

INTRODUCTION

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The following is a sample of papers from the “19th European Systemic Functional Linguistics Conference and Workshop”, which took place at Saarland University, Saarbrücken, Germany, 23rd-25th July, 2007. The “Call for Papers” had invited contributions on the theme *Data and interpretation in linguistic analysis* along the following lines:

Traditionally, linguists approach their object of research using hermeneutic methods. As the often introspective interpretation involved may be difficult to follow, results are frequently not replicable. For reasons of cost involved, this methodology often allows the interpretation of a restricted number of examples only, even if the researcher is interested in language in use. Therefore, inductive methodologies of the sciences and social sciences have gained some influence on linguistic research. These inductive methodologies, however, sometimes make us blind to the fact that data need to be interpreted at some point. What is more, the data itself may already involve interpretation, as in annotated corpora. In terms of its underlying philosophy, Systemic Functional Linguistics allows the combination of both: a genuinely humanities-based approach to interpreting data combined with empirical methodologies taking advantage of electronic corpora together with computational tools and techniques for the study of language in use.

Papers were invited to cover the following areas with papers not strictly related to the theme or outside of the SFL perspective also welcome.

- Corpora and other types of data for analysis
- Example-based studies and generalizability
- The role of interpretation in
 - Phonology
 - Lexicogrammar
 - Semantics
 - Discourse
- Cohesion and coherence - the relative importance of interpretation in both
- Interpretation in non-linguistic modes (i.e. visual, musical etc.)
- Socio-cultural positions of power and interpretation
- Contrast between languages or varieties and the (in)dependence of/ on interpretation
- Context of Situation and Context of Culture as frames for and constraints on interpretation

- Learning or teaching a new language: new interpretations, or just new ways of expression?
- Translation: Changing the encoding, and/or changing the interpretation?

Following this Call for Papers, the reviewing committee selected 63 papers for presentation at the conference. At this point in time, we have received 14 submissions which we are publishing on-line. As for the topical spread of these submissions in terms of the Call for Papers, they fall into approximately 7 sub-topics. In terms of methodology, they address the dialectics between empirical and hermeneutic methodologies to different degrees. At this stage, the question of whether or not a future published volume with sufficient coherence in terms of topic and methodology will emerge is still undecided. In the meantime, though, we would like to grasp the opportunity to give at least a partial account of what the presentations at the conference were like.

We once again would like to thank all those who made the conference possible in July 2007: Saarland University and the Saarland Sports College (Landessportschule), our sponsor *Verenigung der Freunde der Universität des Saarlandes e.V.*, the programme committee, the organizing committee, our plenary speakers John Bateman, Miriam Taverniers, Gordon Tucker as well as Stig Johansson who kindly sent us the manuscript of the plenary lecture he was unable to read due to illness. Above all we would like to thank our participants, some of whose contributions you will find in this on-line publication.

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