



Interactional and discursive practices in changing work environments

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Symposium format:

- **Symposium Multimodal**

Symposium mode:

- **Hybrid**

Sub-themes:

- **LANGUAGE & TECHNOLOGY:** media, tools, digital humanities, Natural Language Processing (NLP)
- **LANGUAGE IN USE:** communication, interaction, conversation analysis, discourse, corpus, media
- **LANGUAGES IN PROFESSIONS:** translation & interpreting, transdisciplinarity, justice, medicine, food, forensics

Short abstract in English:

This symposium will engage with new kinds of discursive and interactional practices in changing work environments. First of all, the digitalization of the workplace calls for new kinds of interactional practices that take into consideration different affordances of digital technologies, often requiring switching between written, video-based and face-to-face interaction, as well as interacting with technologies. Secondly, work has become more dispersed, and the fuzzy boundaries between different sectors of life require new ways of mixing genres, registers and discourses, as well as learning new practices of self-presentation, as workplace roles are often all-pervasive. Thirdly, organizations have to continuously change as they adapt to a changing society. For example, top-down forms of leadership have been increasingly replaced by a participatory ethos. Participatory workplace cultures require interactional practices that make it easy to share information and ideas between different groups of employees in transparent and democratic ways.

Argument:

In recent decades, there have been profound changes in workplace practices. Firstly, the digitalization of the workplace has meant that workplace communication happens increasingly in mediated ways, and human-to-human communication is intertwined with and sometimes even replaced by communication between humans and technology (Darics 2015; Orlikowski & Scott, 2016). These changes have been accelerated by the huge increase in remote work during the covid-19 pandemic. Secondly, work has become more dispersed. Boundaries between work and leisure have become fuzzier. At the same time, digital spaces also enable flexible work arrangements and new kinds of constellations as they bring together people across various sectors and national, cultural and linguistic borders and boundaries. Also,



income is increasingly earned through various short-term, overlapping and self-employed projects, which enhances workforce mobility. Thirdly, organizations have to continuously change as they adapt to a changing society. For example, top-down forms of leadership have been increasingly replaced by a participatory ethos. In order to facilitate such changes, consultants and platforms designed for digital facilitation are often utilized. (See, Nissi, Blåsjö & Jonsson, 2021.)

Importantly, these changes are reflected in changing discursive and interactional practices in workplaces. Digital tools and platforms call for new kinds of interactional practices that take into consideration the different affordances of the technologies, often requiring switching between written, video-based and face-to-face interaction, as well as interacting with the technologies (see e.g., Arminen et al, 2016). Fuzzy boundaries between different sectors of life require new ways of mixing genres, registers and discourses, as well as learning new practices of self-presentation, as workplace roles are often all-pervasive. Participatory workplace cultures require interactional practices that make it easy to share information and ideas between different groups of employees in transparent and democratic ways.

This symposium will engage with these timely issues and bring together latest research on interactional and discursive practices in the present-day work environment. Methodologically, different forms of conversation or discourse analysis may be used to tackle these issues. The papers will cover different themes in this area, including the following:

Digital interaction in the workplace

Interaction in and between different physical and digital workspaces

Practices of work-related self-presentation

New workplace genres and registers

Interactional and discursive practices of new language and communication professionals

Discourses of leadership and organizational change

Arminen, I. Licoppe, C., & Spagnolli, A. (2106). Respecifying mediated interaction. *Research on Language and Social Interaction*, 49(4), 290–309.

Darics, E. (2015). Introduction: Business communication in the digital age – fresh perspectives. In E. Darics (Ed.), *Digital Business Discourse*. Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 1–16.

Nissi, R., Blåsjö, M. & Jonsson, C. 2021. Workplace communication in flux: From discrete languages, text genres and conversations to complex communicative situations. *Applied Linguistics Review*. Published ahead-of-print.

Orlikowski, W.J. & Scott, S.V. (2016). Digital work: A research agenda. In B. Czarniawska (Ed.), *A Research Agenda for Management and Organization Studies*. Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing, 88–96.