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Nota di contenuto	Discourses in Interaction -- Editorial page -- Title page -- LCC data -- Table of contents -- Acknowledgments -- Discourse and the interactional turn -- 1. From the linguistic turn to the interactional turn -- 2. Discourses in interaction -- 2.1 Dialogues between contexts -- 2.2 Constructing identity across genres -- 2.3 Managing interpersonal relations -- 2.4 Structures in interaction -- 3. Concluding remarks -- References -- Part 1. Dialogues between contexts -- Contexts in context -- 1. Introduction -- 2. Context and contexts -- 2.1 Linguistic context -- 2.2 Cognitive context -- 2.3 Social context -- 2.4 Sociocultural context -- 3. Context, contextualization and contextualization cues -- Acknowledgement -- References -- Communicative activity types as organisations in discourses and discourses in organisations -- 1. Introduction: A dialogical turn -- 2. Dialogical theory -- 3. Organisations in discourses? -- 4. Communicative projects in discourse -- 5. Communicative projects: Some general principles -- 6. Communicative activity types -- 7. An example: Phone calls in train traffic control -- 8. TTC calls as a communicative activity type -- 9. Communicative activities: Types and hybridities -- 10. A note on the role of texts in CAT analysis -- 11.

CAT analysis: A two-step analysis? -- 12. Back to 'dialogical theory'. --

References -- Discourse and context in a historical perspective -- 1.

Introduction -- 2. Purpose -- 3. Synchronic and diachronic aspects --

4. Contexts of the Salem documents -- 4.1 Historical, social, and cultural aspects -- 4.2 Legal aspects -- 4.3 Scribal aspects -- 4.4 Communicative aspects -- 5. Conclusion -- References -- Part 2.

Constructing identity across genres -- Pronominal choice in French conversational interaction -- 1. Introduction: Identity -- 2. Method of analysis: Work with an authentic conversation.

2.1 Some specifics about everyday conversational French -- 2.2 Meanings of the three indefinites -- 2.3 Conversation to be analyzed -- 3. Karim's national identities -- 3.1 Background: Karim's linguistic identities -- 3.2 Co-construction of Karim's national identities -- 3.3 Stage one: Karim is a Tunisian-American, Michel is a good (real) Frenchman -- 3.3 Stage two: Karim begins to withdraw from being American -- 3.4 Stage three: Two kinds of Americans vs. Karim: "I'm from a French family" -- 4. Conclusion -- References -- Constructing interpersonal relations in the discourse of Russian media -- 1. Introduction -- 2. Investigating interaction -- 3. Organization of the interaction in Russian media texts -- 3.1 Personal markers -- 3.2 Subjective position markers -- 4. Discussion -- References -- Who communicates in the media supported by the Russian Church? -- 1. Introduction -- 1.1 Main objectives -- 1.2 Data -- 2. Theoretical background -- 3. Interactional elements -- 3.1 Modality markers -- 3.2 Restrictions -- 3.3 Attitude markers -- 4. Concluding discussion -- References -- "O England! England! She says - my Father - my Sisters - my friends! - shall I ever see you more?" -- 1. Introduction -- 2. Fanny Burney and her letters -- 3. Reporting speech and writing -- 3.1 Direct and indirect strategies -- 3.2 General and contextual functions -- 4. Reporting frequencies -- 5. Reporting functions -- 5.1 General reporting -- 5.2 Contextual reporting -- 5.3 Evaluative remarks -- 6. Conclusions -- References -- Part 3. Managing interpersonal relations -- Power in Early Modern English courtroom discourse -- Motto -- 1. Introduction -- 2. Why courtroom discourse? -- 3. The analysis -- 3.1 Turn taking and the use of discourse markers -- 3.2 Forms of address -- 3.3 Examination strategies -- 3.4 A complex case: "Speech act network" -- 4. Conclusion -- References.

Primary sources -- Secondary sources -- "I desire to have some tyme to consider of it" -- 1. Introduction -- 2. Historical pragmatics and pragmaphilology -- 3. Speech act theory and indirect speech acts -- 4. The corpus -- 5. Analysis of the corpus -- 5.1 Methodology -- 5.2 Discussion -- 6. Concluding remarks and further research -- References -- Interactive aspects of computer-mediated communication -- 1. Introduction -- 2. BBCT and SPON: The discussion frames of two public message boards -- 2.1 'Discussion' as a special type of interaction -- 2.2 Computer-mediated communication and the specific conditions of interaction in BBCT and SPON -- 2.3 Disagreement in the context of 'politic behavior' and the emergence of networks as framing conditions in BBCT and SPON -- 3. Communicative functions, the sequential order and preference organization in BBCT and SPON -- 3.1 Disagreement in discourse -- 3.2 Communicative functions and use of disagreement in BBCT and SPON -- 3.3 Propositional disagreement -- 3.4 Personal disagreement -- 3.5 Meta-pragmatic disagreement -- 4. The construction of equilibrium in ambidirectional emergent networks (AENs) in BBCT II and SPON II -- 5. Conclusions -- Acknowledgement -- References -- 'A little story, for food for thought.....' -- 1. Introduction -- 2. The corpus of online discussions -- 3. Method -- 4. Narratives in advice-giving -- 4.1

Supporting advice -- 4.2 Supporting an assessment -- 4.3 Doing relational work -- 4.4 Stories in the making? -- 5. Discussion -- 6. Conclusion -- References -- Part 4. Structures in interaction -- Appropriateness in interpersonal communication -- 1. Explicit references to appropriateness in dialogue -- 2. Direction and structural types of references to appropriateness -- 3. Functional types of appropriateness explication in dialogue -- 3.1 References to role (in) appropriateness. 3.2 References to interpersonal (in)appropriateness -- 3.3 References to locative (in)appropriateness -- 3.4 References to temporal (in) appropriateness -- 3.5 Some combinations of references to (in) appropriateness -- 4. The symmetry of prospective and retrospective references to (in)appropriateness -- 5. Cross-cultural differences in English, Russian, French -- 6. Conclusion -- References -- Literary sources -- Filling the German vorfeld in written and spoken discourse -- 1. Introduction -- 2. Written discourse -- 2.1 What do we find in the vorfeld? -- 2.2 How do these elements compete? -- 3. Spoken discourse I: The ranking -- 3.1 The corpus -- 3.2 The role of origo -- 3.3 Narration in spoken discourse -- 3.4 Recalibrating the ranking -- 3.5 Modelling a non-strict ranking by Stochastic Optimality Theory -- 4. Spoken discourse II: Do turns play a role? -- 4.1 The influence of turn organization on ranking -- 4.2 The ranking of topics -- 5. Conclusion -- References -- Cited sigla from the corpus: -- Phatic expressions in French and German telephone conversations -- 1. Introduction -- 2. Phatic function and phatic expression -- 2.1 Terminological reflections -- 2.2 'Phatic expression': A pre-existing category? -- 2.3 A tentative definition of 'phatic expressions' -- 3. Exploratory analysis of occurrences of French "hein" and German "ne (ich)" in a corpus of authentic telephone conversations -- 3.1 The choice of spoken language corpora -- 3.2 French "hein" in telephone conversations -- 3.3 German "ne" ("nich"/"nech"/"neich") in telephone conversations -- 3.4 Comparing German and French PhEs in ASSESSING speech acts -- 4. Some general observations and open questions to conclude -- 5. Conclusion -- References -- Index -- The Pragmatics & -- Beyond New Series.

Sommario/riassunto

This article is based on a paper given at OID3 Conference referring to my PhD research about 'phatic expressions' in French and German (see Smith 2007). Starting with a tentative definition of 'phatic expressions' (PhEs) with reference to Jakobson (1960) and Malinowski (1923), I attempt to refine this definition through a mainly qualitative analysis of occurrences of French "hein" and German "ne(ich)" in telephone conversations. One major objective consists in developing a methodology drawing on the dialogical and oral character of the PhE as well as possible use-manifested cultural differences by combining ethnomethodological conversation analysis principles and methods, speech act and politeness theory, and basic notions of prosody.