

Analysing discourse relations in natural language: The case of space and time

Dr Thora Tenbrink

Abstract:

Much research on discourse relations focuses on the ways in which connections between clauses and sentences can be established, either implicitly or explicitly through markers such as "because", "before", "but", etc. However, the use of such markers in discourse also shows how a speaker conceptualises the relationships between various aspects of what they are saying. Whenever they occur in discourse, they are therefore reflections of the speakers' mind in this respect.

In this talk, I will illustrate these effects by discussing how speakers conceptualise and express relationships in time and space (Tenbrink, 2007). I will demonstrate the linguistic options in this regard, and show some principles for (and differences between) temporal and spatial relationships. Finally, I will briefly outline how relations in time and space can be investigated systematically in natural discourse using Cognitive Discourse Analysis (Tenbrink, 2015).

References:

Tenbrink, Thora. 2007. Space, time, and the use of language: An investigation of relationships. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Tenbrink, Thora. 2015. Cognitive Discourse Analysis: Accessing cognitive representations and processes through language data. *Language and Cognition* 7:1, 98 – 137.

We have already discussed Yarib Matras on the 22nd November. The next confirmed talk is by Graeme Shannon from the School of Biological Sciences here in Bangor on the 6th of December. Ewa Dabrowska from Birmingham University will be presenting on either the 29th November or the 13th December. I have told her that we need to know urgently, as much as anything since we will need to book accommodation in what is approaching the Christmas period.