Call for Papers: Affect in Language

The research community Comparing and Contrasting Languages and Cultures (CoCoLaC) of the University of Helsinki is hosting a colloquium on affect in language on Friday, February 2, 2018. We invite 20-minute presentations in English addressing affect in language from a wide variety of perspectives.

The dynamics between affect and language have become an important research topic in contemporary linguistics and adjacent disciplines studying language use, with long-standing roots. As a result, there are several, often overlapping concepts related to affect: *emotion*, *emotion display*, *attitude*, and *(affective) stance*.

As early as 1781, Rousseau argued that emotion display is one of the most important functions of language. Darwin (1872) stressed the importance of emotion display in group cohesion and the survival of the species. In linguistics, Bally (1913) brought up the idea of affective syntax (*syntaxe affective*). Other early theorizations of the relation between language and emotion include the emotive function of language described in Roman Jakobson's (1960) model of the six functions of language.

Subsequently, the analysis of linguistic means of expressing affect has concentrated especially on the lexical properties of different parts of speech, including grammaticalization of interjections, collocations and idioms. The interplay between syntax and emotion, as well as morphosyntactic changes affecting the semantic meaning of constructions, have also raised interest (*Langue française* 180, 2013). Moreover, there have been attempts to study the semantic conceptualization of various emotions across different languages. For example, anger has been the focus of many semantic studies (see e.g. Lakoff & Kövecses 1987; Yu 1995; Durst 2001). From a pragmatic perspective, the impact of emotional expressions in argumentation or in determining the force of an utterance is essential when studying affect in language (Hekmat, Micheli & Rabatel 2013).

In conversation and interaction analysis, several theories have been presented concerning the relation between affect, emotion, attitude, and stance. Many scholars view affect as a wider concept encompassing emotions, stance, and attitudes (Sorjonen & Peräkylä 1987; Ochs & Schieffelin 1989). Affect is often conflated with affective stance (Du Bois 2007) and perceived as a quintessential component of the co-construction of meaning in language use. Thus, it has been proposed that affective stance is an inherent part of context and characterizes all social interaction (Stevanovic & Peräkylä 2014). In addition, recent sociolinguistic research suggests that stance can never be neutral (Jaffe 2009). Therefore, affective stance appears to be related to contextualization cues theorized in early interactional sociolinguistics (Gumperz 1982).

Conversation and interactional analysis have made us aware of paralinguistic means, such as prosody, facial expressions, gestures, and body position, also included in expressions of affect. These features are always present in face-to-face situations, whereas they are absent in writing. Social media and other modern means of communication present their

own particularities in expressing affect, such as the use of emojis. In addition, the anonymity of computer-mediated communication has resulted in problems, including an increase in hate speech and other transgressive social media practices.

The means for conveying affect thus vary from one type of interaction to another, but also from one language to another, which may present problems for non-native speakers of a language or in translation. Nevertheless, expressing emotion in a second/foreign language has not been studied widely (for an overview, see Dewaele 2010).

We welcome both theoretical reflections and empirical studies of spoken, written, bodily, and multimodal communication. Potential research questions include (but are not limited to) the following:

- What is the role of affect in contemporary linguistics and adjacent fields?
- Which theories or methods are useful in conceptualizing affect in language use?
- How does modern communication technology contribute either to communicating affect or analyzing affect-related phenomena?
- How do accounts of affect focusing on individual subjectivities differ from intersubjective approaches?
- What are the links between affect and empathy, ethos, or pathos?
- What are the characteristics of affect in multilingual settings?
- To what extent is the expression of affect culturally and linguistically dependent?
- How does the expression of affect differ between institutional and everyday language use?
- What are the particularities of expressing affect in a second/foreign language?

We invite authors to submit their abstract (max. 300 words including references) in Word or RTF format to tuuli.holttinen@helsinki.fi by October 31, 2017. In the body of your message, please indicate your name and affiliation. Do not include this information in your abstract. The results of the peer-review process will be communicated by November 15, 2017.

Invited speakers:
Professor Marja-Leena Sorjonen, University of Helsinki
Dr. Albin Wagener, Université de Nantes / R2DIP / Cleverance

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