

Call for Papers

LinguistTikTok: Linguistic Research on TikTok

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Besides Instagram and YouTube, TikTok is one of the most popular video platforms worldwide (We Are Social 2024). Even though the functions of these platforms are similar – for example in terms of video length, video design options and the recommendation algorithms that determine the content displayed – platform-specific features can still be observed. E.g., TikTok differs from the other platforms particularly in its mimetic character, which is characterised by imitation. TikTok first became known for lipsync and dance videos (Schellewald 2021). In the meantime, however, a thematic diversity can be identified that goes far beyond entertainment and is also reflected in the actors creating content on TikTok: Political parties, large media houses and institutions are adapting their content from established channels more or less successfully to the platform's affordances. Individuals in the role of experts, teachers and scientists also use the platform to impart knowledge and science, thereby contributing to 'infotainment' or 'edutainment' (Weidner 2017; Jarvin 2015).

There are now numerous research articles from various scientific disciplines that deal with the platform known as TikTok since 2018. Examples include works that deal with platform-specific properties and formats (Shutsko 2020; Zulli/Zulli 2020; Schellewald 2021), the dissemination of political and activist content (Ackermann/Dewitz 2020; Huber et al. 2022), describe the adaptation of news formats to the platform's affordances (Vázquez-Herrero/Negreira-Rey/López-García 2020; Hase/Boczek/Schar-kow 2023) or emphasise TikTok's potential as a space of education and knowledge transfer (Wolf 2021; Zeng/Schäfer/Allgaier 2021; Sari et al. 2022).

Linguistic research on TikTok, on the other hand, is rather sparse. Examples include works on code mixing and switching (Azir 2021; Purnami 2022), on the use of styles and registers (Chau 2021; Lisdawati 2021; Ilbury 2023, Jones 2023), on self-presentation and identity construction (Darvin 2022) and on creative self-censorship (Cahoun/Fawcett 2023). It is already clear that the multimodal communication practices on TikTok are a highly productive subject for various linguistic sub-disciplines and research questions. At the same time, TikTok has also established itself as a platform for science communication in the field of linguistics.

With the increasing popularity and enormous popular cultural influence of TikTok, numerous questions have been raised that invite further linguistic analyses. The conference therefore aims to bring together current linguistic research on TikTok and bring the various theoretical, empirical and methodological approaches into dialogue. It also aims to facilitate an exchange with creators who use TikTok to communicate and popularise linguistics (e.g., @fussballinguist, linguistic.studieren, and @glima.tuebingen).

Possible topics include:

- **Methodology of multimodality research:** TikTok is characterised by rather short but very complex videos that appear on the For You page in an endless feed. How can the complexity of the videos be appropriately analysed? How can data be obtained and processed?
- **Interaction formats:** Although TikTok is designed less for mutual exchange with other users compared to other platforms, there are still various interaction options. How are these opportunities utilised?
- **Knowledge transfer and science communication in an environment designed for entertainment:** Which linguistics and multimodal strategies of knowledge transfer, the popularisation of science, the production and staging of scientificity and expertise can be determined? What possibilities arise in particular for the communication of linguistic topics and content?
- **TikTok as a booster for disinformation and conspiracy theories:** How are conspiracy theories prepared multimodally? Which narratives and argumentations can be recognised?

We also welcome contributions that deal with Instagram or compare different platforms. Creators will have the opportunity to present and reflect on their channels, formats and content strategies.

The presentations will each have 20-minute slots followed by 10 minutes of discussion. The abstracts for the presentations (max. 300 words excl. literature) should contain clear research questions, methodological approaches and preliminary results or findings. Presentations and abstracts can be written in German or English.

Keynotes will be given by Rodney Jones (Reading) and Ruth Page (Birmingham).

Please send your abstract to jana.tschannen@unibas.ch before **13.09.2024**. Information about the acceptance will be sent to you by **11.10.2024**.

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