

Abstracts for symposium at 1st European Congress of Qualitative Inquiry  
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Symposium Abstract

***Title: Research on social interaction– current contributions from Discursive Psychology***

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The symposium discusses how various forms of discourse analysis can be particularly fruitful for research in the field of psychology. While qualitative social research covers a large field of different methodologies, we argue that it is particularly research on social interaction informed by discursive psychology that deems appropriate to address psychological matters. Over the last two decades there has been an increasing recognition that mainstream research in psychology has been fundamentally flawed by its neglect of social interaction, e.g. with regard of how research conceives of cognition, beliefs, desires, intentions, goals, experiences, emotions (e.g., Edwards & Potter, 1992; Te Molder & Potter, 2005; Gallagher, 2001), self and identity (Bamberg, 2011) as something ‘inside’ a person. This cartesian understanding of psychological matters “inside” a person and social matters “outside” a person is now challenged by empirical evidence that psychological phenomena need to be understood as inherently interactional in nature. Moreover, it has been argued that the notion of discourse needs to be understood as embodied, enactive and embedded in materiality, i.e. needs to go beyond mere language. Such understanding calls for appropriate methodological approaches to study psychological

phenomena as interactional and intersubjective processes that are constituted through embodied and multimodal discursive practices.

The symposium will present current research from the field of discursive psychology and discuss methodological approaches that seem promising to an interactional understanding of psychological phenomena.

Hedwig te Molder's talk addresses how a discursive psychology approach can be used to study morality of knowledge claims in real life situations. Her research on British radio phone-ins on ADHD reveals that human behaviour can be understood by looking at how people understand each other and are accountable towards their actions rather than as driven by preceding mental states. She thus challenges some prevailing assumptions in cognitive psychology.

Michael Bamberg's talk discusses the role of micro cues as interactional rather than personal ("psychological") characteristics of identity construction. His research on political speeches and interviews of, and debates between the 2016 US presidential candidates provides evidence that identity is not only interactively accomplished, but as *located* in intersubjectivity and interaction.

In a similar vein, Brendan Gough will present findings on identity constructions in online interactions between men. His research provides evidence that aspects of masculinity relating to help-seeking, emotions and vulnerability need to be re-specified as interactional rather than personal.

Finally, David Laetsch's presentation challenges the widespread assumption in psychology that empathy is something that resides within a person. He provides an alternative understanding of empathy as a socially enacted phenomenon and provides empirical examples of how a DP approach can be fruitful to an interactional understanding of empathy and ultimately help improve empathy-oriented interventions in clinical psychology.