

Call for contributions to the iPrA 2023 panel

Robust and flexible interactive language technology for human empowerment

convened by *Andreas Liesenfeld (Radboud University) and Hendrik Buschmeier (Bielefeld University)*

Beyond flashy PR and AI hype, language technology has the potential to change many people's lives, as it makes available new interactional resources and communicative modalities. Better hearing aids for deaf users or disaster early warning systems for small language communities, for instance. However, commercial technology providers design for the masses and rarely take an interest in marginalized user groups, so there is a lack of work on life-changing pragmatic technologies that provide artificial senses, streamline the shape of interaction, or empower users to exercise agency in social life.

Building interactive language technologies for diverse user groups requires understanding human interaction beyond common ability assumptions. And building inclusive technology beyond mainstream user groups requires a critical look at foundational principles of interaction. At the intersection of studies of human interaction and interactive language technology, this panel invites contributions by researchers that share an interest in building better tools to support human empowerment (e.g., Buschmeier & Kopp 2018, Cassell 2020, Dingemanse & Liesenfeld 2022, Pitsch et al. 2009).

Starting from human-centered approaches to such technologies, we focus especially on tech that facilitates interactions that, for people involved, may straddle the boundaries between typicality and atypicality, fluency and disfluency, empowerment and disempowerment. These seeming opposites represent the space in which any interaction takes its shape. The challenge is to use insights from pragmatics, conversation analysis, human-computer interaction and neighboring fields to characterize the shape of human interaction with diverse user groups in mind, and work towards applying these insights in a new generation of robust and flexible language technologies.

Topics covered in this session include: mixed-method approaches to miscommunication in human-AI interactions; patterns of universality and diversity in human interaction; human-in-the-loop approaches to language technology development; multimodal communication and interaction; developments in human-centered AI; human agency and pragmatics in the face of ubiquitous computing.

Panel contributors confirmed so far: Hendrik Buschmeier (Bielefeld University, Germany), Justine Cassell (INRIA, France), Chloé Clavel (Télécom ParisTech, France), Mark Dingemanse (Radboud University, Netherlands), Andreas Liesenfeld (Radboud University, Netherlands), Karola Pitsch (Duisburg-Essen University, Germany)

References

- Buschmeier, H. and Kopp, S., 2018. Communicative listener feedback in human-agent interaction: artificial speakers need to be attentive and adaptive. In *Proceedings of the 17th International Conference on Autonomous Agents and Multiagent Systems* (pp. 1213–1221). Stockholm, Sweden.
- Cassell, J., 2020. The ties that bind. *Reseaux*, 220-221(2), pp. 21-45.
- Dingemanse, M. and Liesenfeld, A., 2022. From text to talk: Harnessing conversational corpora for humane and diversity-aware language technology. In *Proceedings of the 60th Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics (Volume 1: Long Papers)* (pp. 5614-5633). Dublin, Ireland.
- Pitsch, K., Kuzuoka, H., Suzuki, Y., Sussenbach, L., Luff, P. and Heath, C., 2009. "The first five seconds": Contingent stepwise entry into an interaction as a means to secure sustained engagement in HRI. In *Proceedings of the 18th IEEE International Symposium on Robot and Human Interactive Communication* (pp. 985-991). Toyama, Japan.

What is IPrA 2023?

[IPrA 2023](#) is the 18th International Pragmatics Conference organized by the [International Pragmatics Association](#). Participants generally share interest in how language is used and are highly diverse in their methods of investigation, their disciplinary backgrounds, and interest in fundamental or applied research.

How to write your abstract:

- Abstracts should have a minimum length of 250 words and **cannot be longer than 500 words**, including references (this is technically enforced by the submission system). The submission deadline is November 1, 2022.

How to submit your abstract:

1. Become a member of the International Pragmatics Association (90 EUR / year) to get an International Pragmatics Association account
 - Membership information: <https://pragmatics.international/page/Membership>
 - Become a member: https://pragmatics.international/general/register_member_type.asp
2. To submit your abstract go to the conference management system <http://ipra2023.exordo.com> and log in with your International Pragmatics Association account
 - In the Dashboard go to “My Submissions” and start a “New submission”
 - In step 1 (“Track”) choose “Panel contributions”
 - In step 4 (“Topics”) choose the panel “Robust and flexible interactive language technology for human empowerment (organized by Andreas Liesenfeld, Hendrik Buschmeier)”
 - At the end of step 5 (“Additional Information”) click “Done” to save (and thereby submit) your abstract

Detailed information regarding submission can be found in IPrA’s general call for papers <https://pragmatics.international/page/CfP>. If you have questions concerning this (unfortunately) rather complicated procedure, do not hesitate to contact us (andreas.liesenfeld@ru.nl, hbuschme@uni-bielefeld.de).