



INTERNATIONAL
ICON
STUDENTS' CONFERENCE **MAINZ**

The 4th International Students' Conference

Reaching One Another

Language as Interface and Performance

November 18 and 19, 2021

In person in SB II Room 05-432,
and online at <https://icon.uni-mainz.de/>



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Introduction

Reaching One Another. Language as Interface and Performance.

Dear participants,

We are thrilled to welcome you to the fourth International Students' Conference ICON Mainz 2021. This year's ICON Conference topic is "Reaching One Another. Language as Interface and Performance." ICON is an interdisciplinary and international students' conference at the University of Mainz. It offers students from all over the world and from all kinds of fields of research a platform to exchange ideas about their research projects and to present their research and discuss it with a wider audience.

Language is everywhere. You can see it (e.g. lettering, plant communication), feel it (e.g. Braille, or feeling home because your mother tongue is spoken), hear it (e.g. birdsong), smell it (e.g. animal communication), use it, change it. The term language encompasses many meanings and media through which information is communicated. As an umbrella term, language appears and is understood in a variety of ways, therefore encouraging research in different fields of analysis with their various related issues.

The fourth ICON Conference is meant to open a space where an amplitude of possible topics can be presented and discussed. In doing so, we hope to enable the most diverse and interdisciplinary examination of the overarching topic of "language". We are looking forward to welcome at least some of you to the Johannes Gutenberg University Campus in our hybrid conference with a mix of digital and in-person talks. Please also consider attending the World Café at the end of the conference. This will give you all the opportunity to recap and discuss the results of the two-day event as well as express further thoughts on language and communication.

Goals of ICON Mainz

- to interest international and home students and motivate them to participate in the conference
- to exchange cutting edge scientific knowledge
- to share interdisciplinary perspectives
- to promote international networking and exchange
- to meet renowned scholars
- to represent JGU, thereby getting non-JGU students interested in studying at JGU
- to offer a vareity of scientific events to participants
- to compile and edit the contributions and outcomes of the conference events
- to issue a confirmation of participation
- to offer an attractive social program



Campus - Forum universitatis, Foto: Thomas Hartmann, @JGU Mainz

Conference Programme:

Wednesday, November 17th

20:00 – 20:10 Official Welcome Speech

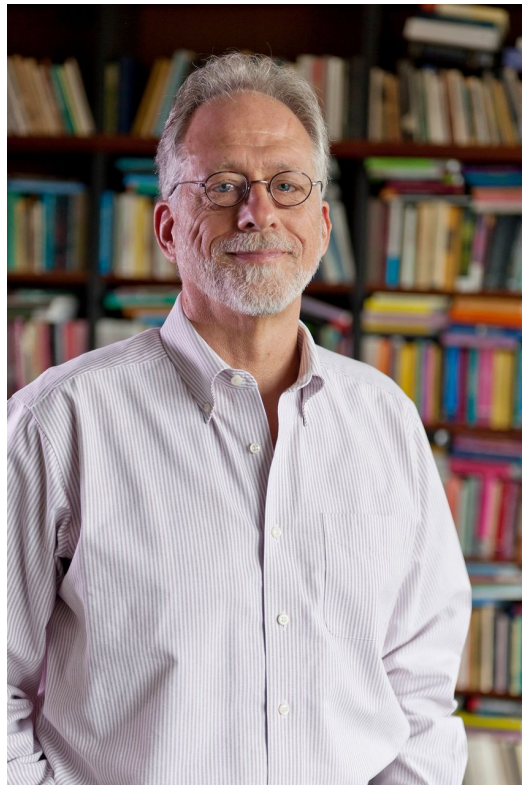
Univ.-Prof. Dr. Stephan Jolie,

Vize President of Johannes Gutenberg University

20:10 – 21:00 Keynote Presentation

"Communication Before Language" (digital)

Univ.-Prof. Dr. Michael Tomasello, Duke University



Michael Tomasello, Foto: Duke University

Conference Programme: Thursday, November 18th

09:00 – 09:30 Reception Coffee

09:30 – 09:50 Official Welcome

10:00 – 10:50 “Staging the Rule: Performances for Order in the Roman Republic” (digital)
Alfredo Tosques

11:00 – 11:50 “Dance and Corporeal Communication in Medieval Catalan Literature: A Moral Perspective” (digital)
Xavier Dalmau Martínez

12:00 – 13:00 Lunch Break

13:00 – 13:50 “Communication and Oppression: Fake News as Instruments of Propaganda”
Davide Versari

14:00 – 14:50 “Looking Through the Lens of Language at the Way Early Muslim Intellectuals Tried to Reach the Hidden Truth by Unpacking and Examining the Arabic Letters and Words” (digital)
Ibrahim Al-Khaffaf

15:00 – 15:30 Coffee break

15:30 – 16:20 “Modelling Topics Over Time with Neural Network”
Mala Mahadevu

16:30 – 17:20 “Climate Wars – Military Metaphors in the Headlines of Polish and American Newspapers” (digital)
Marta Kwasniewska

Conference Programme:

Friday, November 19th

09:00 – 09:50	<p>“The Language of Prelude BWV 870 – What Bach’s Music Tells Us and How We Can Talk About It” (digital)</p> <p><i>Jan Bielak</i></p>
10:00 – 10:50	<p>“Should Translation Students Know their Languages Beforehand? Implementing the Scaffolded Language Emergence (SLE) as a Naturalistic Approach in Translation Programs”</p> <p><i>Norman Darío Gómez Hernández</i></p>
11:00 – 11:30	Coffee break
11:30 – 12:20	<p>“Communicating the Incommunicable: Is It Possible to Represent Trauma in Literature?” (digital)</p> <p><i>Malin Christina Wikstrøm</i></p>
12:30 – 13:20	<p>“Should You Let Your Computer Do the Reading? A Discussion of the Benefits of Distant Reading for Literary Studies, with a Quantitative Study on the Development of Stage Directions in European Drama”</p> <p><i>Jan Niklas Jokisch</i></p>
13:20	World Café (Discussion and Wrap-Up)

All Presentations

Keynote Speaker:

Prof. Dr. Michael Tomasello

*Michael Tomasello is Professor of Psychology and Neuroscience at Duke University, and emeritus director at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, Leipzig, Germany. His research interests focus on processes of cooperation, communication, and cultural learning in human children and great apes. His recent books include *Origins of Human Communication* (MIT Press, 2008); *Why We Cooperate* (MIT Press, 2009); *A Natural History of Human Thinking* (Harvard University Press, 2014); *A Natural History of Human Morality* (Harvard University Press, 2016); and *Becoming Human: A Theory of Ontogeny* (Harvard University Press, 2019).*

Communication Before Language

For obvious and very good reasons the study of human communication is dominated by the study of language. But from a psychological point of view, the basic structure of human communication – how it works pragmatically in terms of the intentions and inferences involved - is totally independent of language. People often produce spontaneous, non-conventionalized gestures, including most prominently pointing (deictic gestures) and pantomiming (iconic gestures). These gestures are universal among humans and unique to the species, and in human evolution they almost certainly preceded conventional communication, either signed or vocal. For prelinguistic infants to communicate effectively via pointing and pantomiming, they must already possess species-unique and very powerful skills and motivations for shared intentionality as pragmatic infrastructure. Conventional communication is then built on top of this infrastructure - or so I will argue.

Alfredo Tosques

Alfredo Tosques is an undergraduate Classics student at the University of Pavia and at the Institute for Advanced Studies of Pavia (IUSS). He was admitted to Collegio Ghislieri. He is currently conducting research at the University of Warwick. His research interests are mainly in society, politics and cultural history of the Roman Republic.

Staging the Rule: Performances for Order in the Roman Republic.

Is power imposed from above? Or is it accepted? The presentation will survey the case study of the Roman Republic, which formally was a republic, where citizens had the right to vote both laws and their representatives, but actually seems an oligarchy. Why did the majority, endowed with political rights, accept to be governed by a restricted ruling class?

A different interpretation of politics, as a dialogue, could help to solve this apparent contradiction: power was held by the group who managed to persuade the others to be the more meritorious to rule.

In Rome the language used for this political communication was made of civic rituals. They were all public performances displaying order and stability and conveying the values on which that social and political order was based and could be reproduced. These performances were the key of the support which let few families rule Rome.

Xavier Dalmau Martínez

Xavier Dalmau Martínez is a B.A. in Catalan Philology and Minor in German Language and Literature at the Universitat de València, Spain. He is also graduated at the Ballettschule des Hamburgsballett (Ausbildung zum Bühnentänzer).

Dance and Corporeal Communication in Medieval Catalan Literature: A Moral Perspective

This work attempts to deepen our knowledge of the culture and morality of the Middle Ages through the analysis of the numerous references to dance, understood as a kind of corporeal communication contained in medieval Catalan literature. The dance-literature binomial represents a magnificent resource for exploring and learning more about morality at a time when dance was present in a multitude of cultural manifestations. The female figure surrounds medieval dance, and it is the key to explore *El libre de les dones* (The women's book) that we analyse to extract all the explicit references to dance in this book by Francesc Eiximenis. Thus, the two main groups of dances: good dances, inspired by the biblical passage of King David's dance, and bad dances, inspired by the biblical passage of Salome's dance, provide an overview of the two main aspects of dance and how they were considered, all to recreate the morality of the Middle Ages from a global perspective and focusing on the body language and the expression as the dance itself.

Davide Versari

My name is Davide Versari, I am a master student at the University of Pavia, where I study Philosophy and which awarded me with the prize dedicated to the memory of Prof. Giacinto Romano, for the best second year master student of the department of Humanities. I am also a fellow of the Collegio Ghislieri, an historical college in Pavia whose selection process is based on strict requisites of excellence, as well as a master student at the IUSS, University School for Advanced Studies Pavia. My current research focuses on the problem of Fake News, in connection with the phenomenon of Propaganda, that I am approaching from the point of view of philosophy of language and epistemology. However, my interests also cover the field of logic, especially of formal semantics, that was, indeed, the main reference for my bachelor thesis about the semantics of inquisitive propositions.

Communication and Oppression: Fake News as Instruments of Propaganda

The main thesis of my presentation is that Fake News can be considered an instrument of propaganda, as intended in the way described by Jason Stanley in his book “How Propaganda Works”, i.e., as causing epistemic oppression in the negatively privileged groups that are subjected to it. First of all, I will give a definition of Fake News arguing in favour of it by explaining its principal characteristics. Secondly, I will give an overview of Stanley’s account of propaganda, highlighting its main features, as well as the mechanism subtended to its functioning. In particular, I will pose attention to the model of communication underlying Stanley’s idea, and on the epistemological theory known as “pragmatic encroachment”. Finally, I will suggest joining these elements in an account that considers Fake News as instruments of propaganda, from which it follows straightforwardly that it causes in its audience what Kristie Dotson calls “epistemic oppression”.

Ibrahim Al-Khaffaf

My name is Ibrahim Al-Khaffaf and I am a Ph.D. student in History of Science at Prof. Dr. Fuat Sezgin Institute of Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakıf University, Istanbul, Turkey. Apart from my field of study which is majorly about the transmission of science between the Islamic world and Europe. And apart from my prospective Ph.D. thesis topic which is connected with the change of the text after translation, I am also interested in the Muslim alchemists' and mystics' understanding of the world, language and other aspects of life in general. Thus, to me, to see the impact of such spiritual writings on science is important. Since those intellectuals approached knowledge from a unique and rich perspective.

Looking Through the Lens of Language at the Way Early Muslim Intellectuals Tried to Reach the Hidden Truth by Unpacking and Examining the Arabic Letters and Words

My presentation is about the flexibility of Arabic language. It dwells on different approaches made by some intellectuals to reach the truth via letters. So, my talk covers: The Abjad Numerals with examples of how it was used in finding the hidden meaning in speech; The view of some mystics regarding the creation of the Arabic letters; How Arabic could have facilitated the use/development of some algebraic practices; The alchemist Jābir ibn Hayyān's alphabetical/mathematical system and his theory of balance; Some Quranic verses (connected to language) which were mystically interpreted by some alchemists and Sufis; Interesting ideas about Arabic language by Brethren of Purity; Finally I will conclude by stating that such colorful and various approaches to letters and words made in many different fields were only possible because of the flexibility of the Arabic language which likewise expedited the early development of some significant scientific theories at the time.

Mala Mahadevu

A very enthusiastic student who wants to excel in the field of AI, ML and Deep Learning, Data analytics. Who is not only willing to excel but also learn through every step of the way from peers and experts. Believes in being in self learning and collaborative learning approach to upskill.

Modeling Topics over Time with Neural Network

Neural networks being the state-of-the-art for topic modeling have the ability to learn and model complex relationships among the data. We want to develop a neural topic-model for topics that evolve over time or helps in finding how each topic has changed at each observed time stamp. Our new approach allows us to understand how particular events changed over time. Scholarly journals, emails, news articles, and search query logs are just a few examples of document content that show changing content. Therefore, it is important to explicitly analyze and model the changes in such events, to answer questions and to see the change of trends from time to time.



Gutenberg Bust, Foto: Vanessa Möschner

Marta Kwaśniewska

My research focus is the employment of conceptual metaphors in media discourse, especially revolving around climate change discourse. Academic field: cognitive linguistics, corpus linguistics, discourse analysis. Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce, Poland.

Climate Wars – Military Metaphors in the Headlines of Polish and American Newspapers

The study presents a qualitative analysis of newspaper headlines in the context of metaphorical expressions employing the source domain of war. The material is comprised of Polish and American press articles headlines concerning the problem of climate change and is derived from materials published in 2019. The examples of metaphorical expressions are identified with the employment of specific metaphor identification procedures and subsequently categorized depending on the aspect of war which is prevailing. The results have indicated diversified representations of war in the Polish and American headlines. Various implications stemming from the representation are discussed.



Statue in front of Philsophicum, JGU, Foto: Vanessa Möschner

Jan Bielak

Jan Bielak studies music theory and conducting at the Karol Lipiński Academy of Music in Wrocław. He received an A.B. with distinction in the theory of music. The scope of his interests includes music analysis, the relationship between music and language and the life and work of Karol Szymanowski.

The Language of Prelude BWV 870 – What Bach's Music Tells Us And How We Can Talk About It

The aim of my paper is to reveal the structural essence of Bach's Prelude BWV 870, show it in the purest form possible, and thus discover the most important rules that govern it. I achieve this by applying my own method of reduction, which also provides a substantial body of information about Bach's diminution technique. Although the method is important – I describe it in the historical and methodological context – my main interest lies in its result. Therefore, I verify its usefulness by conducting an experiment. At my request, the participating pianist played Prelude in C major twice – before and after being acquainted with my research outcome. The presentation will include recordings of these two different interpretations, together with the results of the whole experiment.

Norman Darío Gómez Hernández

Norman Gómez holds BAs in Foreign Language Teaching and in Translation, and an MA in Education and Didactics of Translation, all awarded by the University of Antioquia, Colombia. He carried out post-graduate studies in e-Learning and Teaching at the University of Greenwich, and has recently defended his doctoral thesis “La enseñanza de la traducción en pregrado universitario en Hispanoamérica, in the Faculty of Translation, Linguistics and Cultural Studies (FTSK) at Johannes Gutenberg University, Germany.

Should Translation Students Know their Languages Beforehand? Implementing the Scaffolded Language Emergence (SLE) as a Naturalistic Approach in Translation Programs

Much has been said about the viability of beginning to learn how to translate only when students have gained sufficient command of both the source and target languages and cultures, otherwise “... classes will degenerate into language acquisition classes without the students –or the teachers– even realising it” (Nord, 2005). However, meeting those language learning prerequisites may be unrealistic in many translator training contexts, where students start their studies with limited knowledge of foreign languages, and rely primarily on the limited range of languages and course offerings in school. Besides, translation programs usually provide instruction to their new students on the basis of conventional teaching methods that may not be adequate for helping them go beyond a basic level of comprehension and expression in those languages.

In this talk I will outline and explain the alternative and integrative approach to language teaching known as Scaffolded Language Emergence – SLE (Kiraly & Gomez 2019), which draws eclectically from a variety of teaching methods and has proven to be highly effective for teaching more than 15 foreign languages to adult beginners at the FTSK at the University of Mainz over the past 18 years.

Malin Christina Wikstrøm

Malin Christina Wikstrøm finished her studies this summer, completing a PhD in English literature and translation at the University of Aberdeen while simultaneously finishing her teacher training at the University of Oslo in Norway. She is currently teaching English, history and social sciences at secondary level in Norway and working part time for the University of Southeastern Norway. Her research is primarily focused on the field of literature, in relation to gender, sexuality, mental health and translation.

Communicating the Incommunicable: Is It Possible to Represent Trauma in Literature?

In this presentation I will first explain the importance of communicating about mental health problems and trauma in our contemporary society, before I go on to discuss whether it is possible to represent the experience of trauma in writing. There have been discussions within the field of literature whether these complex topics of psychology can even be represented in fiction. How can an author successfully transfer these emotions? Even though the experience of trauma is claimed to be unrepresentable, it is important to at least attempt to capture the struggle in writing in order to improve the general public's understanding of trauma. Employing the "show don't tell" technique is a way to get as close as possible to the portrayal of trauma. I will then show some examples of how people use creative ways of presenting trauma through writing, both in literature and on social media.

Jan Niklas Jokisch

I received an BA and an MA in Comparative Literature from JGU. I spent an extra year at the University of Massachusetts Amherst studying Comparative Literature and Translation Studies (financed through the DAAD). I am currently teaching German at the Universidad Nacional de Córdoba and at the Universidad Tecnológica Nacional - Facultad Regional Córdoba in Argentina (also financed through the DAAD). Aside from that I am a freelance translator for the DEFA Film Library (associated with UMass Amherst).

Should You Let Your Computer Do the Reading? A Discussion of the Benefits of Distant Reading for Literary Studies, With a Quantitative Study on the Development of Stage Directions in European Drama

The dominant method in literary studies is – and possibly always has been – close reading, the detailed analysis and interpretation of a text as a complex network of references. This, as a method, is more than adequate for the study of single texts and limited text corpora. But literary studies ultimately takes the step from the particular and aims at more universal statements about broad literary phenomena. Those inductions are, however, dubious since they rely on the close reading of tens of texts while claiming to be applicable to tens of thousands if not more. That is why Franco Moretti in his “Conjectures on World Literature” (2000) advocates for a new method: distant reading; which has become to be understood as a computational approach to literary studies, tackling this inductive dilemma and “the great unread” by letting computers do most – if not all – of the reading. This approach wasn’t quite met with enthusiasm. So, I – as a person formally trained in close reading – would like to use my own computational study on the development of the stage direction in European drama to discuss what we can gain when we use artificial languages to approach natural languages; thereby, hopefully bridging the chasm between close and distant reading by demonstrating how they are not rival methods but should instead be used and understood as complimentary.

Impressum

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Campus - Bibliothek im GFG, Foto: Thomas Hartmann, @JGU Mainz

Reaching One Another

Language as Interface and Performance



ICON Mainz is an interdisciplinary and international students' conference at the University of Mainz. ICON offers students from all over the world a platform to exchange ideas about their research projects, to get to know current topics from other fields of research and to broaden their horizon by exchanging ideas with other students.

A further goal of ICON is to raise awareness that students can make a valuable contribution to research worldwide. This is why ICON gives students the opportunity to present their research and discuss it with a wider audience.

What is special about ICON is that the organization team is made up of students from different disciplines and nationalities; it is a conference organized by students for students.