



Discourse Studies

Faculty of Wellbeing Education
and Language Studies (WELS)

Call for PhD projects starting in October 2024

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Project description

School

Languages and Applied Linguistics

Members

Prof Johannes Angermuller	https://www.open.ac.uk/people/ja9447	johannes.angermuller@open.ac.uk
Dr Jaspal Singh	https://www.open.ac.uk/people/js37473	jaspal.singh@open.ac.uk
Dr Stefanie Schneider	https://www.open.ac.uk/people/ss37438	stefanie.schneider@open.ac.uk
Prof Rosina Márquez Reiter	https://www.open.ac.uk/people/rmr278	rosina.marquez-reiter@open.ac.uk
Dr Korina Giaxoglu	https://www.open.ac.uk/people/kkg38	korina.giaxoglou@open.ac.uk
Dr Sally Hunt	https://www.open.ac.uk/research/people/sh35694	sally.hunt@open.ac.uk
Dr Laura Paterson	https://www.open.ac.uk/people/lip63	laura.paterson@open.ac.uk

Background

Discourse is a key interest of researchers in the School of Languages and Applied Linguistics at the Open University. The Open Discourse Group perceive discourse as a situated practice of meaning making in society. We study how, through language, people participate in, normalise or disrupt cultural and social structures, norms and practices, e.g. in public communication, institutional talk or conversation. We are interested in the discursive negotiation of social order, through interactions between language users as well as in the collective dynamics of larger groups.

We are engaged in various projects of discourse research that respond to contemporary challenges from migration to climate change, from inequality to postcolonialism, from (mis)recognized identities to social justice. Researchers in the School explore and problematize political discourse in the media; social media mourning; decoloniality and discourse; the role of discourse in constructing power structures in academia; workplace intercultural communication; discourses of marriage; the discursive construction of gender in children's fiction and of morality in public and private discourse.

We entertain links with a range of disciplines in the social sciences and humanities. We collaborate with *DiscourseNet. International Association of Discourse Studies* (<https://discourseanalysis.net/DN>).

Aim

The group organises monthly talks and is involved in events for the national and international community of discourse researchers

(<https://discourseanalysis.net/DN/seminars/OpenDNLondon>). Our ambition is to represent many developments in Discourse Studies, to make innovative contributions to the field and to make a positive impact in society.

Methodology

We normally investigate discourse as an empirical object of the social world, in need of methods and theories of social research. The group is open to many qualitative and quantitative methodologies, from ethnography to corpus linguistics, from narrative to interactional analysis to name just a few.

Contribution

The project accounts for discourses both theoretically and empirically.

Researchers draw on linguistic, social, political and cultural expertise and craft an articulated response to the challenges of the object under study.

Current PhD students focus on, among other topics:

- a discursive construction of leadership.
- the case of a German start-up Moroccans in Paris: linguistic practices and landscaping.

PhD project

We are looking for PhD candidates in the field of Discourse Studies.

While PhDs are normally written in English, we can accompany you in a broad range of European languages. We will especially welcome projects studying:

- Discourses at the intersection of politics and science
- Narrative and argumentation
- Social media and AI
- Identity constructions in print media or fiction
- Representation of marginalised groups and/or of poverty
- Language and gender
- Communicative practices in the informal economies of the Global South and the Global North
- Workplace discourse including intercultural communication and pragmatics
- Topics combining discourse analysis with corpus linguistics or ethnography
- Linguistic practices and (im)mobility.

Applicants normally have a background in linguistics and/or other fields relevant to the project. Doctoral researchers can expect to be involved in the activities of OU's discourse group and a broader community of discourse researchers.

