Universität Zürich[UZH]

URPP Language and Space -
Spatial Boundaries and Transitions in Language and Interaction
April 23-28 2017, Monte Verità

Hands-on workshop on *Boundaries in Empirical (Linguistic) Data*

(28 April 2017)

The workshop consists of three individual sessions, conceived and hosted by the URPP members Curdin Derungs (University of Zurich), a GIScientist currently leading the GISLab, Wolfgang Kesselheim (University of Zurich), a conversation analyst and leader of the VideoLab, and Tanja Samardžić (University of Zurich), a computational linguist leading the CorpusLab. The general idea is to present case studies, including associated data, and to provide simple tools that allow hands-on discussions of boundaries in linguistics. Participants can register for one of the three case studies (appr. 15 participants per group):

Case study 1: Boundaries in Interactional Space (VideoLab)

In the VideoLab's part of our workshop, participants learn to analyse how people construct spatial units and their boundaries in interaction.

In a short input, participants will be introduced to relevant work from Sociology (Goffman), Psychology (Kendon's Context analysis) and multimodal Conversation analysis (work on interactional space and interactional architecture). Working in small groups we will analyse video extracts from authentic interactions in an institutional context.

Our objective is to describe the dynamic ways how people make use of both embodied communicative resources (talk, gesture, body posture and movement, etc.) and of elements of the built environment in order to jointly construct spatial boundaries within the interaction situation, and to reflect on the dynamic nature of the boundaries which result from this interactive process.

Case study 2: Spatial Boundaries in Areal Linguistics (GISLab)

In the GISLab's session we will discuss and apply different spatial statistical approaches for modelling linguistic boundaries and areas.

Languages and dialects often show complex - and interesting - spatial variation. Linguistic boundaries and isoglosses are an intuitive way for conceptualizing continuous spatial variation as distinct entities. However, implementing algorithms for modelling linguistic boundaries is considerably complex and often no ground-truth information - other than linguistic intuition - is available.

In this session we will tackle this challenge by discussing the particularity of different linguistic data sources - e.g. traditional dialectological data vs. more recent crowed sourced data - and a series of spatial statistical algorithms - such as clustering and interpolation. The discussion is followed by a hands-on exercise where different state of the art algorithms can be explored and tested for their applicability.

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Case study 3: Spatial spread of linguistic features extracted from Twitter (CorpusLab)

The social network Twitter is potentially a rich source of linguistic data explicitly (GPS coordinates) or implicitly (place names) associated with spatial information. The network allows access to the content produced by their users through an API (application program interface), which made it an important source of data for studying various aspects of verbal interaction. In this workshop, the participants will be guided through the procedure of collecting and analysing Twitter data by means of a newly developed tool intended especially for linguistic research (GeoTweet). We will extract example features using pre-defined Python functions encoded in the tool and trace feature distribution in space by setting the parameters of the tool's spatial analysis component implemented in R. We will look for plausible feature boundaries.

The three sessions share the same umbrella questions:

1) What information is used to create spatial entities?
2) What types of boundaries result from the analysis?

Findings from the three case study groups will be discussed in a common concluding session.

	Wolfgang Kesselheim	**Curdin Derungs**	**Tanja Samardžić**
09:00-12:00	1: Boundaries in Interactional Space	2: Spatial Boundaries in Areal Linguistics	3: Spatial spread of linguistic features extracted from Twitter
12:00-13:00	Lunch		
13:00-14:00	Presentations (20 min per group)		

Registration information

- ⇨ The workshop is free for participants of the conference *Spatial Boundaries and Transitions in Language and Interaction.* The number of participants is limited to max. 45 persons.
- ⇨ Please register until 15 March 2017 via email to boundaries2017@spur.uzh.ch by indicating your preferred case study.