

# CLARe3 / 2017 / FU Berlin

## International Conference CLARe3



*Encounters in Language and Aging Research: Pragmatic Spaces, Longitudinal Studies and Multilingualism*

March 6–8, 2017, Freie Universität Berlin

Org.: Annette Gerstenberg (Freie Universität Berlin), Catherine Bolly (Universität zu Köln / UCLouvain)

Fabeckstr. 23–25 ("Holzlaube", -1.2009, basement), FU Berlin



[CLARe 3: Program and Abstracts](#)

[CLARe3: Poster Session](#)

[CLARe3: Venue](#)

[CLARe3: Committees](#)

[CLARe3: Call for abstracts \(closed\)](#)

[CLARe3: Conference pictures](#)

The conference is dedicated to discussing major issues in language and aging research. The focus is on projects and research questions taking their point of departure in empirical approaches and the use of innovative methods to gather and analyze authentic material and samples of language data from older adults. Also, the subject of language in later life is deeply embedded in interdisciplinary contexts. It is thus mandatory that linguists with various specializations in pragmatics, sociolinguistics, and corpus linguistics, as well as psycholinguists, psychologists, and experts in the field of nursery and healthcare, work together.

After two previous events at the University of Louvain, this is the first academic event of the CLARe network in Berlin, which aims to promote the institutionalization of exchange between the participating disciplines and countries.

### Thematic orientations

1. **Pragmatic spaces:** Verbal and nonverbal communication in later life can be accompanied by adaptive strategies and language changes in the use of pragmatically relevant linguistic signs (Davis 2014). Older people can also use the interactional space differently, depending on the context and their interlocutors. From a pragmatic perspective, the different contexts of language used therefore need to be analyzed with regard to the type of interaction at stake as well as to the identity of the communicating persons. The use of authentic linguistic material and dedicated tools to study audio and/or video data is also crucial to better capture the pragmatic dimension of language in old age. Pragmatic spaces in old age will thus be studied according to their interactional and contextual dimensions (e.g., peer-to-peer communication, intergenerational encounters, care settings, dialogues, etc.). Special attention will be paid to the use of pragmatic cues - be they vocal or gestural - including positioning activities, deictic markers, pragmatic/discourse markers, formulaic language, social relationships, intersubjective space management, common ground, or stance-taking in discourse.
2. **Longitudinal studies:** This thematic session aims to establish a sociolinguistic view on language use in later life with regard to variables that may indicate real-time language change or a change in the linguistic behavior of aging people in terms of age-grading (Labov 1994). The exploration of corpus data can give insight into the process of lifelong learning (Ramscar, Hendrix, and Baayen 2013). Additional focus will be on verbal and nonverbal indicators of a possibly progressive change in communication behaviors that can be linked to problematic aging (e.g., lower sense of control, slowing of information processing, hearing loss, etc.) and to adaptive and compensatory strategies (e.g., to remain involved in the interaction, to maintain social activity); the validity of the sane-pathological continuum in dementia and the role of psychological and medical information in longitudinal studies (Hamilton 2008) will also be discussed here.
3. **Multiple identities and multilingualism in later life:** Along with research on language acquisition, multilingualism is an innovative topic in the field of aging (Seebus 2008). Furthermore, the role of multiple identities and their construction across the lifespan has been a core of interest in the field of dementia in aging. The use of various languages and the accumulation of several social roles over a lifespan may have a role in the construction of older people's wellbeing and in the maintenance of efficient communication exchanges. The focus here will be on language preferences, borrowing, interferences, attrition, and/or code-switching in bi- or multi-lingual older speakers as well as on language issues arising from multilingual contexts of interaction (e.g., in nursing homes). Assuming that some changes are linked, to some extent, to cognitive or somatic changes (e.g., slowing of information processing, arthritis, hearing loss, etc.), contrasting studies and comparison between languages will also be of great value to discriminate between individual, generational, or even communal changes in the linguistic systems being compared.

### Round tables on methods and applied linguistics

1. **Healthcare (experts from research and practitioners):** The role of caregivers (be they family members, doctors, nurses, speech therapists, etc.) lies at the interface of academic research and applied linguistics. Fruitful dialogue between these two disciplines has begun in some countries and has led to changes in the training of caregivers and institutions' infrastructure (e.g., in raising the awareness of the problems of "secondary baby talk" or "elderspeak"). Still, a continuous exchange between the experiences of practitioners and the results of (psycho-)linguistic research is necessary and must be promoted on an interdisciplinary basis (see for instance the Louvain4Ageing consortium in Belgium and the CERES center in Cologne). CLARE's conference gives the opportunity to promote a valuable exchange in the experiences of different countries.
2. **Methods in language and aging research:** Experts with methodological affiliation in corpus linguistics (spoken and visual data) and in sociolinguistic fieldwork, as well as those in more experimental studies in psycholinguistics, will discuss the specific challenges of empirical work on language and aging issues. Every step of the analysis and data treatment will be considered with respect to their level of appropriateness concerning the scientific questions raised (e.g., motion capture in sign language, interview design in sociolinguistics, storage and query tools for corpora, experimental design, interdisciplinary evaluation tool of quality of life, etc.). The information of the participants is a crucial issue, as well as related ethical problems, such as authorizing the use and publication of the resulting data, which is especially sensitive when investigating older people's language.