LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE/₁₆

LL16 Pre-Conference Workshop
"Does it fit here?" Disorienting encounters in/with semiotic landscapes

Tuesday, 2nd September 2025

Programme:

9:15-9:30 CET:
Check-in

9:30-10:00:
Welcome session

10:00-12:30:
Tapping into Multisensory Ethnography: Do we fit here or who is the campus for?
Natalia Volvach, Stockholm University

In this workshop, we will explore and practice the multisensory ethnography of university life by attending to the body and its relationship with semiotic landscapes. In the first part of the session, we will briefly discuss the history of linguistic/semiotic landscape research and its approaches to capturing different senses of place, including sensory ethnography.

The second part of the session will take us beyond discussion and into the field: we will engage with the campus of Duisburg-Essen University, one of Germany's largest universities, located in a historically industrial region, as a site for multisensory exploration and experimentation. While often taken for granted, university campuses play a crucial role in creating a sense of belonging among vibrant student groups, making some bodies fit seamlessly into place while alienating others. When navigating the university campus together, we will ask ourselves: How does being in and moving through the campus make us feel? What can our bodily experiences reveal about whom the campus is designed for? What do the senses of dis/comfort we encounter tell us about space and its production?

In the final part of the session, we will wrap up our discussion on multisensory ethnography. We will talk about how our bodies, as "sensing agents" (Volvach, forthcoming), can become useful in other contexts where capturing semiotic landscapes – those that stretch toward hard-to-articulate impressions, or oscillate between absence and presence may present new challenges for researchers.

12:30-13:30:
Lunch break

13:30-16:00:
Disorienting Encounters: Interventions and emergent worlds
Sean P. Smith, Tilburg University

If "orientation" describes a clear location within and relationship to space, then "disorientation" explains how this relation breaks down. A single prefix marks all kinds of slippage, as "dis-" orientation gives way to disruption, destabilization, disturbance, and discontinuity. As Sara Ahmed (2006, p. 177) writes, "disorientation shatters our involvement in a world" – but that, through one world's dissolution, another emerges. Attending to disorientation, perhaps, invites new possibilities for how we conceptualize and relate to space.

In the second half of the workshop, we ask you to bring a piece of "disorienting" data from one of your own projects. This could be a picture taken during fieldwork, a quote from an interview, a screenshot of a digital space, or something else entirely – the only requirement is that you can describe how its relationship with the space around it is disorientating, uneasy, or uncomfortable. In other words, how does your data not "fit" with space, or how does space struggle to fit your data?

With your data in hand, we will work in small groups to answer questions including: How does a researcher sense disorientation? How can space be challenged by signs that do not fit? And what new worlds can emerge from disruptive interventions in the landscape?

16:00-17:00
Publishing with Bloomsbury: A Workshop and Q&A for ECRs
Sarah MacDonald, Bloomsbury

Thinking about publishing your first academic research book? Learn everything you need to know from Sarah MacDonald, Senior Commissioning Editor for Linguistics at Bloomsbury Academic, in this virtual session. Sarah will introduce Bloomsbury's linguistics publishing and walk you through the publishing journey, answering common questions such as 'How can I adapt my PhD thesis for publication?' and 'What makes a strong book proposal?' The session will end with a Q&A where you'll have the chance to ask Sarah questions of your own.

Suggested readings:

Ahmed, Sara (2006). *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*. Duke University Press. (Introduction: Find Your Way, pp. 1–24)

Bock, Z., & Stroud, C. (2019). Zombie Landscapes: Apartheid Traces in the Discourses of Young South Africans. In A. Peck, C. Stroud, & Q. Williams (Eds.), *Making Sense of People and Place and Linguistic Landscapes* (pp. 11–27). Bloomsbury.

Borba, R., Fabrício, B. F., & Lima, F. (2022). 'Living memories of the changing same': Rio's linguistic landscape at the crossroads of time and race. *Language in Society*, *51*(5), 797–818.

Deumert, A. (2022). The sound of absent-presence: Towards formulating a sociolinguistics of the spectre. *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics*, *45*(2), 135–153.

Smith, S. P. (2024). "The trash is ruining the picture": social media, sustainability, and the semiotics of pristine nature. *Social Semiotics*, 1–21.

Volvach N. (2024). Shouting absences: Disentangling the ghosts of Ukraine in occupied Crimea. *Language in Society*, *53*(3): 523–548.