

Workshop at Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics

Workshop on Comparative Pragmatics

MPI, Nijmegen

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Title:

Dynamic processes of the co-creation of a story by interactants: The '*Ba*-theory' approach as an a step to an ecological study of discourse

Abstract:

How and why can a pair of teacher-student interactants co-create a story?

This presentation addresses this question by the analysis of the task discourse from Mr. O Corpus. In analyzing and interpreting the discourse data taken while the teacher and the student exchange conversations in achieving the task of making a coherent story by arranging cards, the '*Ba*'(filed) theory is employed. The theory is originated by a Japanese biophysicist as a challenge to the problem of complexity. '*Ba*' based approach is an innovating frame of thinking device that presupposes 1) inside perspective of the subject, 2) dual mode thinking of the self, 3) two modes of communication, i.e. overt and covert, and 4) a dynamic model like an improvised drama.

The data have been analyzed into two phases of discourse: the dialogue discourse and the merging discourse. The former is indexed by the interpersonal modalities such as honorifics and sentence final particles, while the latter is characterized by dropping of these linguistic features. The sudden drop of presupposed use of modalities by a teacher is obviously a deviation, but it would serve as a creative use (cf. Silverstein 1967). It is in this merging discourse that the discourse phenomena of repetition, simultaneous utterances, and chaining utterances occur. These phenomena would add nothing to the conversation, but function to synchronize and to entrain the interactants. When synchronization and

entrainment are maintained between the interactants, covert communication is to be maintained that would create a basis for smooth overt communication. Thus, the presentation will entertain the dynamic processes of co-creating a story by interactants showing video data.