Rock the Rhythm and Croon the Melody: The Music of Speech

Prof. Dafydd Gibbon, Bielefeld University


The main objective of the course is to increase awareness of speech prosody and to impart analytic skills regarding speech prosody in different situations and different languages, with practical sessions in which the functions, patterns and sound properties of samples of speech in Chinese, selected West African languages and English will be analysed, with occasional samples of the languages of participants. There will be excursions into the rhythms and melodies of poetry and song, and speculations about the evolution of speech prosody. Participants are recommended to bring their laptops, and to install and ‘play around’ with these two software applications before the course, as well as checking the background reading:

Praat: http://www.fon.hum.uva.nl/praat/
Audacity: https://www.audacityteam.org/
   https://arxiv.org/abs/1704.02565

Materials for the course will be available later on the following website:
   http://wwwwhomes.uni-bielefeld.de/gibbon/2019-Mannheim-Summer-School/

Anrechnung:
Anglistik: PS Linguistics (Form and Function) / PS Sprachwissenschaft
Alle anderen FB: S International Cultural Studies
Multilingual Resourcefulness: Forms and Functions of Language Mixing

Prof. Dr. Rosemarie Tracy, University of Mannheim

This seminar is very much about ourselves as users of different regional dialects, social registers, and of altogether different, mutually unintelligible languages. It deals with the overall linguistic repertoire speakers/writers acquire and employ according to communicative intentions, interlocutors/addressees, context, and other factors. But not only are speakers/writers capable of selecting and sticking to a specific variety – i.e. a ‘monolingual mode’ in the sense of Grosjean (1997 et pass.) – whenever rights and obligations call for this, they may also engage in intensive language mixing. In our class, we will look at mixed speech from both a formal and a functional perspective, and we will discuss the answers sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic research has so far offered to questions such as the following:

- Why do highly proficient bilinguals/multilinguals engage in language mixing?
- Can we identify cross-linguistically similar mixing patterns, could there be “universals” of code-switching, and which models have been proposed to capture competition and cooperation between languages?
- What role do typological aspects and cross-linguistic similarities and contrasts play?
- To what extent are speakers “in control” and aware of their mixing behavior? Does speakers’ attitude towards language mixing get reflected in their specific mixing profile?
- What does language use in bi-/multilingual speakers tell us about attrition and individual language change across the lifetime?
- What is the difference between language mixing in adults and children acquiring two or more simultaneous languages from birth?

Our discussion will be based on data available and/or collected and brought along by participants.

Anrechnung:

Anglistik: PS Linguistics (Form and Function) / PS Sprachwissenschaft

Romanistik: PS Sprach- und Medienwissenschaft (mit romanistischer Schwerpunktsetzung in Hausarbeit) oder S International Cultural Studies

Germanistik: PS Linguistik (Prüfungsleistung: Hausarbeit)

Geschichte, MKW, Philosophie S International Cultural Studies
Translating Languages and Cultures

Prof. Gong Qi, Jinan University, China

Misunderstandings often arise when speakers of different language backgrounds, even speakers of different dialects of the same language, communicate with one another. Sometimes misunderstandings may be easily identified and rectified; but other times there may be grave consequences resulting in complete communication breakdowns. Serious misunderstanding may be largely due to mal-translation or mis-interpretation of a particular culture when, very often, people involved are not really aware that there are any problems, especially in a bilingual/bidialectal environment, which may lead to serious failures in communication.

This course will not attempt to address everything leading to misunderstandings caused by mal-translation. The discussion will be firmly grounded in cutting edge research, and we will begin with the relationship between language and culture as defined in contemporary theories and then explore the issue of false friends across languages in depth, aiming at a modified model of classification (into which a comparison of Chinese ideographs [Hanzi] with alphabetical writing will also be integrated). The course then moves on to explore the differences in language and culture that underlie and play a major role in mal-translations in intercultural contexts. We will examine barriers to successful intercultural translations and issues of intranslatability across cultures. Finally, mal-translations in contemporary bilingual dictionaries (with special reference to Chinese-English dictionaries) will be discussed in order to raise students’ awareness of the seriousness of the issues involved and to highlight ways of improving the quality of intercultural communication. Throughout the course, practical means for identifying and minimising misunderstandings will be addressed and discussed. The course will conclude with considerations of useful strategies in resolving intercultural dilemmas in cross-language/cultural interactions.

This course will be relevant to a wide range of majors, including students of linguistics, culture, translation, literature, education, mass media, and also to students from other professional areas interested in cross-linguistic and cross-cultural themes. This course will help participants to gain substantial knowledge and deep insights into the background of mal-translation issues, and to become aware of the problems of mal-translation in cross-cultural contexts. The course is designed to provide students with the effective tools they need to improve their interactions and to cope with barriers in their intercultural encounters. During classes, students will be encouraged to provide examples from their own languages, to contribute to discussions by taking into account different perspectives and to reflect problems against the backdrop of their own cultures. They will gain new insights into the ways in which language and culture affect each other.

Anrechnung:

Romanistik: PS Sprach- und Medienwissenschaft (mit romanistischer Schwerpunktsetzung in Hausarbeit) oder S International Cultural Studies

Alle anderen FB: S International Cultural Studies
Graphic Novels: Bridging Cultures

Prof. Paul Malone, Ph.D., University of Waterloo, Canada

This course looks at encounters between different cultures, positive and negative, as represented in graphic novels. We may encounter different cultures as tourists, as students, as journalists, as immigrants or as exiles. Sometimes when we enter a different culture, we are cut off from our surroundings by linguistic difference, and forced to observe as an outsider. Even when we speak the language of the other culture, or some of those we encounter speak our language, there remains a distance that needs to be bridged. How does the visual narrative form of the graphic novel, where both words and the real world are represented only as symbols, help communicate the challenge of communicating and understanding? Several examples from the German- and English-speaking worlds will be examined; depending on time and availability, texts may include Line Hoven’s Love Looks Away, Guy Delisle’s Pyongyang, Sarah Glidden’s Rolling Blackouts and Ulli Lust’s Today Is The Last Day Of The Rest Of Your Life (all texts in English).

Anrechnung:

Anglistik: PS Literary Studies

Romanistik: PS Literatur- und Medienwissenschaft (mit romanistischer Schwerpunktsetzung in Hausarbeit) oder S International Cultural Studies

Germanistik: PS Literaturwissenschaft (Prüfungsleistung: Hausarbeit)

Geschichte, MKW, Philosophie: S International Cultural Studies
Public Conversation in the Age of Global Media

Prof. Lesley Cowling, Ph.D., University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa

From classical times, democratic societies have relied on the idea of talking in public as a way to solve social problems, engage with differing views and resolve conflict. In the modern era, public debate and citizen engagement in a “public sphere” is thought to be a vital democratic process. The growth of the internet and social media, which has offered more and more people access to public conversations, at first appeared to be a force for democratising societies even further and to allow marginalised people to express their views. The revolutions in North Africa and the Middle East that became known as “the Arab Spring” unfolded online, and were driven by social media. However, the internet has also been used to foment conflict, disseminate false narratives, fragment communities and promote geopolitical and commercial agendas.

This course examines public discussion in this context. We ask how it functions in democracies, its rules and norms, how it creates publics, communities and identities, and how the ongoing changes brought by new technologies create and amplify new, or different, practices. We revisit the notion that public engagement is a good way to raise and resolve problems in society, asking how this ideal operates in practice, both in nation states and in mediated global communities.

We will draw on examples and cases that explore how the internet and social networks work as a forum for discussion, specifically looking at ‘fake news’, public shaming, and the diversion of political debates to Twitter and Facebook. We will also examine studies that show how traditional established media have historically shaped public discussion and how they are adapting to an environment in which they are no longer the dominant space for public opinion to be aired. Students will be expected to identify cases from their own media environments to discuss in class and to analyse for the final assessment.

We will also critically analyse and apply some of the theories that attempt to explain public discussion and its significance. These will include theories of agenda-setting (Maxwell McCombs and Dearing and Rogers), publics and counterpublics (Jürgen Habermas, Craig Calhoun, and Nancy Fraser), social imaginaries (Michael Warner, Arjun Appadurai, Charles Taylor, and Dilip Gaonkar), and orchestration and babelisation (Carolyn Hamilton, Lesley Cowling, Pascal Mwale and Indra de Lanerolle). Students will be engage with these theories through a directed process, including lectures, class discussions, exercises and group work.

Anrechnung:

Anglistik: Ü Specific Media Topic/Fachspezifische Medien- und Kommunikationswissenschaft

Geschichte: Ü Neuzeit

MKW: PS Theorien oder PS Mediensystem/Mediengeschichte

Romanistik, Germanistik, Philosophie. S ICS