variation linguistique
4th congress dedicated to linguistic variation in Romance (DIA-IV)
Organizers: Martin Glessgen, Johannes Kabatek, Elisabeth Stark, and Harald Völker
Contact: dia4@rom.uzh.ch

September 15, 2016
(Micro)variation morphosyntaxique galloromane (MiMoGa)
Workshop, organized by Mathieu Avanzi, Benjamin Massot, and Elisabeth Stark
Contact: benjamin.massot@wanadoo.fr

For details, see: www.spur.uzh.ch/events

Acquisition of Competitive Funds

The following research projects were approved or prolonged by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) in spring 2016:

- *Differential object marking in Spanish: Emergence and tendencies of the current system* (PI: J. Kabatek)

- *"Heaven has no order of the front and back": conceptual history approaches to the emergence of the category of spatiality in Chinese texts of the 17th century* (PI: W. Behr, P. Lukicheva)

- *Large-scale annotation and alignment of parallel corpora for the investigation of linguistic variation (SPARCLING)*, Prolongation (PI: M. Hundt, M. Volk)

The Lithuanian Research Council granted funds for establishing a cooperation network between the Department of Comparative Linguistics at UZH (PI: P. Widmer; collaborator: F. Sommer) and the Department of Baltic Studies of Vilnius University. The third-party funding finances workshop activities and several research and teaching visits during 2016.

Portrait

Diachrony and Language Contact

David P. Gerards joined the URPP *Language and Space* in February 2015 as a PhD student in the research group "Linguistic Areas."

Could you please briefly summarize what you are working on in your doctoral thesis?

David P. Gerards: My work deals with nominal determination in Old Ibero-Romance, focusing particularly, but not exclusively, on mass nouns and another linguistic element often referred to as a *partitive article*. Think of French *Je veux du beurre* ('I want butter'); it seems as if Old Ibero-Romance had something similar. In Modern Ibero-Romance, however, bare nouns would be used. When I say particularly, but not exclusively, I do so because I observe a lot of variation in my data. Not only do we find *del* (the Spanish version of French *du)*, but also the modern bare nouns, and, finally, very strange definite articles. One hypothesis is that the appearance of *del* can be explained in terms of language contact with Central Romance.

What is your motivation to conduct research on the topic of partitives in Ibero-Romance in particular?

Gerards: It builds on work I did for my MA thesis, which also dealt with the expression of partitivity in Romance, and especially Galician. Nouns and nominal determination have always been one of my biggest (scientific) interests. With my work, I hope to be able to contribute to shedding some light on one of the blind spots in the diachrony of Ibero-Romance. There really aren't any detailed studies.

After receiving your master's degree from the University of Zurich, you immediately joined the URPP Language and Space. As a PhD student, how do you benefit from this highly diverse and interdisciplinary research environment?

Gerards: I love it. Both the infrastructure and the personal aspect bring about a very enriching and stimulating work environment. The interdisciplinarity you just mentioned is something we should be really proud of. It creates great opportunities for discussions and projects where you can add your expertise and, at the same time, learn about things you had no idea about before. This is how science should be.

Guests Summer 2016

Lars Hinrichs, associate professor at the University of Texas at Austin, Department of English, stays in Zurich as short-time fellow of the URPP *Language and Space,* June 20–29, 2016. He gives a talk on June 21, 14:00–16:00, with the title "The language of diasporic blogs: A framework for the study of rhetoricity in written online code-switching." Lars Hinrichs is also providing a two-day workshop on June 22 and 24, in each case 10:00–12:00 and 13:00–15:00. Organization: D. Schreier, R. Zaugg. For more information, please contact D. Schreier, schreier@es.uzh.ch.

Daniel Erker, assistant professor of Spanish and Linguistics at the department of Romance Studies at Boston University, stays in Zurich as a guest of the URPP *Language and Space* from June, 28–30, 2016. He presents a case study on "Spanish and English in contact" on June 29, 14:00–15:30, RAA G-01, Rämistrasse 59, 8001 Zurich. Those who want to partake of a scholarly exchange with Daniel Erker on June 30, 9:00–11:00, are invited to contact H. Ruch, hanna.ruch@uzh.ch.

Stephen R. Anderson, professor of Linguistics at Yale University, is visiting the University of Zurich, July 4–5, 2016. The Interest Group Morphology of the PhD Program *Linguistics* is organizing a workshop on July 4 about clitics and inflectional morphology with a focus on allomorphy and inflectional classes with the title "From animal communication to Zurich German," SOD 0-002, Schönberggasse 9, 8001 Zurich. On July 5, 10:15–12:00, KOL F-123, Rämistrasse 71, 8006 Zurich, Anderson gives a talk entitled "Is morphology really about 'morphemes'?". For more information please contact A. Hasse, igm@ds.uzh.ch.

Invited Speakers
URPP Colloquium Fall 2016

September 22, 2016
Jürg Fleischer (University of Marburg)

October 6, 2016
Michael Schulte (University of Adger)

November 3, 2016
Benedikt Szmrecsanyi (KU Leuven)

December 15, 2016
Federico Rossano (University of California, San Diego)

Full program: www.spur.uzh.ch/en/lingkol

Members of the Scientific Board in Zurich

On September 14–15, 2016, the members of the Scientific Board of the URPP *Language and Space* will meet in Zurich. The members are Hilary Chappell (chair, professor of linguistic typology of East Asian languages, EHESS Paris), Susanne Günthner (professor of linguistics, University of Münster), Jonathan Harrington (professor of phonetics and speech processing, LMU Munich), Christian Heath (professor of work and organisation, King's College London), Adam Ledgeway (professor of Italian and Romance linguistics, University of Cambridge), Per Linell (senior professor at the Department of Education, Communication and Learning, University of Gothenburg), Paul Longley (professor of geographic information science, University College London), Anke Lüdeling (professor of corpus linguistics and morphology, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin), and Joe Salmons (professor for linguistics, University of Wisconsin, Madison).

Prolongation of the URPP *Language and Space*

The evaluation process of our project has been completed end of April 2016. In sum, the outcome of the expert report, authored by the members of the external board, Pier Marco Bertinetto (Scuola Normale Sueriore Pisa), Mechthild Habermann (University of Erlangen-Nürnberg) and Jürgen Streeck (University of Texas at Austin), acknowledges the overarching achievements and the distinguished accomplishments of the researchers taking part in the *Language and Space* project. Based on these results, the Executive Board of the University of Zurich awarded funding for the second period 2017 to 2020 to proceed with the project and also to get further in establishing lasting infrastructure in Zurich for innovative linguistic research.

People

Eleanor Coghill, postdoctoral researcher in the URPP research group "Linguistic Areas" with a project focusing on "Neo-Aramaic dialects across Space and Time" will take up a professorship in Semitic Languages at Uppsala Universitet, starting in August 2016.

Christa Dürscheid, professor of German linguistics and member of the research group "Interactional Spaces," was accepted as a member of the Agder Academy of Sciences and Letters.

Sabine Stoll, research professor at the Institute of Comparative Linguistics and Unit Head of the Psycholinguistics Laboratory of the University of Zurich, has joined the URPP *Language and Space* as a participating professor.

The CorpusLab collaborator Dolores Batinić will move to the Institute of German Language in Mannheim (IDS) as a full-time scientific collaborator as of September 1, 2016.

Group photo of the annual URPP *Language and Space* retreat, June, 6, 2016, in front of the conference center Schloss Au.