Post-digital ethnography: Multimodality, mobility, and polymedia

in-person course on Monday (all day) and Tuesday morning by
Agnieszka Lyons

Short CV: Agnieszka Lyons is a linguist and multimodalist at Queen Mary University of London with an interest in the relational and the intersubjective. She's interested in the way in which an array of communicative resources, including verbal, nonverbal and media-based, intertwine to convey meaning across contexts. She is also interested in the emergent nature of meaning-making.

Another strand of her research looks at the impact of lived experience of trauma on communication. She explores the way in which self-narratives are constructed not only from a variety of multimodal resources available in an individual's polymedia context, but also co-constructed through engaging multiple voices, both internal and external to the speaker.

Course description:
The communicative landscape of today is constantly changing, with new ways of staying in touch emerging and older ways getting repurposed and reframed. We no longer live just in the offline, and the online has ceased to be a separate space. It is now weaved through the everyday and both shapes and is shaped by it.

In this course, we will explore ways in which these changes can be reflected in our approach to analysing language and communication. Rooted in the understanding of communication as spanning across a range of media and contexts (including mobility and migration), we will map out interweaving communicative patterns and consider the significance of particular semiotic choices for meaning-making. We will look at the impact of communicating at a distance on shared understandings and strategies used to alleviate perceptual and geographical distance between interactants. This will set the scene for the conceptualisation of our post-digital communicative landscape in the context of polymedia and allow us to recognise our communicative patterns across various levels of the polymedia environment. During the course, we will work with frameworks (such as Multimodal Discourse Analysis and post-digital ethnography) and naturally occurring data (such as mobile messaging, including group messaging) and engage with considerations around the most recent developments in ethnographic research methods. Against this background, we will explore directions in which the digital has shaped and served our communicative needs across time, peeking into what we can already see as coming up.

Session 1: Introduction to context and method
- How do we communicate today?
- Why is it not enough to look at language?
- What else do we look at then?

Session 2: Sketching a framework: polymedia nest
- Navigating media, channels and semiotic resources
- Beyond the nest?
- Connection and disconnection

Session 3: Working with data
- Online and offline intersection
- What is negotiated?
- What travels?

Preparation

Lyons, A. and Tagg, C. (2019) The discursive construction and execution of mobile chronotopes. *Language in Society* 48(5): 657-683. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S004740451900023X

Tagg, C. and A. Lyons (2021) Polymedia repertoires of networked individuals: a day-in-the-life approach. *Pragmatics & Society* 12(5): 726–756. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1075/ps.20051.tag

Vold Lexander, K. and J. Androutsopoulos (2021) Working with mediagrams: a methodology for collaborative research on mediational repertoires in multilingual families. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 42(1): 1-18, DOI: 10.1080/01434632.2019.1667363