

- Faculté des lettres et sciences humaines
- www.unine.ch/lettres

Plurilinguisme et communication : A cross-linguistic perspective on discourse markers (2LN2324)

Filières concernées	Nombre d'heures	Validation	Crédits ECTS
Pilier principal M A - sciences du langage et de la communication	Séminaire: 2 ph	Voir ci-dessous	5
Pilier secondaire M A - sciences du langage et de la communication	Séminaire: 2 ph	Voir ci-dessous	5

ph=période hebdomadaire, pg=période globale, j=jour, dj=demi-jour, h=heure, min=minute

Période d'enseignement:

- Semestre Automne

Equipe enseignante

Sam Schirm, Ph.D.
Office hours: TBD/by appointment. Online office hours also available
Email: ronald.schirm@unine.ch, sam.schirm@uni-bielefeld.de

Contenu

****Ce séminaire sera bilingue, en anglais ainsi que en français. Tous travaux peuvent être complétés et remis en anglais, français ou allemand****

Okay, anyway, y'know, that's right, eh? — ah, hein, parce que, j'sais pas, ben

Conversationalists use such discourse markers regularly and systematically to manage conversation in real time: in distributing their turns, displaying their attitudes, managing expectations and social obligations, as well as negotiating relationships and rights to knowledge.

This course will introduce students to the study of discourse and different methodological approaches to discourse markers. We will ask: What are typical features of discourse markers? How do they emerge in language? What are some common discourse markers in English/French, and how to conversationalists use them? What can the study of discourse markers show us about language — and social interaction more generally?

The methodology we will employ in this course is conversation analysis (CA), a data-driven and participant-oriented approach to the study of human language. In the first three day-long sessions, the students will be introduced to CA approaches to transcription of spoken interaction, sequential analysis, and collection building, all of which students will employ in their final project. All classroom discussion and project work will be based on transcribed spoken face-to-face, telephone, and online interaction. Course readings will include research on discourse markers in a variety of languages, including English, French, German, Estonian, and Danish. A cross-linguistic approach will help us appreciate the functional spectrum of discourse markers, trace cross-cultural differences in research traditions, and consider the relationship between linguistic structure and discourse marker use.

Forme de l'évaluation

Assessment for this course will consist of the following components:

- an original empirical research project on the use of specific discourse marker(s) in interaction, using the methodologies and theories of CA introduced in class. Students will ideally expand on an idea from one of the in-class data sessions or from the readings. A portion of class time in the first two sessions will be dedicated to open data sessions, in which students will (in addition to practicing their analytical skills) identify potential discourse markers to investigate further. Students are to confirm their topic with the instructor. The research project will consist of two components:
 - 1) a presentation of preliminary findings on the final days of class (Dec. 9th and 11th) in our final course conference. The purpose of the conference is for students to exchange their projects with one another and give each other feedback. Presentations shall be between 18 and 20 minutes in length, with 5-10 minutes for questions and feedback.
 - 2) a final paper, in which students write up in more detail their analytic findings and situate those findings within the larger body of CA and discourse marker research. Students are also to use and reflect on the feedback they received on their project at the final course conference. The paper should be 14-16 pages long (not including title page, works cited, or appendices) with following formatting: typed, double-spaced, 12-pt Times New Roman, 2.5 cm margins, APA or similar citation style. The final paper will be due on March 7th, 2026.

- active participation during class

The instructor will include other small assignments (readings, transcription) between class sessions for the students to develop their analytical skills outside of course time as he sees fit.

Échéance pour la remise du dossier:

- Faculté des lettres et sciences humaines
- www.unine.ch/lettres

Plurilinguisme et communication : A cross-linguistic perspective on discourse markers (2LN2324)

En cas de bascule à distance, présentation orale via Webex et dossier à rendre selon les mêmes modalités.

La non présentation du travail à l'échéance ou la non présentation orale, sans motif valable, seront comptabilisées comme un échec.

Modalités de rattrapage

Délai de rattrapage pour la remise d'un éventuel dossier corrigé: 30 mai 2026

Documentation

Required and suggested readings will be made available to students via an online platform.

Pré-requis

Previous experience working with data from spoken interaction and with conversation analysis an asset, but not necessary.

Forme de l'enseignement

Seminar

Dates:

30 septembre, 10h à 12h

1er octobre, 10h à 14h

2 octobre, 10h à 14h

25 novembre, 10h à 14h

27 novembre, 10h à 14h

9 décembre, 10h à 14h

11 décembre, 10h à 14h

Objectifs d'apprentissage

Au terme de la formation l'étudiant-e doit être capable de :

- Apply the principles of conversation analysis to an original research project
- Describe basic (sequential) structures of conversation
- Identify general features and functions of discourse markers

Compétences transférables

- Explain significance of analytic findings for larger body of research
- Communicate analytical results from an original empirical study clearly and succinctly