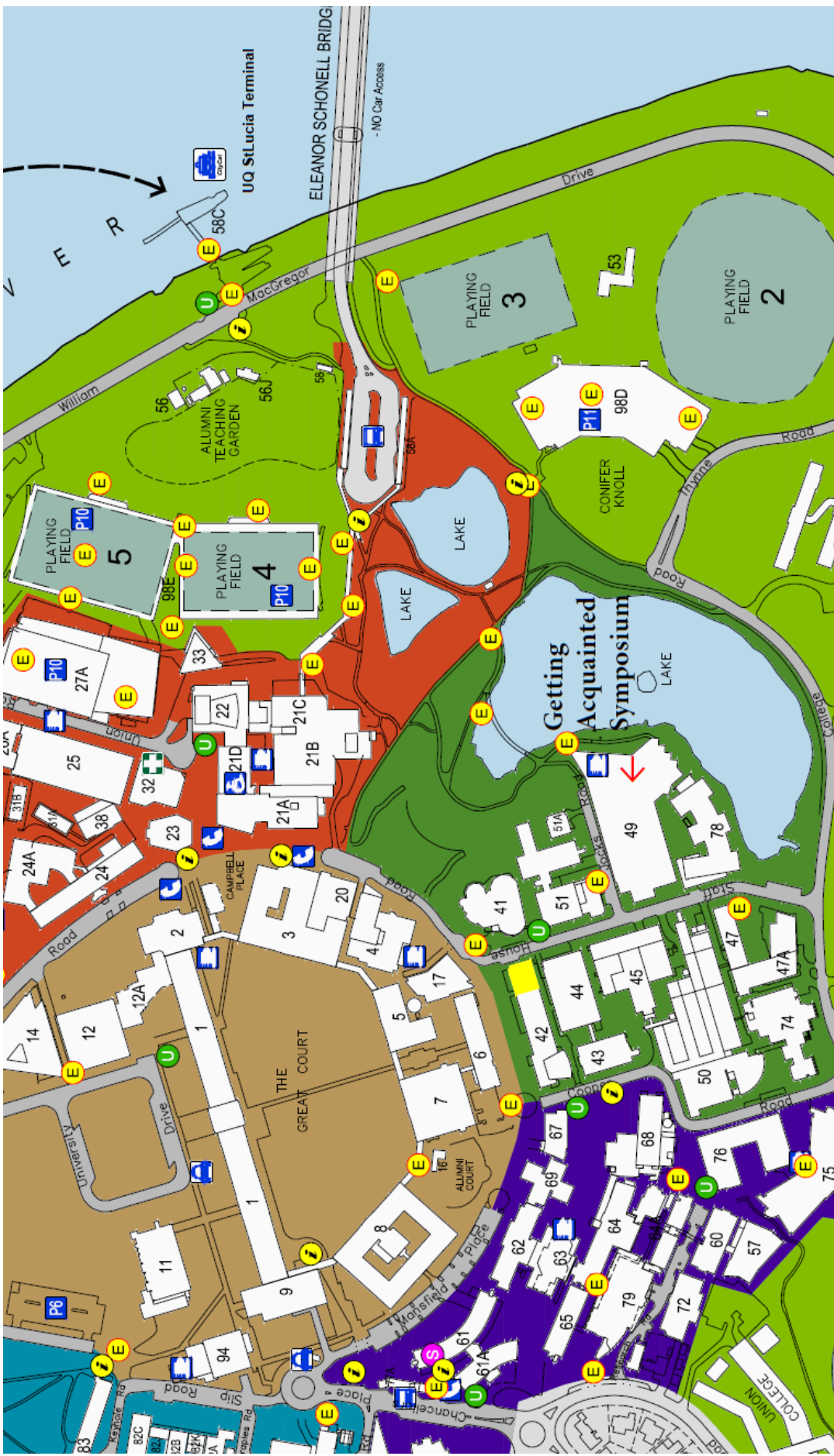


SCHOOL OF LANGUAGES AND CULTURES
GETTING ACQUAINTED
ACROSS CULTURES

20 OCTOBER 2017



Venue: Advanced Engineering Building (#49), Room 601 (Boardroom)



GETTING ACQUAINTED ACROSS CULTURES

Organised by Michael Haugh and Valeria Sinkeviciute

Symposium Programme

8:30 – 9:00 – Registration and welcome

SESSION 1 (9:00 – 10:30)

9:00 – 9:30

Natalie Flint (Ulster University) and **Andrew John Merrison** (York St John University)
Reciprocally sustaining involvement: On the preferences for agreeability and interactivity when doing disaffiliation in initial intercultural interactions

9:30 – 10:00

Jun Ohashi (Asia Institute, The University of Melbourne)
Balancing obligations: A cross-cultural investigation of small talk

10:00 – 10:30

Melody Chang (School of Languages and Cultures, The University of Queensland)
Display of epistemic stance in getting acquainted interactions

MORNING TEA (10:30 – 11:00)

KEYNOTE SPEAKER (11:00 – 12:00)

István Kecskés (University of New York at Albany)
The interplay of prior experience and actual situational context in intercultural first encounters

LUNCH BREAK (12:00 – 13:30)

SESSION 2 (13:30 – 15:00)

13:30 – 14:00

Heinz L. Kretzenbacher (The University of Melbourne), **John Hajek** (The University of Melbourne), **Catrin Norrby** (Stockholm University) & **Doris Schüpbach** (The University of Melbourne)

Austrian German speakers' introduction and address behaviour at international conferences

14:00 – 14:30

Antonella Strambi (Flinders University) and **Vincenza Tudini** (The University of South Australia)

Getting acquainted in online text chat: The role of self-disclosure in rapport building between L1 and L2 speakers of Italian

14:30 – 15:00

Kerry Mullan (School of Global, Urban and Social Studies, RMIT University)

Humour in French and Australian English initial interactions

AFTERNOON TEA (15:00 – 15:30)

SESSION 3 (15:30 – 16:30)

15:30 – 16:00

Michael Haugh (School of Languages and Cultures, The University of Queensland) and **Donal Carbaugh** (University of Massachusetts Amherst)

Self-deprecation and reciprocity in initial interactions

16:00 – 16:30

Valeria Sinkeviciute (School of Languages and Cultures, The University of Queensland)

Performing yourself: Constructing identity in initial encounters

16:30 – Closing

ABSTRACTS

Keynote

István Kecskés (University of New York at Albany)

The interplay of prior experience and actual situational context in intercultural first encounters

Objective

The study aims to investigate how prior experience of interlocutors interacts with actual situational context when the latter is represented by a well-known frame: getting acquainted with others.

Background

Getting acquainted with others is a closed social situation, a frame in which interlocutors usually have to follow a behavior pattern dictated by the requirements of socio-cultural background in a given speech community. There is a 'skeleton' of these 'getting to know you' procedures that can be considered universal. In each conversation in any language, 'flesh' is added to the 'skeleton' in a dynamic and co-constructed manner. However, there is a difference between how this happens in L1 and intercultural interactions. While in L1 the "flesh" on the skeleton is predetermined mainly by requirements of core common ground in the given language, in intercultural encounters this "flesh building" process in the target language (English) is not set but is co-constructed by the interlocutors based on their prior experience with their own L1 culture, limited experience with the target culture and the assessment of the actual situational context. In this study the co-construction process will be analyzed by examining the use of formulaic language and freely generated language in the discourse segments.

Research questions

- 1) What is the ratio of formulaic language versus freely generated language in the discourse segments? How do this ratio and the types of formulas used say about the nature of the co-construction process?
- 2) How much do interlocutors follow the target language pattern in the first phase of interaction? What factors trigger deviations from the target norms?
- 3) What factors in the subjects' language behavior demonstrate differences in assessment of the actual situational context?

Data collection

Data collection will be based on seven conversations that lasted 30-minute recording spontaneous speech on topics like health, sports, living in Albany. The participants were as follows: C1 Japanese and Korean, C2 Korean and Turkish, C3 Korean and Chinese, C4 Japanese and Chinese, C5 Chinese and Korean, C6 Korean and Burmese, C7 African-French and Korean.

Data will be analyzed to answer the research questions.

Natalie Flint (Ulster University)

Andrew John Merrison (York St John University)

Reciprocally sustaining involvement: On the preferences for agreeability and interactivity when doing disaffiliation in initial intercultural interactions

Much of the current literature on initial interactions is expanding from fields such as social psychology into socio-pragmatics (such as Haugh 2015, 2016; Svennevig 1999). This paper takes an interdisciplinary approach to studying the socio-pragmatics of initial interactions using a conversation analytic methodology. Through the focus on affiliative work and remedial work, this paper investigates the extended collaborative account sequences, considering the agreeable and interactive nature of initial intercultural interactions.

Much of the literature on affiliative work has considered only on how interactants *do* (dis)affiliation (such as, Stivers 2008; Clift 2016). This paper, however, is concerned with the remedial work *following* disaffiliations and it will consider the process of ‘doing accounting’ as remedial work (Goffman 1971) in initial interactions. More specifically this paper considers justifying-accounts (as opposed to excuses). Even more specifically this research explores the collaborative nature of justifications. Further, it demonstrates collaboration existing on at least four different levels of interactional engagement: SINGLE-INDIVIDUAL ACCOUNTS, MULTIPLE-INDIVIDUAL ACCOUNTS, ACCOUNT-FORS and ACCOUNT-WITHS. Ultimately, this paper reports on what appear to be observable preferences for *agreeability* and *interactivity* in initial interactions.

Clift, Rebecca (2016) Don’t make me laugh: Responsive laughter in (dis)affiliation. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 100, 73–88.

Goffman, Erving (1971) *Remedial interchanges. Relations in Public: Micro-studies of the Public Order*. Penguin, Harmondsworth, pp. 124–225.

Haugh, Michael (2015) Impoliteness and taking offence in initial interactions. *Journal of Pragmatics* 86, 36–42.

Haugh, Michael (2016) Mockery and (non-)seriousness in initial interactions amongst American and Australian speakers of English. In Carbaugh, Donal (ed.), *Handbook of Communication in Cross-Cultural Perspective*. Routledge, London, pp. 104–117.

Stivers, Tanya (2008) *Stance, alignment, and affiliation during storytelling: When nodding is a token of affiliation*. *Research on Language & Social Interaction* 41(1), 31–57.

Svennevig, Jan (1999) *Getting Acquainted in Conversation: A Study of Initial Interactions*. John Benjamins, Amsterdam.

Jun Ohashi (Asia Institute, The University of Melbourne)

Balancing obligations: A cross-cultural investigation of small talk

Linell and Luckmann (1991) explain the dynamic aspects of interaction, using the notion of 'asymmetries in dialogue' (disturbance in the equilibrium), stating that "[d]ialogue thrives on this tension between exploiting asymmetries and retuning to states of equilibrium" (ibid. p.7). In other words, initiating a conversational move disturbs the state of equilibrium, and the move requires another move from the other, and thus asymmetry is essential feature of dialogue. In his study of Japanese linguistic politeness phenomena in thanking (*o-rei*) episodes, Ohashi (2010) illustrates emerging symmetry of aggregated contributions of, what he coins as, 'politeness tokens' (including thanking formulas, bowing, self denigration and etc.), using his role-play data. Even though, thanking episodes assume asymmetry in the debt and credit relationship, i.e. one is beneficiary and the other is benefactor, the role-play data demonstrate that almost equal amount of politeness tokens are invested in by them. For the beneficiary, expressing thanks is expected, and denial or denigration of one's credit is expected for the benefactor, and they somehow achieve equilibrium in their contributions. What they contribute is not symmetrical (mirrored) but the amount of their contributions is. Ohashi describes this as 'balancing obligations'. These notions of 'asymmetries in dialogue' and 'balancing obligations' are much in common, perhaps the same thing being described from different perspectives. This study employs them to investigate how Japanese native speakers in Japan and English native speakers in Australia manage 'small talk' from a cross-cultural perspective. The data include video recorded unstructured first-encounter free talks and subsequent individual follow up interviews obtained in Australia and Japan respectively. The study attempts to explain emerging phenomena, incorporating conversational participants' understanding and evaluations of their first encounter small talks.

Melody Chang (School of Languages and Cultures, The University of Queensland)

Display of epistemic stance in getting acquainted interactions

With respect to the claiming of knowledge, conversation analytic studies on epistemics have demonstrated how the display of knowledge is not simply the psychological notion, but it is socially managed in ongoing interaction through participants' information exchange practices. (Heritage 2002; Heritage and Raymond 2005; Heritage 2012; Heritage and Raymond 2012). As getting acquainted with others is one of the most basic interpersonal activities where information exchange can be found, I focus on the analysis of audio recordings of initial interactions between first language speakers of English from Australia and speakers of English as an additional language from Taiwan in the current study. The aim of this paper is to examine the display of epistemic stance in the sequences of information exchange, drawing from the analysis of 10 recordings of initial interactions between Australian and Taiwanese participants and 10 intracultural interactions where Taiwanese are getting acquainted through the lens of interactional pragmatics (Arundale 2010a, 2010b; Haugh 2010, 2012). The preliminary analysis indicates that display of epistemic stance are salient and prevalent on the part of Taiwanese speakers in both intercultural interactions as well as in the intracultural interactions. It is suggested that practice of displaying epistemic stance is used as a mean of extending 'getting to know you' sequences, in particular, with great frequency of instances 'I know what you are doing' in responding the self-presentations sequences in order to establish the ongoing relationships with their interactants.

Heinz L. Kretzenbacher (The University of Melbourne),
John Hajek (The University of Melbourne),
Catrin Norrby (Stockholm University)
Doris Schüpbach (The University of Melbourne)

Austrian German speakers' introduction and address behaviour at international conferences

In an earlier pilot study, we compared German and English speakers' address behaviour at international conferences in L1 English, L2 English and L1 German (cf. Kretzenbacher / Hajek / Norrby 2013). Given our interest also in pragmatics across pluricentric languages, one shortcoming with regard to German-speakers was the imbalance of cohorts between German and Austrian speakers of German. To address this issue we have since widened our database with the help of an online survey and a mailing list targeting academics in Austria. Our aim was to collect the first large-scale set of empirical data on introduction and address by native speakers of Austrian German in the same communicative context.

This new data set allows to look in detail here at the intracultural and intercultural behaviour of Austrians involved in introductions in a relatively underdescribed national variety of German (Clyne / Norrby / Warren 2009) as well as in English as Lingua Franca (ELF) respectively. In each case, we look at the effect of context, e.g. self-introduction vs introduction of another person, and consider also the effect of social factors, i.e. age and gender, on reported patterns. We are also interested in establishing the extent to which Austrian Germans are aware of differences between patterns of introduction in Austrian German and in English, and the extent to which they may or may not accommodate to perceived English norms. To allow us to examine and understand the degree of shift in reported behaviours, we also compare our Austrian ELF results with a similarly sized data sample we have collected for American English.

In addition to quantitative data we provide qualitative data from our Austrian German respondents regarding their experience of and attitudes to address at conferences. Finally, we consider the implications of our findings in terms of a more general understanding of the pragmatic behaviours of L2 English speakers, in this case from Austria, and their awareness of and willingness to align with English-language norms as exemplified by our American data.

Clyne, Michael / Norrby, Catrin / Warren, Jane. 2009. *Language and human relations. Styles of address in contemporary language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kretzenbacher, Heinz L. / Hajek, John / Norrby, Catrin. 2013 Address and introduction across two pluricentric languages in intercultural communication. In: Amorós Negre, Carla et al. (eds.), *Exploring linguistic standards in non-dominant varieties of pluricentric languages*. Vienna: Peter Lang, 259-274.

Antonella Strambi (Flinders University)
Vincenza Tudini (The University of South Australia)

Getting acquainted in online text chat: The role of self-disclosure in rapport building between L1 and L2 speakers of Italian

How do relationships develop through text-based computer-mediated interaction between L1 and L2 speakers of Italian? This study identifies some of the rapport-building behaviours that can be observed in a small corpus of online chat transcripts, where Australian students of Italian interact with L1 Italian speakers. Through the lens of Conversation Analysis, we focus especially on instances of self-disclosure, and on how they are initiated, received, and negotiated through interaction. This is because self-disclosure, or the act of willingly communicating personal information about oneself to others, has been identified as a key factor in the development and maintenance of friendships (e.g. Matsushima & Shiomi, 2002).

Topics and breadth of self-disclosure have been found to vary not only according to intimacy levels, but also according to the medium of communication (e.g. Dai et al, 2016; Joinson, 2001). However, research into self-disclosure in intercultural encounters has focused predominantly on face-to-face communication, whereas self-disclosure in text-chat has rarely involved L1-L2 dyads. To our knowledge, this is the first conversation analytic study that explores self-disclosure in text chat among L1 and L2 speakers of Italian.

By observing how self-disclosure is achieved interactionally during online intercultural encounters, we aim to contribute to a growing academic interest in this field, as well as raise students' awareness of these processes, in order to support them in their online relationship building efforts.

Our results suggest that patterns of self-disclosure are influenced by features of the online medium, as well as by the hybrid nature of these interactions, which are characterised by a combination of social and pedagogical orientations. Furthermore, while self-disclosure is observed in our data, we suggest that other factors may contribute to rapport-building in L1-L2 text-based chat. These include compliments, exchanges of personal information through question-answer sequences, and other forms of small talk.

- Dai, Y., Shin, S. Y., Kashian, N., Jang, J., & Walther, J. B. (2016). The Influence of Responses to Self-Disclosure on Liking in Computer-Mediated Communication. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 35(4), 394–411.
- Joinson, A. N. (2001). Self-disclosure in computer-mediated communication: The role of self-awareness and visual anonymity. *European journal of social psychology*, 31(2), 177-192.
- Matsushima, R., & Shiomi, K. (2002). Self-disclosure and friendship in junior high school students. *Social Behavior and Personality: an international journal*, 30(5), 515-525.
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Kerry Mullan (School of Global, Urban and Social Studies, RMIT University)

Humour in French and Australian English initial interactions

Building on previous work on humour in French and Australian social visits among friends (Béal and Mullan 2013, 2017), and among strangers getting acquainted (Haugh 2011, 2017), this paper will examine the use of humour in intracultural and intercultural initial interactions between French and Australian English speakers. These initial interactions consist of ten hours of conversations in French and English, audio recorded in Australia between August 2000 and September 2002. The twenty-four unacquainted participants are native speakers of standard French or general Australian English, twelve of whom are interacting in their second language.

A preliminary analysis suggests that for the Australian English speakers, the frequency and types of humour corroborate what has previously been found for humour in social visits among friends (Béal and Mullan 2017): i.e., a strong preference for both self-deprecating and mock impolite (Haugh 2011) recipient-oriented humour, regardless of the fact that they are interacting with strangers. On the other hand, humour seems to be used less frequently by the French participants in these initial interactions – both with other French speakers and with Australians – perhaps as a consequence of not being acquainted with their interactants, and/or perhaps indicating that they regard the task as being more formal and therefore an inappropriate setting for humour in general, or at least for certain types of humour.

Using the four-dimensional model developed for the comparison of humour cross-culturally in Béal and Mullan (2013), this paper will examine the similarities and differences in both the types and the pragmatic functions of the humour found in these initial interactions between French and Australian English speakers, in particular in relation to face-management issues in the context of getting acquainted. A number of examples will be presented by way of illustration, and an attempt will be made to link the findings to some previously outlined underlying cultural values for French and Australian English speakers (Béal and Mullan 2013, 2017; Goddard 2009; Haugh 2017).

- Béal, Christine and Mullan, Kerry. 2013. Issues in conversational humour from a cross-cultural perspective: Comparing French and Australian corpora. In Bert Peeters, Kerry Mullan and Christine Béal (eds.), *Cross-culturally Speaking, Speaking Cross-culturally*, 107-140. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars.
- Béal, C. and Mullan, K. 2017. The pragmatics of conversational humour in social visits: French and Australian English. *Language and Communication*, 55, 24–40.
- Goddard, Cliff. (2009). "Not taking yourself too seriously in Australian English: Semantic explications, cultural scripts, corpus evidence". *Intercultural Pragmatics*, 6, 1, 29-53.
- Haugh, Michael. 2011. Humour, face and im/politeness in getting acquainted. In Bethan Davies, Michael Haugh and Andrew John Merrison (eds.), *Situated politeness*, 165-184. London: Continuum.
- Haugh, Michael. 2017. Mockery and (non-)Seriousness in initial interactions amongst American and Australian speakers of English. In Donal Carbaugh (ed.), *The Handbook of Communication in Cross-Cultural Perspective*, 104-117. New York, United States: Routledge.
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Michael Haugh (School of Languages and Cultures, The University of Queensland)
Donal Carbaugh (University of Massachusetts Amherst)

Self-deprecation and reciprocity in initial interactions

Self-deprecation involves either directing negative assessments or mockery at self, or alternatively playfully understating one's achievements, or abilities in the course of self-disclosing (Chen, 1993; Kim, 2015; Lampert & Ervin-Tripp, 2006; Wackers, Andeweg & de Jong, 2014). In this paper we focus on analysing jocular and non-jocular forms of self-deprecation and how it is managed by participants in initial interactions between American and Australian speakers of English. Drawing from approaches in interactional pragmatics (Arundale, 2010; Haugh, 2012) and cultural discourse analysis (Carbaugh, 2005, 2007), we analyse instances of self-deprecation. The instances were selected from a corpus of more than 50 video recorded interactions involving Australians and Americans who were asked to get acquainted; these interactions involved both same and different nationality pairings, along with comments on such instances identified in follow-up interviews with those participants. Our analysis reveals that the sequential environments in which self-deprecation arises, and responses by others to it, reflects the multiple preference structures at play when self-disclosing in initial interactions, namely, the way in which self-praise is evidently dis-preferred (Pillet-Shore, 2012, 2015), and the overall preference for agreement with assessments (Sacks, 1987; Pomerantz, 1984), particularly in initial encounters (Schneider, 1988). While the American and Australian participants drew from similar interactional resources in managing these multiple preference structures through affiliative laughter in response to self-deprecation, the American participants reciprocated self-deprecations significantly more frequently than the Australian participants. We argue that the emphasis on reciprocity in relation to self-deprecation amongst the American participants reflects cultural discourses that favour positive self-presentation, that is, "putting one's best foot forward" (Scollon & Scollon, 1981; Carbaugh, 1988), and so self-deprecation is treated as something requiring "balancing out" across conversational partners. Amongst the Australian participants, we find cultural discourses that favour "avoiding standing out from others" (Horne, [1964]1986; Hirst, 2001), and so self-deprecation is treated as a less serious threat to positive self-presentation. Implications are discussed for analysing such discourse sequences, its theory and methodology.

Valeria Sinkeviciute (School of Languages and Cultures, The University of Queensland)

Performing yourself: Constructing identity in initial encounters

Getting acquainted is an interactional process that no human being can avoid. Engaging in that process, interlocutors inevitably give and make first impressions, which becomes crucial if one is not able to escape new acquaintances' company for a longer period time. This is the case of housemates' meeting each other in the *Big Brother* house, the place where they have to share their daily lives with fellow housemates. This paper examines the ways in which the housemates in the Australian 2012 series position themselves in initial encounters that take place in the first several days in the house. The main objective of this talk is to analyse in detail what kind of (on screen) identities the housemates decide to construct in their first interactional practices. It can be observed that much identity construction is used in order to create a bond with fellow interactants, which can be achieved through affiliation with their interests, suggestions or claims, whether performed in a humorous or serious frame. On the other hand, disaffiliative practices are also present in the house, especially when a housemate's self-aspired identity clashes with the one seemingly imposed by the others. Finally, identities constructed, performed, negotiated and resisted in initial encounters highly depend on situational contexts and range from self-deprecating and humorous to motherly caring and supportive to masculine (alpha male) and gay.
