



Symposium title:

Language, work and vocational education: Teaching, training and learning through language use in professional contexts

Coordinator 1 (Laurent Filliettaz, University of Geneva, Switzerland)

Coordinator 2 (Anna Claudia Ticca, University of Geneva, Switzerland)

Symposium format (one choice - delete the others):

- **Multimodal Symposium**

Symposium mode (one choice - delete the others):

- **Hybrid**

Sub-themes (multiple choices - delete the others):

- ☐ **LANGUAGE RESOURCES:** multi-modality (including gesture), corpora, artifacts,
- ☐ **LANGUAGE IN USE:** communication, interaction, conversation analysis, discourse, corpus, media
- ☐ **LANGUAGES IN PROFESSIONS:** translation & interpreting, transdisciplinarity, justice, medicine, food, forensics

Abstract

This symposium aims to study situations in which work-related training or learning experiences are mediated by language use. By tightening the links between vocational education research and applied linguistics, we explore how people gain access to vocational knowledge and build up skills and competencies, how they expand their learning experiences once they leave school, and how they undergo identity changes. The synergies of vocational education research and the diverse approaches in linguistics will be observed from two main perspectives. The first focuses on *language as a means for learning and professional development*. The idea is to understand how mechanisms related to vocational education can be revisited and reconsidered as linguistic accomplishments. The second focuses on *formal or informal training practices allowing participants to become reflexive about their linguistic or interactional competences*. The interest is to understand how principles of a linguistic description can become object of learning and professional development.

Argument (2 pages maximum, i.e. about 500 words or 3000 characters including bibliography):

Multimodal symposium: *it is advisable to specify clearly the thematic orientations so as to best guide future individual submissions.*

For some decades, various frameworks in discourse and interaction analysis have found fruitful applications in a wide range of social practices, some of them closely related to education. But surprisingly, the field of vocational education has not attracted significant



attention (Filliettaz & Lambert, 2019). Linguists or sociologists involved in Workplace studies have not been explicitly interested in vocational or professional education and have often failed to approach the workplace as a site for learning or training.

In contrast with this tendency, there seems to be a growing need for exploring continuities between vocational education research and applied linguistics. How do people gain access to vocational knowledge and build up skills and competencies? How do they expand their repertoires of learning experiences once they leave school? How do they undergo identity changes? These questions and many more have been addressed frequently by researchers interested in vocational education (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Billett, 2001). The perspectives from language and linguistics, one could argue, are certainly not external to these issues. Learning to work and becoming a member of professional communities very much rely on institutional demands, which are highly mediated by language and discourse (Pekarek-Doehler et al., 2017). These discourses provide accounts of the ways individuals engage with the process of training and learning, and can be regarded as valuable methodological resources for understanding the complex processes associated with vocational education. Given this background, it seems highly promising to explore the possible connections existing between vocational education research and concepts and analytic tools provided by various strands in applied linguistics.

It is precisely the aim of this symposium to tighten the links between these disciplines and to apply a linguistic lens to research questions that have gained interest for vocational educationalists. From there, the proposed symposium seeks to shed light on situations in which training or learning experiences related to work are mediated by language use. These connections will be explored through two possible avenues:

- 1) The first avenue focuses on *language use as a means for learning and professional development*. It explores the possible contributions of language use in context as a way a) to guide and scaffold collaborative actions at work, b) to make epistemic categories intersubjectively visible amongst participants, c) to negotiate interpersonal relationships and to navigate communities of practices. The interest here is to understand how mechanisms related to vocational education can be revisited and reconsidered as linguistic accomplishments (Kilbrink, Asplund & Asghari, 2021).
- 2) The second perspective focuses on *formal or informal training practices in which participants are expected to become reflexive about their linguistic or interactional competences*. Over the years, a growing range of experiences have been conducted, in which linguists have contributed to design training environments based on principles of discourse or interaction analysis (Stokoe, 2014). The interest here is to understand how epistemological and methodological principles of a linguistic description can become an object of learning and professional development.



Contributors are invited to present and discuss a large range of empirical settings (healthcare, education, law, hospitality, etc.) drawing from different approaches in linguistics. An orientation on multimodal data will be particularly welcome, exploring the connections between multiple semiotic resources.

References

- Billett, S. (2001). Learning through work: workplace affordances and individual engagement. *Journal of Workplace Learning*, 13(5), 209-214.
- Filliettaz, L., & Lambert, P. (2019). La formation professionnelle, un point aveugle de la linguistique sociale?. *Langage et société*, (3), 15-47.
- Kilbrink, N., Asplund, S., & Asghari, H. (2021). Introducing the object of learning in interaction: vocational teaching and learning in a plumbing workshop session. *Journal of Vocational Education & Training*. doi: 10.1080/13636820.2020.1850512.
- Lave, J. & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.
- Pekarek Doehler, S. et al. (Ed.). (2017). *Interactional competences in institutional settings: From school to the workplace*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Stokoe, E. (2014). The Conversation Analytic Role-play Method (CARM): A method for training communication skills as an alternative to simulated role-play. *Research on Language and Social Interaction*, 47(3), 255-265.