

**Fifth Bonn Applied English Linguistics Conference  
(BAELc5)**

# Abstracts



**BAELc5**

**Fifth Bonn Applied English Linguistics Conference**



# Fifth Bonn Applied English Linguistics Conference (BAELc5)

Friday, 3 June 2016		
13:30	Registration	
14:00	Klaus P. Schneider	Conference opening
Chair: Pawel Sickinger		
14:15	Larssyn Staley (Zürich)	<i>Socioeconomic and discourse specific variation in address forms</i>
14:45	Lisa Lehnen (Würzburg)	<i>“Small Talk wär mal ganz gut, glaub ich.”: Pragmatic competence from the perspective of EFL teachers</i>
15:15	Edit Ficzer Willcox (Oxford)	<i>Assessing EFL learners’ pragmatic competence in speaking: Some pragmatic features CEFR B2 level learners display in speech</i>
15:45	Coffee break	
16:15	Ami Sato (Lancaster)	<i>The role of a “superparticipant” in negotiating politeness norms in an online forum</i>
Chair: Klaus P. Schneider		
17:00 - 18:00	Keynote lecture: <i>How, and to what extent, does culture influence evaluations of politeness?</i> Helen Spencer-Oatey (Warwick)	
19:00	Conference dinner at <i>Casa del Gatto</i> (Kaiserplatz 20, 53113 Bonn)	

**Saturday, 4 June 2016**

Chair: Katrin Renkwitz & Stefanie Pohle

09:00	Kim-Kathrin Riegel & Linda Taschenberger	<i>Refusals of invitations in German, German learner English, and British English</i>
9:45	Samantha Kelly Kent	<i>Complaint strategies in Dutch and English: A cross-cultural comparison</i>
10:15	Coffee break + Poster session M.A. students (Bonn)	
11:00	Maria Kostromitina	<i>The structure of service encounter requests in Russian and German</i>
11:30	Silvana Maria Lepşa	<i>Insults in online discussion sites: Examining gender variations on a structural level</i>
12:00	Edda Marie Grudda	<i>Small talk openings in Canadian English: A study of sex differences</i>
12:30	Lunch break (Catering at the <i>Universitätsforum</i> available)	

**Saturday, 4 June 2016**

Chair: Susanne Mohr

13:30	Helene Steigertahl (Bayreuth)	<i>"And where do you speak English?" - Language Use and Attitudes in Namibia</i>
14:00	Coffee break	
14:30	Victoria Guillén-Nieto (Alicante)	<i>Defamation: Verbal aggression, culture and impoliteness</i>
15:00	Julia Muschalik (Düsseldorf)	<i>Balancing the risks and benefits of conflictive illocutions: The case of the strategic threatener</i>
15:30	Gaby Axer (Bonn)	<i>Developing a system to quantify authorship analysis</i>
16:00	Klaus P. Schneider	Conference closing

<b>Poster presentations</b>	
Anna Lena Adams	Pragmalinguistic development of German learners of English: Comparing requests of foreign language learners and English native speakers
Alberto Furgoni	How German learners of English express disagreement in a collaborative context: A comparison of German students with different levels of language proficiency
Alexander Güldner	External modification of requests in Scottish English and German learner English
Rojman Isa Megeed	A critical analysis of Brown and Levinson's Face Threatening Acts and their role in non-standard situations for males and females
Laura Theodora Weller	Request strategies by German learners of English: Do they favor British or American English patterns?
Kseniia Zaichenko	Responses to requests by German and Ukrainian speakers of English

**Socioeconomic and discourse specific variation in address forms**

**Larssyn Staley (Zürich)**

*Larssyn Staley studied English Linguistics and Literature at the University of Zurich where, in 2013, she completed her Master's degree. In 2014 she joined the English Department at the University of Zurich as a research assistant to Andreas H. Jucker. Currently she is working on her doctoral dissertation: Pragmatic Variation in Los Angeles Restaurant Service Encounters.*

While recent studies on intralingual pragmatic variation have shown the effect of region on the use and form of pragmatic variables (e.g. Barron 2005, 2008, 2011; Félix-Brasdefer 2009, 2010, 2015; Placencia 2008; Schneider 2005, 2014) little to no research exists on the effect of social status. Address forms present themselves as an interesting candidate for research on socioeconomic pragmatic variation due to the variation they have already been shown to display according to the power and solidarity of the interlocutors. In this study, I explore how address forms vary according to the macro social factor of socioeconomic status and micro social factors related to the specific discourse context.

To analyze socioeconomic variation, I take 22 restaurants with three different price ranges as a proxy for socioeconomic status. All of these restaurant service encounters were audio recorded with prior consent of the servers and guests. For the analysis of micro variation, the discourse context is delimited to particular communicative tasks to establish a comparable linguistic and cognitive context in addition to the comparable sociocultural context established through the restaurant setting and the server-guest relationship. In this study, I consider singular, plural, pronominal and nominal forms, their combined use and whether these forms are used as free vocatives or bound address forms.

The findings of this study suggest that an increase in plural nominal (e.g. guys) as well as you+nominal forms (e.g. you guys/folks) correlates with a decrease in social-economic status. Additionally, in the lowest socioeconomic group, these solidarity building forms are used more frequently when additional items, such as appetizers and desserts, are promoted.

- Barron, A. (2005). Offering in Ireland and England. In: Barron, A., & Schneider, K. P. (Eds.). *The pragmatics of Irish English* (pp. 141-177). Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Barron, A. (2008). The structure of requests in Irish English and English English. In: Barron, A., & Schneider, K. P. (Eds.). *Variational pragmatics: A focus on regional varieties in pluricentric languages* (pp. 35-67). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: Benjamins.
- Barron, A. (2011). Variation revisited: A corpus analysis of offers in Irish English and British English. In: Frenk, J., & Steveker, L. (Eds.). *Anglistentag 2010 Saarbrücken: Proceedings: [proceedings of the conference of the German Association of University Teachers of English]* (pp. 407-420). Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier.
- Félix-Brasdefer, J. C. (2009). Pragmatic variation across Spanish(es): Requesting in Mexican, Costa Rican and Dominican Spanish. *Intercultural Pragmatics* 6, 473-515.
- Félix-Brasdefer, J. C. (2010). Intra-lingual pragmatic variation in Mexico City and San José, Costa Rica: A focus on regional differences in female requests. *Journal of Pragmatics* 42, 2992-3011.
- Félix-Brasdefer, J. C. (2015). *The language of service encounters: A pragmatic-discursive approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Placencia, M. E. (2008). Requests in corner shop transactions in Ecuadorian Andean and Coastal Spanish. In: Schneider, K. P., & Barron, A. (Eds.). *Variational pragmatics: A focus on regional varieties in pluricentric languages* (pp. 307-332). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: Benjamins.
- Schneider, K. P. (2005). No problem, you're welcome, anytime: Responding to thanks in Ireland, England, and the USA. In: Schneider, K. P., & Barron, A. (Eds.). *The pragmatics of Irish English* (pp. 101-139). Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Schneider, K. P. (2014). Pragmatic variation and cultural models. In: Pütz, M., Robinson, J. A., & Reif, M. (Eds.). *Cognitive Sociolinguistics: Social and cultural variation in cognition and language use* (pp. 107-132). Philadelphia: Benjamins.

Friday, 3 June 2016 | 14:45 – 15:15

**“Small Talk wär mal ganz gut, glaub ich.”: Pragmatic competence from the perspective of EFL teachers**

**Lisa Lehnen (Würzburg)**

*Lisa Lehnen studied “Anglophone Studies” and “Spanish Language & Culture” (B.A.) at the University of Duisburg-Essen and completed her M.A. in “Applied Linguistics” at the University of Bonn in February 2016. She is currently working as a research fellow at the University of Würzburg with Prof. Dr. Carolin Biewer who also supervises her PhD project with the working title: “Pragmatic Variation across Second-Language Varieties of English and Learner Englishes –A Speech-Act Based Study”. Generally, she is most interested in research on (Variational) Pragmatics, Intercultural Communication, Corpus Linguistics, Teaching English as a Foreign Language, World Englishes and Sociolinguistics.*

How do we use a foreign language appropriately? What about our own culturally- and socially-determined linguistic habits and norms of politeness?

In fact, language learners seldom seem to be aware that unintentional pragmatic failure can make a bad impression especially on native speakers who, for their part, might not be aware that miscommunication is due to a linguistic, i.e. pragmalinguistic or sociopragmatic (cf. Thomas 1983), problem. Teachers, thus, play an important role in raising learners' awareness of the challenges they might encounter when interacting in a foreign language. While enabling learners of English to communicate successfully in the foreign language seems to be of uncontroversial importance (cf. Bardovi-Harlig 2001; Kasper 1997; Rose & Kasper 2001), it remains unclear to some degree how this can be successfully achieved in teaching practice. Especially for pre-service teachers, who are still studying and have not gained much experience yet, is it useful to be provided with some practical insight into appropriate content and methods for teaching pragmatics.

This investigation involves a survey with students of English to become teachers and an interview study with teachers of English that explores their beliefs about the development of pragmatic competence in EFL classrooms. Although it is not possible to draw general conclusions about the quality of English Studies programmes or of TEFL practices from this small-scale study which focuses on North-Rhine Westphalia, it is believed that the first-hand reports carry some implications for the successful integration of pragmatic competence into foreign language teaching.

Bardovi-Harlig, K. (2001). Evaluating the empirical evidence: Grounds for pragmatic instruction? In: Rose, K. R., & Kasper, G. (Eds.). (pp. 13-32). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kasper, G. (1997). Can pragmatic competence be taught? (NetWork #6) [online]. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i, Second Language Teaching & Curriculum Center. Retrieved from: <http://www.nflrc.hawaii.edu/NetWorks/NW06/>.

Rose, K. R., & Kasper, G. (Eds.). (2001). *Pragmatics in language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Thomas, J. (1983). Cross-cultural pragmatic failure. *Applied Linguistics* 4(2), 91-112.

Friday, 3 June 2016 | 15:15 – 15:45

**Assessing EFL learners' pragmatic competence in speaking: Some pragmatic features CEFR B2 level learners display in speech**

**Edit Ficzer Willcox (Oxford)**

*Edit Ficzer Willcox is a PhD candidate at CRELLA Research Institute, University of Bedfordshire. She is an Associate Lecturer at Oxford Brookes University and a test material writer for Macmillan Publishing. Her background includes teaching English as a foreign language and teacher training. In addition, she has contributed articles to linguistic journals and presented papers at professional conferences.*

The importance of testing L2 learners' pragmatic competence is becoming evident as a result of increasing research activity on this topic. Most current pragmatic tests use Speech Act Theory as a theoretical



framework, although it has been criticized lately for overlooking the importance of the discursive side of pragmatics (Kasper, 2006; Roever, 2011).

The main objective of this research study, therefore, is to investigate an approach to assessing CEFR B2-C2 level EFL learners' pragmatic competence in extended oral discourse. The study aims at identifying some criterial features defining the level of L2 pragmatic competence and examines the extent to which different speaking task formats allow test takers to display their pragmatic competence. It also investigates whether the identified criterial features can be operationalized in rating scales, while considering which features are salient to raters when awarding scores for pragmatic competence.

This presentation, as part of the study, reports on its first phase, which focused on identifying pragmatic features salient in B2 learners' speech production. Nine university students from different cultural backgrounds participated in the study, which included four monologic and two dialogic tasks. These were video recorded, transcribed and analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. The results indicate that B2 level learners, regardless of their nationality, use the same somewhat narrow range of linguistic devices available to them for pragmatic purposes; and that although they organize speech sequentially, the discourse constructed can occasionally be abrupt and repetitive. It is worth noting that this latter feature was especially noticeable in the dialogic task involving unequal social constellations.

Kasper, G. (2006). Speech acts in interaction: Towards discursive pragmatics. In: Bardovi-Harlig, K., Felix-Brasdefer, J. C., & Omar, A. S. (Eds.). *Pragmatics and language learning*, Vol. 11 (pp. 281-314). Honolulu: University of Hawai'i, National Foreign Language Resource Center.

Roever, C. (2011). Testing of second language pragmatics: Past and future. *Language Testing* 28(4), 463-482.

Friday, 3 June 2016 | 16:15 – 16:45

### The role of a “superparticipant” in negotiating politeness norms in an online forum

#### Ami Sato (Lancaster)

*Ami Sato is a PhD candidate in the Department of Linguistics and English Language at Lancaster University, UK. Her doctoral research examines the construction of rapport in online forums. Her research interests include language use in building rapport, (im)politeness, computer-mediated discourse and literacy studies.*

The aim of this paper is to investigate how the norms of polite/appropriate behaviours are negotiated in an online forum called the *Japan Forum* (<http://www.jref.com/forum/>), where participants from across the world share their interests and information about Japan. Similar to previous studies on participants' evaluations and interpretations of (im)politeness in computer-mediated communication settings (e.g. Graham, 2007; Angouri & Tseliga, 2010), the present study examines how participants negotiate their politeness norms in asynchronous computer-mediated communication. The data is based on 759 threads that were posted between 2011 and 2014 in a section for learning Japanese. I examine the metacommunication that occurred in threads in which the participants discussed polite/appropriate behaviours. One of the politeness norms often mentioned is that the original poster who starts a thread should remain active in the thread, interacting with and acknowledging other participants' contributions (i.e., responses). This expectation of behaviour is addressed by a “superparticipant” (Graham & Wright, 2014) who posts frequently in this online forum and advises the other participants. I suggest that the role of superparticipant is important in maintaining the online forum by facilitating the discussion regarding the negotiation of politeness norms between new and established members in the online community.

Angouri, J., & Tseliga, T. (2010). “You Have No Idea What You are Talking About!” From e-disagreement to e-impoliteness in two online fora. *Journal of Politeness Research. Language, Behaviour, Culture*, 6(1), 57-82.

Graham, S. L. (2007). Disagreeing to agree: Conflict, (im)politeness and identity in a computer-mediated community. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 39(4), 742-759.

Graham, T., & Wright, S. (2014). Discursive equality and everyday talk online: the impact of “superparticipants”. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 19(3), 625-642.

## Keynote

### How, and to what extent, does culture influence evaluations of politeness?

#### Helen Spencer-Oatey (Warwick)

*Helen Spencer-Oatey has worked at the interface of psychology and linguistics throughout her career. She taught English language to children and adults in Hong Kong and later she trained teachers of English language in China. After completing her PhD at Lancaster University, Helen Spencer-Oatey lectured at the University of Luton for 10 years and established the first MA in Intercultural Communication in the UK.*

*In 2002 she started managing the major inter-governmental eChina-UK Programme on behalf of the Higher Education Funding Council for England. Since 2007 Helen Spencer-Oatey holds the position of Director of the Department of Applied Linguistics at the University of Warwick. Her research interests are social pragmatics, intercultural interaction, intercultural adaptation and change, and culture and pedagogy.*

For the past 40 years and more, there has been extensive theorising within pragmatics on the concept of politeness, as well as literally thousands of empirical studies on politeness phenomena, especially cross-cultural comparisons of different speech acts. Yet, rather surprisingly, there has been little or no theorising within pragmatics on the concept of culture itself, nor of the role it may play in politeness behaviour and judgements.

In this talk I address this issue by drawing on insights from other disciplines, most notably psychology, and applying them to politeness theory, with a particular focus on politeness evaluations. I start by considering what politeness is and how it is conceptualised in my rapport management model. I then explain how politeness judgements are inevitably associated with a sense of morality, which Kádár and Haugh (2013) refer to as a moral order and the psychologist, Jonathan Haidt (e.g Haidt and Kesebir, 2010) calls moral foundations. After this I turn to examining the nature of culture in order to consider how, and to what extent, an understanding of the different manifestations of culture in terms of perspectives/values and interactional principles can influence people's moral sense and hence their politeness judgements. Throughout the talk I use a number of authentic examples of intercultural interactions to help us identify the different evaluative viewpoints that need to be explained, the extent to which these differing evaluations are culturally based, and the strengths and the limitations of specific explanatory concepts.

Haidt, J., & Kesebir, S. (2010). Morality. In S. Fiske, D. Gilbert, & G. Lindzey (Eds.), *Handbook of Social Psychology. 5th edition* (pp. 797–852). New Jersey: John Wiley.

Kádár, D. Z., & Haugh, M. (2013). *Understanding Politeness*. Cambridge: CUP.

Saturday, 4 June 2016 | 09:00 – 09:45

### Refusals of invitations in German, German learner English, and British English

#### Kim Riegel & Linda Taschenberger (Bonn)

*Kim Riegel completed her BA in „Moderne Fremdsprachen, Kulturen und Wirtschaft“ in Gießen, Germany. Her research interests are foreign language teaching and learning and psycholinguistics.*

*Linda Taschenberger completed her BA in “English Studies” in Malmö, Sweden. Her research interests are cognitive- and psycholinguistics, bilingualism, language and identity and sociolinguistics.*

The enhancement of cross-cultural communication has been a major goal in the field of intercultural communication. The investigation of face-threatening acts has emphasised the varying appropriateness of linguistic strategies across different cultures and how this may result in intercultural misunderstandings, conflicts, and negative stereotypes. To this date, studies of refusals among German and English speakers have focused solely on the comparison with American English. The present study, therefore, aimed to compare native speakers of German and British English in order to give insight into their differing norms of communication in this regard. This talk presents the results of two studies on refusals to invitations, one of which focuses on the cross-cultural aspect of the linguistic phenomenon while the other takes an interlanguage approach to the issue at hand. Data for both studies were collected via a questionnaire in the form of a Discourse Completion Task and coded based on the coding scheme developed by Beebe et al. (1990). The analysis of the refusals shows a clear preference for indirect strategies in both groups of native speakers. Contrasting these two groups reveals that social power and social distance appear to be critical factors in the selection of semantic strategies. Besides a similar preference for indirect strategies, the interlanguage speakers (German EFL learners) likewise show differences in strategy use according to social distance. The data suggests that positive transfer from German to British English is more probable than negative transfer.

Beebe, L. M., Takahashi, T., & Uliss-Weltz, R. (1990). Pragmatic transfer in ESL refusals. In: Scarcella, R. C., Andersen, E., & Krashen, S. D. (Eds.). *Developing communicative competence in a second language* (pp. 55-73). New York: Newbury House.

Saturday, 4 June 2016 | 09:45 – 10:15

### Complaint strategies in Dutch and English: A cross-cultural comparison

#### Samantha Kent (Bonn)

*Samantha Kent completed her BA in English Language and Culture at Leiden University in the Netherlands. Besides her studies she is working as an English teacher and is therefore extremely interested in the application of pragmatics research in foreign language teaching and learning.*

Pragmatic competence plays a central role in learning to speak a new language. It is therefore important for pragmatics research to not only concentrate on thoroughly examining one language, but to also examine the impact of communication across cultures. Currently, there has been little research that compares English and Dutch. Given the close ties between the two languages, and the widespread use of English in the Netherlands, more research in this area would be beneficial.

Consequently, the present study uses the speech act of complaining as a basis to compare Dutch and English language use. The data used in the analysis was elicited with a production questionnaire from a total of 30 native speakers, spread evenly across the two languages, who are all either students or recent university graduates. The design of the Discourse Completion Task incorporated two different social variables: interlocutors of equal social status and interlocutors of unequal social status. The analysis of the data focuses on the head acts of the complaints, which are categorised according to degree of (in)directness, and both external and internal modification strategies. The coding scheme that was used to categorise the data was adapted from an earlier study by Trosborg (1995).

The findings show that, generally speaking, the English respondents use more indirect complaint strategies, and more internal and external modifications, than the Dutch respondents. Interestingly, as it seems to contradict classic politeness theory, it was also found that the different social constellations did not have much of an influence on the Dutch speakers and no influence on the English speakers at all. The degree of directness was the same in both situations.

Trosborg, A. (1995). *Interlanguage Pragmatics: Requests, Complaints and Apologies*. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Saturday, 4 June 2016 | 10:15 – 11:00 | Poster session

**Pragmalinguistic development of German learners of English: Comparing requests of foreign language learners and English native speakers**

**Anna Lena Adams (Bonn)**

*Anna Lena Adams completed her B.A. in "English Studies" at the University of Bonn. In her corpus-based thesis she focused on sex differences in apologies in Irish English. Her interests are foreign language teaching and learning as well as interlanguage pragmatics and intercultural communication.*

The present study focuses on the pragmalinguistic development of German learners of English (GLEs) in secondary school which are compared to English English native speakers in terms of realization strategies and modification of requests. Previous research on interlanguage pragmatics has mostly concentrated on adult university students, but, with a few exceptions (cf. Rose 2009, Savić 2015), neglected students in their teenage years.

Therefore, the present study investigates request utterances made by 44 German students in seventh and ninth grade between the ages of twelve and 15 with the help of two discourse completion tasks (QEU, cf. Schneider 2014). Their utterances are compared to those made by 60 English English native speakers in the same age group. The focus of analysis is on realization strategies, lexical and phrasal downgraders, alerters and mitigating supportive moves. The two hypotheses were: a) there is a pragmalinguistic development from seventh grade to ninth grade GLEs and b) English native speakers use a greater variety of modifying elements in their requests. The first hypothesis was mostly supported by the data at hand, whereas the second hypothesis could not be confirmed.

Rose, K. R. (2009). Interlanguage pragmatic development in Hong Kong, phase 2. *Journal of Pragmatics* 41, 2345-2364.

Savić, M. (2015). "Can I very please borrow it?": Request development in young Norwegian EFL learners. *Intercultural Pragmatics* 12(4), 443-480.

Schneider, K. P. (2014). Pragmatic variation and cultural models. In: Pütz, M., Robinson, J. A., & Reif, M. (Eds.). *Cognitive sociolinguistics: Social and cultural variation in cognition and language use* (pp. 107-132). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Saturday, 4 June 2016 | 10:15 – 11:00 | Poster session

**How German learners of English express disagreement in a collaborative context: A comparison of German students with different levels of language proficiency**

**Alberto Furgoni (Bonn)**

*Alberto Furgoni completed his BA in Foreign Languages and Literatures at the University of Bologna. In his thesis he analysed the Germanic features in the dialect of Mantua (Italy). His research interests are cognitive psycholinguistics, pragmatics, language teaching.*

This study is located in the field of interlanguage pragmatics and investigates the pragmatic strategies employed by German learners of English when expressing disagreement. More specifically, the focus is on how learners at different levels of language proficiency disagree in a collaborative context.

According to previous research, disagreement is defined as a reaction to a previous verbal and/or non-verbal action (Kakavá, 2002). Even though Brown and Levinson (2009) define disagreement as a highly

face-threatening speech act, it has been shown to be part of everyday conversation and in some cultures is considered as a sign of sociability and intimacy (Kakavá, 2002), or, in some contexts (e.g. decision making, workplace, etc.), is even required (Angouri & Locher, 2012).

For this study, a group of German high school students in tenth grade and a group of German first-year university students were given a questionnaire with four Discourse Completion Tasks. The high school students received a questionnaire with situations which are school-related, while the university students had university-related scenarios.

The instances were analysed according to Kreutel's coding scheme (2007) in which disagreements are classified as "strong" or "mitigated". The results show that learners with higher language proficiency (i.e. university students) tend to employ more mitigated disagreements than the other participant group (i.e. high school students). However, this difference is not significant and, in line with Kreutel (2007) and Glaser (2009), it confirms that language proficiency does not always imply a higher pragmatic competence.

Angouri, J. & Locher, M. A. (2012). Theorising disagreement. *Journal of Pragmatics* 44, 1549-1553.

Brown, P. & Levinson, S. C. (2009). Politeness: Some universals in language usage [chapter 1, reprint]. In: Coupland, N., & Jaworski, A. (Eds.). *Sociolinguistics: critical concepts [volume III: Interactional sociolinguistics]* (pp. 311-323). London: Routledge.

Glaser, K. (2009). Acquiring pragmatic competence in a foreign language: Mastering dispreferred speech acts. *Topics in Linguistics* 4, 50-57.

Kakavá, C. (2002). Opposition in modern Greek discourse: Cultural and contextual constraints. *Journal of Pragmatics* 34, 1537-1568.

Kreutel, K. (2007). "I'm not agree with you": ESL learners' expressions of disagreement. *TESL-EJ* 11(3), 1-35.

Saturday, 4 June 2015 | 10:15 – 11:00 | Poster session

### External modification of requests in Scottish English and German learner English

**Alexander Güldner (Bonn)**

*Alexander Güldner completed his BA in English Studies at the University of Bonn. His research interests are pragmatics, institutional discourse and language processing.*

The present study examines the realisation patterns of supportive moves in requests in everyday situations produced by native Scottish English speakers and Germans with English as a second language. Specifically, different constellations of social dominance and social distance between speakers were investigated to test whether the choice of supportive moves in requests is affected by these variables. The study was conducted with 32 students, 16 native Scottish English speakers and 16 native speakers of German respectively, who were asked to complete a production questionnaire comprising six discourse completion tasks. The data were then analysed with a modified CCSARP coding scheme (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989). In line with previous studies, the analysis reveals a tendency of non-native speakers to use more supportive moves than native speakers of English. Although grounders were the type of supportive move most frequently employed by both groups, the overall use of supportive moves by speakers of German lends support to the notion that they do not utilise the conventional norms of their target language English (cf. Yates 2010). In addition, it was found that the variables of power and social distance had a stronger effect on Scottish participants' realisations.

Blum-Kulka, S., House, J., & Kasper, G. (1989). Appendix: The CCSARP coding manual. In: Blum-Kulka, S., House, J., & Kasper, G. (Eds.). *Cross-cultural pragmatics: Requests and apologies* (pp. 273-294). Norwood: Ablex.

Yates, L. (2010). Pragmatic challenges for second language learners. In: Trosborg, A. (Ed.). *Pragmatics across languages and cultures* (pp. 287-308). Berlin/New York: De Gruyter Mouton.

Saturday, 4 June 2015 | 10:15 – 11:00| Poster session

**A critical analysis of Brown and Levinson's Face Threatening Acts and their role in non-standard situations for males and females**

**Rojman Isa Megeed (Bonn)**

*Rojman Isa Megeed completed her BA in English Language at the University of Duhok in Iraq. Her research interests are medical and therapeutic discourse, conflict management, translation and interpretation, journalism and media.*

This empirical term paper presents a critical analysis of Brown and Levinson's Face Threatening Acts, with a particular focus on their role in non-standard situations for male and female interactants. Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness is the most prominent theoretical account on politeness strategies so far. Yet, criticism has been voiced regarding the individualistic concept of face in terms of choices that are not open to the speaker and the claim that social distance, power and degree of seriousness are neglected. Hence, the question posed in the present paper is what role Brown and Levinson's Face Threatening Acts play in non-standard situations for male and female speakers, to what extent they occur in those, if at all, and to what extent interactants' communicative behavior complies with Brown and Levinson's theory. The findings were derived from manually prepared transcripts from the American television series "Grey's Anatomy" and coded based on the Cross Cultural Realization Project developed by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989). The data show remarkable similarity in requests between males and females both in professional and private situations. Additionally, the interactants in these instances partially disregard social distance, power and degree of seriousness. Thus, this study supports a shift away from Brown and Levinson's politeness model, primarily because they investigate linguistic aspects of politeness in isolation rather than in context.

Blum-Kulka, S., House, J., & Kasper, G. (1989). Appendix: The CCSARP coding manual. In: Blum-Kulka, S., House, J., & Kasper, G. (Eds.). *Cross-cultural pragmatics: Requests and apologies* (pp. 273-294). Norwood: Ablex.

Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Saturday, 4 June 2015 | 10:15 – 11:00| Poster session

**Request strategies by German learners of English: Do they favor British or American English patterns?**

**Laura Theodora Weller (Bonn)**

*Laura Weller completed her B.A. in "English studies" at the University of Bonn. Her research interests are forensic linguistics, clinical linguistics and psycholinguistics.*

English is one of the first foreign languages taught in German schools. However, none of the 16 German Ministries of Education clearly states exactly which variety of English is to be taught. Given the existence of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which stipulates language comparability in Europe, it can be assumed that it is the British variety that is primarily taught in German schools.

This paper aims to determine which factors most strongly influence the way German learners of English perform requests: The English variety taught at school (here: presumably BrE), or other factors such as a stay abroad (here: in the U.S.).

Both German learners of English as well as American English (AmE) native speakers (both averaging 24 years of age) were given a questionnaire with eight scenarios eliciting requests (discourse completion task format). The requests were analyzed in terms of their head act strategy and internal and external modifications, following the framework of the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989). The results for the German learners were then compared to the request realizations of AmE and British English (BrE) speakers. The data for the latter group stem from Barron's (2008) study of requests in Irish English and British English.

It was found that the German learners employed strategies more similar to those used by AmE speakers than to those used by BrE speakers. This could be explained by the informants' stay in the United States of America (6 weeks on average), as well as their common membership in an American sports club.

Blum-Kulka, S., House, J., Kasper, G. (Eds.). (1989). *Cross-cultural pragmatics: Requests and apologies*. New Jersey: Ablex.

Barron, A. (2008). The structure of requests in Irish English and English English. In: Schneider, K. P., & Barron, A. (Eds.). *Variational pragmatics: A focus on regional varieties in pluricentric languages* (pp. 35-68). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: Benjamins.

Saturday, 4 June 2015 | 10:15 – 11:00 | Poster session

### Responses to requests by German and Ukrainian speakers of English

#### **Kseniia Zaichenko (Bonn)**

*Kseniia Zaichenko completed her BA in Philology; English Language and Literature at the H.S. Skovoroda Kharkiv national pedagogical University. Her research interest is the field of variational pragmatics.*

Evidently, norms for encoding politeness differ across cultures (Ogiermann 2009). These norms influence language use, hence also responses to requests. This paper highlights the agreement and rejection strategies used by native speakers of German and Ukrainian when responding to requests in English, thus contrasting language behaviour of the representatives of two language groups, Slavic and Germanic. 40 participants (20 Ukrainian and 20 German) in the age group of 20-25 years were asked to fill in a questionnaire with ten DCT items eliciting responses to requests. This paper focuses on the strategies employed in the responses, drawing on the politeness theory by Brown and Levinson (1987) and discusses factors influencing the decision to accept or reject the request. It was concluded that Ukrainian speakers of English use more diverse strategies and tend to combine 2-3 of them in one response while German speakers of English in the majority of responses employ one strategy per response.

Ogiermann, E. (2009). Politeness and in-directness across cultures: A comparison of English, German, Polish and Russian requests. *Journal of Politeness Research* 5, 189-216.

Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Saturday, 4 June 2015 | 11:00 – 11:30

### The structure of service encounter requests in Russian and German

#### **Maria Kostromitina (Bonn)**

*Maria Kostromitina completed her specialist diploma of 'Foreign Languages and Foreign Language Teaching of English and German' at the Penza State Pedagogical University. Her research interests are foreign language teaching and learning, pragmatics and second language acquisition.*

An extensive amount of studies devoted to requesting speech acts has been conducted in English and German. Yet, little research deals with Russian, which is astonishing if we take the close economic relations between the EU and Russia into consideration. For this reason, the present research explores cross-cultural variation in the realization of German and Russian service encounter requests.

In doing so, it takes the degree of imposition in the posed service encounter situations into account, in order to determine its influence on the informants' directness. The analysis focuses on differences between request strategies, their perspective and the amount and type of internal and external modification employed by German and Russian native speakers. The data analyzed in this study were elicited by means of a Discourse Completion Task (DCT), and findings were interpreted within the Cross Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) framework (cf. Blum-Kulka et al. 1989) and with regard to the cultural dimensions theory proposed by Hofstede (2001, 2010).

The study shows that, in general, request realization strategies and their perspective in German and Russian are surprisingly similar. Still, the overall tendency that Russians are more indirect than Germans in performing requests when communicating with out-group members confirms Hofstede's claim that in societies with a higher degree of collectivism and uncertainty, avoidance tends towards greater indirectness (Hofstede 2001, 2010).

Blum-Kulka, S., House, J., & Kasper, G. (Eds.). (1989). *Cross-cultural pragmatics: Request and apologies*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Pub.

Hofstede, G. (2001). *Culture's consequences: Comparing values, behaviors, institutions, and organizations across nations* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Hofstede, G. (et. al.) (2010). *Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill USA.

Saturday, 4 June 2015 | 11:30 – 12:00

### Insults on online discussion websites - Examining gender variation on the structural level

**Silvana Maria Lepşa (Bonn)**

*Silvana Maria Lepşa completed her BA in Linguistics and Phonetics in the field of English Studies at the University of Cologne. Her research interests are pragmatics, CMC and language acquisition.*

This paper presents a study on gender differences concerning insults in online fora. Particularly structural features and lexical choices of insults are of interest and are analyzed empirically. The variety of linguistic realizations is examined from a socio-pragmatic perspective, in order to make claims on the specific language behavior of the participants. The findings are based on a corpus of insulting strategies from the political fora *US Message Board* and *Debate Politics Forum*.

For this purpose 41 female messages and 41 male messages were extracted from the abovementioned fora. As theoretical background Culpeper's (2010) impoliteness framework was adopted, which denotes offensive expressions as conventionalized and formulaic. The results of this study suggest that both male and female informants prefer pointed criticism as an insulting technique and hardly ever use personalized vocatives or negative assertions in computer-mediated communication. At the same time, there is no noticeable distinction between female and male participants with regard to insulting strategies. However, gender variation with respect to topic fields and directness degree are observed: the majority of female participants tends to criticize the content of posts, whereas male participants direct the insult towards the addressee.

Culpeper, J. 2010. "Conventionalised impoliteness formulae". *Journal of Pragmatics* 42: 3232–3245.

Saturday, 4 June 2015 | 12:00 – 12:30

### Small talk openings in Canadian English: A study of sex differences

**Edda Marie Grudda (Bonn)**

*Edda Marie Grudda completed her BA in English and American Studies and General Linguistics at the Heinrich-Heine-Universität in Düsseldorf. Her research interests are gender and sexual orientation in language, pragmatics and language processing.*

Small talk is an important aspect in many professional and non-professional contexts. Research on small talk has been carried out with numerous foci of interest, including sex differences, in various varieties of English. However, one variety neglected so far is Canadian English. For this reason, this paper investigates sex differences in small talk openings in Canadian English, focusing on different types of moves such as greetings and self-identification.

The data was taken from a corpus collected with the Questionnaire on English Usage (QEU), a mixed-task questionnaire developed by Schneider and Barron (see e.g. Schneider 2005). 60 same-sex dialogues, 30



male and 30 female, elicited via a dialogue production task, were analysed with the help of a modified coding scheme based on Schneider (2008, 2012).

Results show that female and male speakers both use moves such as greetings, but males mostly prefer approach moves such as 'requests for party assessment'. Females use moves that refer to their own identity as well as making remarks about their interlocutor. Furthermore, males and females differ especially in respect to level of formality and politeness. For instance, female speakers use more formal and polite speech in their openings than males, with males also using different strategies to mark politeness. In addition, females use compliments or agree with what the interlocutor says, whereas males are reciprocating their interlocutor's turns. Overall, this study is in line with previous research by showing that sex is an important variable when examining small talk.

Schneider, Klaus P. (2005) "'No problem, you're welcome, anytime': responding to thanks in Ireland, England, and the U.S.A." In: A. Barron/K. P. Schneider (eds.), *The Pragmatics of Irish English*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 101–139.

Schneider, Klaus P. (2008). "Small talk in England, Ireland, and the USA." In Schneider, Klaus P. & Barron, Anne (eds.): *Variational Pragmatics: A Focus on Regional Varieties in Pluricentric Languages*. Amsterdam, Philadelphia, PA: Benjamins, 99-139.

Schneider, Klaus P. (2012). "Appropriate behaviour across varieties of English". *Journal of Pragmatics*, 44(9), 1022-1037.

Saturday, 4 June 2015 | 13:30 – 14:00

### **"And where do you speak English?" - Language Use and Attitudes in Namibia**

#### **Helene Steigertahl (Bayreuth)**

*Between 2006 and 2013 Helene Steigertahl studied English, German and European Art History at the University of Heidelberg, Germany. Since 2013 she has been working as a research assistant at the English linguistics department at the University of Bayreuth, Germany. Helene Steigertahl is writing her PhD thesis about the use of English in Namibia. Her research interests are World Englishes, English in southern Africa, language policy and planning and sociolinguistics.*

In 2015 Namibia celebrated 25 years of independence - 25 years of English - "the language of liberation" - as the sole official language of the country. Namibia is a multiethnic and multilingual country where people usually speak two to four languages on a daily basis. In 1990 only 4% of the Namibian population were L2 speakers of English and only 0.8% were L1 speakers of English. Since then the number of English L1 speakers has only slightly increased, up to 1.9% in 2001 and 3.4% in 2011. Figures on L2 speakers do not exist. In the meantime English has spread through all domains and is spoken by many people in the whole country, as the attitudes towards this Indo-European language are very positive. But in what contexts do Namibians speak English? Which language is used or preferred in which domain? What are the attitudes towards the official language in comparison to the speakers' home languages? These questions will be elaborated on in my talk.

First, I will give an introduction into Namibia's linguistic situation and language policy. Second, preliminary results of my fieldwork on language use and attitudes will be presented. These are based on sociolinguistic interviews and questionnaires conducted in Namibia in 2013 and 2015. Third, these findings are compared to previous studies, such as Pütz (1995), Beck (1995), Steigertahl (2010) and Buschfeld & Kautzsch (2014). By this, the key role of one language in a country where many languages exist is to be illuminated.

Beck, Anke. 1995. 'Language and Nation in Namibia: The Fallacies of Modernization Theory'. In: Martin Pütz (ed.), *Discrimination through Language in Africa? Perspectives on the Namibian Experience*, 207-222. [Contribution to the Sociology of Language 69]. Berlin - New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Buschfeld, Sarah and Alexander Kautzsch. 2014. 'English in Namibia. A First Approach'. *English World-Wide* 35:2, 121–160.

Pütz, Martin. 1995. 'Attitudes and Language: An Empirical Investigation into the Status and Use of English in Namibia'. In: Martin Pütz (ed.), *Discrimination through Language in Africa? Perspectives on the Namibian Experience*, 245-284. [Contribution to the Sociology of Language 69]. Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Steigertahl, Helene. 2010. *The Role of the Official Language English in a Namibian Community – An Empirical Study on Language Use and Language Attitude in Lüderitz*. State Examination Thesis (Unpublished). University of Heidelberg, Germany.

**Defamation: Verbal aggression, culture and impoliteness**

**Victoria Guillén-Nieto (Alicante)**

*Victoria Guillén-Nieto holds a Ph.D. in English Studies from the University of Alicante in Spain (1993), and an MA in Forensic Linguistics from Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona (2008). From 2003 to 2009, she was head of the department of English Studies at the University of Alicante. Since 2006, she has been directing the Master's program in English and Spanish for Specific Purposes and been lecturing forensic linguistics in several master's programs. At present, Guillén-Nieto is doing research in forensic linguistics as a forensic science, particularly in identification, inter-textuality, linguistic profiling and language crimes.*

Impoliteness is a multidisciplinary field of research, which has attracted the attention of specialists from varied disciplines. While social psychologists have mainly focused on aggressive behaviour, sociologists have explored the effects of social abuse and specialists in conflict studies have analysed interpersonal and social conflict. Linguists doing research anchored in the field of linguistic pragmatics have focused on impoliteness and conflictive interactions (Bousfield 2008). Impoliteness occurs, as said by Culpeper (2011: 19), "(...) when: (1) the speaker communicates face-attack intentionally, or (2) the hearer perceives and/or constructs behaviour as intentionally face-threatening, or a combination of (1) and (2)." (Culpeper 2011: 19).

Intentionality, offence and face-attack are key elements that bring together impoliteness and defamation (Shuy 2010; Tiersma and Solan 2012: 340-353). In detail defamation is a language crime perpetrated primarily by means of language, involving intentional false communication, either written (libel) or spoken (slander), that harms a person's reputation, decreases the respect, regard, or confidence in which a person is held; or includes disparaging, hostile, or disagreeable opinions or feelings against a person.

The aim of this paper is to describe and explain defamation within the theoretical framework of impoliteness. This provides the language expert with a number of functional working tools with which to explore verbal aggression and abuse, such as culture and identity, schema, attitude and ideology, face, social norms, intentionality, and emotion (Spencer-Oatey 2005: 95-119; Culpeper 2011). The study addresses the following research questions: What role does context play in defamation? Do Spanish courts resort to literal meaning (formulaic impoliteness) or to pragmatic meaning (implicational impoliteness) in defamation cases? The research on empirical data, particularly on 50 defamation cases in Spanish courts. We extracted these cases from 50 judgements searched with CENDOJ including guilty verdicts for the crime of defamation. The conclusions reached derive from qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis (TF/IDF), and will contribute to a better understanding of the socio-pragmatic foundation of defamation in the Spanish legal culture.

Bousfield, Derek 2008. *Impoliteness and Interaction*. Philadelphia and Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

CENDOJ (Consejo General del Poder Judicial in Spain) <http://www.poderjudicial.es/search/indexAN.jsp> [Last access: 29/04/2016]

Culpeper, Jonathan 2011. *Impoliteness. Using Language to Cause Offence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Shuy, Roger W. 2010. *The Language of Defamation Cases*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Spencer-Oatey, Helen D. M. 2005. (Im)Politeness, face and perceptions of rapport: Unpackaging their bases and interrelationships. *Journal of Politeness Research: Language, Behaviour, Culture* 1 (1): 95-119.

Tiersma, Peter M. and Solan, Lawrence M. 2012. The language of crime. Pp. 340-353. In Peter M. Tiersma, Peter M. & Lawrence M. Solan (Eds.). *The Oxford Handbook of Language and Law*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Saturday, 4 June 2015 | 15:00 – 15:30

### Balancing the risks and benefits of conflictive illocutions: The case of the strategic threatener

**Julia Muschalik (Düsseldorf)**

*Julia Muschalik is a research assistant at the Department of English Language and Linguistics at Heinrich-Heine-University Düsseldorf. Her research interests include empirical pragmatics, discourse analysis, and English in professional domains. She wrote her PhD thesis on form and function of threatening in English.*

Existing research makes confident claims about the prototypical form and function of verbal threats, for example about their directness. One prevalent assumption is that threats are predominantly realized indirectly (cf., e.g., Fraser 1998; Gales 2010; Harris 1984; Limberg 2008, 2009). However, it is rarely addressed why speakers would prefer an indirect threat to a direct one, which touches upon a more fundamental issue: while the interrelation of (in)directness and politeness has been the object of a vast body of research, little is still known about the role of (in)directness in models of impoliteness that account for conflictive illocutions like threats (cf., e.g., Culpeper 2011; Locher & Bousfield 2008).

In this paper I analyze a corpus of authentic threat utterances in terms of their form, function and degree of (in)directness, in order to probe the question of whether the majority of speakers indeed opts for more indirect threats.

The findings suggest that speakers appear to alternate between two opposing strategies, namely overtly direct or non-conventionally indirect threats. This result challenges recent models of communicative efficacy (e.g. Lee & Pinker 2010; Pinker, Nowak & Lee 2008) which propose that especially with conflictive illocutions, offrecord indirectness can be conceptualized as *strategic*, i.e. as optimally balancing costs and benefits of a speech act. The data show that in the case of threats, offrecord indirectness is not always the most rational choice. Instead, the optimal strategy of a *strategic threatener* appears to crucially depend on a threat's function.

Culpeper, J. (2011). *Impoliteness: using language to cause offence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gales, T. (2010). *Ideologies of Violence: A Corpus and Discourse Analytic Approach to Stance in Threatening Communications*. University of California, Davis dissertation. Retrieved from <http://linguistics.ucdavis.edu/picsand-pdfs/Gales%20Dissertation.pdf>

Harris, S. (1984). The form and function of threats in court. *Language & Communication* 4(4), 247-271.

Lee, J. J., & Pinker, S. (2010). Rationales for indirect speech: the theory of the strategic speaker. *Psychological review* 117(3), 785-807.

Limberg, H. (2008). Threats in conflict talk: Impoliteness and manipulation. In D. Bousfield & M. Locher (Eds.), *Impoliteness in Language. Studies on its Interplay with Power in Theory and Practice* (pp. 155–179). Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.

Limberg, H. (2009). Impoliteness and threat responses. *Journal of Pragmatics* (41), 1376-1394. doi:10.1016/j.pragma.2009.02.003

Locher, M. & Bousfield, D. (2008). Introduction: impoliteness and power in language. In D. Bousfield & M. Locher (Eds.), *Impoliteness in Language: Studies on its Interplay with Power in Theory and Practice* (pp. 1-13). Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.

Saturday, 4 June 2015 | 15:30 – 16:00

### Developing a system to quantify authorship analysis

**Gaby Axer (Bonn)**

*Gaby Axer holds a BA in English Studies and Linguistics & Phonetics from the University of Cologne. In 2015 she received a postgraduate diploma in forensic linguistics from Aston University in Birmingham, UK. Since 2013 she has been studying Applied Linguistics at the University of Bonn and is currently writing her MA thesis. Her research interests are forensic linguistics and language variation.*

Authorship analysis is one of the major fields in forensic linguistics and has been implemented as evidence in various legal cases, either to support investigation or to present evidence in court, often in

connection with text messages (cf. e.g. Grant 2010; 2013). It has been shown that even in extremely short messages, idiosyncratic use of language can show and be of distinctive nature in forensic cases. This paper examines the distinctive features of authorship amongst three native speakers of British English in their WhatsApp messages on the basis of t-tests. Each author's texts are divided into known and questioned texts, the known ones being used to find distinctive features amongst the three authors. These features are then used to analyse the three questioned message collections in order to match the correct author. So far, these analyses have only been on a qualitative basis, judging between consistency, partial consistency and inconsistency with each author (cf. Grant 2013). While other studies have worked on statistical tests to identify the features for analysis from the known texts (cf. Grieve 2005), this paper aims at developing a system of quantification for the selected features found in the questioned texts so that an overall judgement of consistency can be made on an objective and reliable basis – not just for one message at a time, but for a collection of messages in total.

Grant, Tim. 2010. "Text Messaging Forensics". In: Coulthard, Malcolm & Johnson, Alison (eds.). *The Routledge Handbook of Forensic Linguistics*. London: Routledge. 508–522.

Grant, Tim. 2013. Txt 4n6: Method, Consistency, and Distinctiveness in the Analysis of SMS Text Messages. *Journal of Law and Policy* 21(2). 467–494.

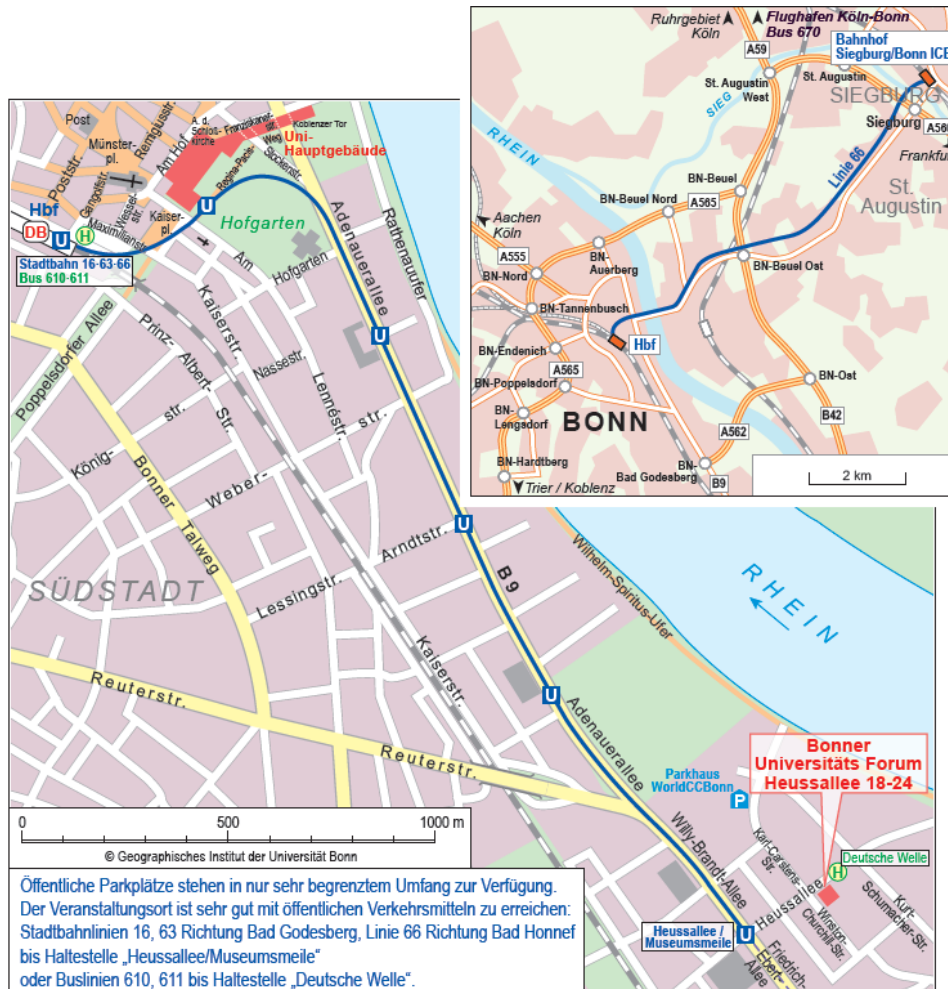
Grieve, Jack William. 2005. *Quantitative Authorship Attribution: A History and Evaluation of Techniques*. Unpublished MA thesis, Simon Fraser University.

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## Notes

## Notes



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