

Languages *INTER* Networks

Lancaster University, 20-22 June 2019

Call for Papers

[‘We nooses tous des bastardi elettronici che usano lingue globali’](#)

[Ours Lingages](#). The internet is my language mother. I speak with a voice that’s not my own, I speak in other voices, not my voice. We are all e-strangers, all nomads that use globish bastard languages. We are the alienated translated (wo)men in-between code and emotion, in-between our wish to be visible and our longing for intimacy. L’entre-deux = void. Can’t we be ‘with’ instead?
(Annie Abrahams)

Digital artist and performer Annie Abrahams highlights how living in the digital world transforms not only the language(s) we speak, but also our relationship to language(s) and the relationship between languages, together with our relationships to other people. ‘Networked language practices [...] are simultaneously local and transnational’, observes at the same time Jannis Androutsopoulos (2015). The digital space makes it easier for human languages to circulate, coexist, interact, and mix in a fluid and flexible fashion - linguistic borders are not removed, but they have shifted and become more porous.

Language is never alone. Of necessity, digital texts are composed in at least two ‘languages’ and exist by means of perpetual back-and-forth processes of translation between them: a ‘so-called natural language, which is addressed to humans [...] and computer codes, which (although readable by some humans) can be executed only by intelligent machines’ (Hayles 2006). Hayles goes on to argue that ‘in our computationally intensive culture, code is the unconscious of language’.

How can we be ‘with’ languages in their plurality, rather than just in-between them and lost in translation? Digital arts and literature have explored the potential of programmable media to play with and perform linguistic complexity and fluidity both across human languages and between human and machine languages. Everyday users are no less inventive and adventurous in their practices, as they acquire linguistic fragments from the flux, integrate them into their interactions, and create their own hybrid modes of expression.

Following up on our first symposium in March 2018, [Multilingual Digital Authorship](#), this conference will focus on projects, works, and any form of creative digital artefacts online or offline, including anything from individual tweets, instapoems, and status updates to interactions and more complex projects, artworks that consciously experiment with linguistic cross-fertilization – or on the contrary, highlight the dangers of linguistic standardization seeking to suppress hybridity. The objective is to explore the creative, cultural, and political potential of encounters amongst digital technologies, languages, and creative practices.

Confirmed invited speakers and artists:

[Annie Abrahams](#)

[Jean-Pierre Balpe](#)

[John Cayley](#)

[Ottar Ormstadt](#)

[Alexandra Saemmer](#)

[Rui Torres](#)

The conference will include an evening of performances open to the general public and will be accompanied by a thematic issue of [ZeTMaG](#).

A selection of the conference papers will be published in a journal special issue.

Three types of proposals are therefore invited. *Please indicate in brackets in the title if the proposal is for a Paper, a Panel, or a Performance*

1. 20-minute individual conference papers or panels including three or four papers in English.

Topics may include, but need not be limited to:

- The coexistence or mixing of (human and/or computer) languages in digital interactions, artworks, and/or creative projects
- Hybrid or multiple linguistic and cultural identities in and through creative digital practices
- Creative web-based communities across languages and their outputs
- The shifting and melting of linguistic borders in digital space, in particular as illustrated by cultural artefacts
- Machine translation and its creative uses
- Links between digital media, creativity, language(s), and power, including linguistic standardization and its subversion
- Fictional and artificial languages in and/or through digital media, including non-alphabetic ones (emoticon, emoji code, etc.) and their creative uses
- What is language anyway? What makes a language? What distinguishes languages? What kinds of 'languages' can we 'speak' in the digital space? When does a language begin to be more than one?

Submission format:

Individual papers: please submit a 200-word proposal, with author affiliation and a 100-word bio-bibliography

Panels: please submit a 100-words summary on the overarching objective of the panel, together with a 150-word abstract for each paper, with author affiliation and a 100-word bio-bibliography for each author

Please submit your proposal on [EasyChair](#) by **Friday the 27th of January 2019**.

2. Performances with a digital component, of 10-20 minutes in length, related to any of the above, to be presented in an event to take place on the first evening of the conference, open to the general public.

Please submit a 200-word description of the work and the equipment and space required, together with a 100-word biography of the artist(s) (if available, include link to website/previous work).

Please submit your proposal on [EasyChair](#) by **Friday the 27th of January 2019**.

3. Digital artworks to be published in a thematic issue in the experimental digital art magazine [ZeTMaG](#) on **Language(s)-Space(s)**, to be launched at the conference. The magazine can accept text, photo, audio, audiovisual formats. (Other formats might be possible, please contact the editors at zetmaglab@gmail.com with any queries.)

Please send a brief description of the proposed work directly to zetmaglab@gmail.com. The submission of final works will be required by 31st May 2019.

This conference will be the second and last academic event of a two-year project funded by the 'Multilingualism: Empowering Individuals, Transforming Societies' AHRC Open World Research

Initiative (www.meits.org) and is part of a series of four conferences on [Digital Authorship](#) run in partnership with the University of Paris 8. The event benefits from additional support from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and partnership with the Electronic Literature Organization (<https://eliterature.org/>).

Postgraduate students and early career scholars are particularly encouraged to submit proposals. Up to three small bursaries for postgraduate speakers will be available to contribute to travel and accommodation costs.

With any queries, please contact the organizer, Erika Fülöp at e.fulop@lancaster.ac.uk.