



Wednesday, June 25<sup>th</sup>

## Symposium2: **Cognitive and Cross-linguistic Aspects of Literature**

Theme: the symposium examines the cognition of literature in various languages. Session one focuses on how the cognitive function of attention directs the content of developing oral literatures; Session two focuses on how conversants cognitively manage the different levels of characters' dialogues; and Session three focuses on issues in translation of indirect speech in literature, suggesting that multiple viewpoints are managed in language-specific ways.

### Abstracts:

1. In a report on field work in Buffalo, NY, (English) and Borneo (Hobongan—as yet undescribed), I note patterns in emerging oral literatures, e.g., both focus on community identity. The stories explain and to some extent create an inside-outside distinction as the primary motivation for the stories. The selection of factual and non-factual aspects of the stories reinforces the point of the stories, and one story creates uniqueness (Buffalo), while the other explains it (Hobongan). Attention drives the creation of oral literature. Talmy (2000, 2010) notes that language directs attention; this study demonstrates that attention also directs language and its uses.
2. There are several linguistic phenomena that give evidence that people speak through characters, much like authors of literary works do, in everyday discourse, using forms of intersubjectivity in language (e.g. Verhagen 2005). Most approaches cannot explain these because any theoretical account that insists on the “text” as the beginning can offer no general account for the use of characters. The conclusion that follows is that speakers and listeners actively follow the plot of utterances: they always make use of the conversation frame (Pascual, forthcoming) when cognizing meanings of linguistic utterances, whether or not this frame is made explicit.
3. Both amateur and experienced novelists use direct speech as a literary device to create novel semantic categories. Using direct speech while not using actual quotes is treated here as fictive interaction. Such constructions appear in many languages (author, forthcoming), but they constitute a challenge for translators because languages have them at different grammatical levels. This paper examines when and how they do and do not survive translation in mainly English, Dutch, Spanish, and French bestsellers. The cases indicate a cultural model of informational language (Sweetser, 1987), so that we can present fictional interaction to talk about a non-verbal entities or processes. At the same time, they invariably involve multiple viewpoints (Dancygier & Sweetser 2012), which need to be considered in literary translation (Lu & Verhagen 2013).