



UNIVERSITÀ
DI PAVIA

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***Engineering credible, professional and supportive agent
communication***

Strategic Engineering Communication Series

Wednesday 30 March 2022

h. 14.00-16.00

Room EF1

Facoltà di Ingegneria, Via Ferrata 5 - 27100 Pavia

Abstract – *This talk and workshop discusses Human-Machine Interaction (HMI) in an educational setting. HMI here is a special case of face-to-face communication in a digital scenario because there is no face and no human communication partner, only an agent. This agent uses modern Google (phonetic) text-to-speech technologies to generate texts in varying language. In the first part, I discuss two short academic journal abstracts (with titles and keywords) that highlight negative and positive uses of modern speech technologies: Identifying bots may be an important skill to avoid spoofing, the deceptive, even criminal, use of speech technologies. Reconstructing personal voice after speech loss may be a decisive help for patients to regain their self-concept. The discussion of the language used will give students an opportunity to approach academic texts from an intermediate (B2) level of proficiency. In the second part, students listen to short texts as input and evaluate the agent's language in an online questionnaire, whether they find this HMI communication supportive (nice to work with), professional (sounds like an expert in this field), credible (you can rely on the information given), etc. This exercise will give students an opportunity to think about variation in English, the importance of engineering agent language strategically, i.e., adapting it to the satisfaction of human communicators, and cooperative principles of HMI in general.*

Josef Schmied held the Chair of English Language and Linguistics at Chemnitz University of Technology from April 1993 to March 2021 and now focusses on his research interests in international contexts. His main research interests are in Language & Culture (sociolinguistics, national conventions), in Language & Cognition (academic discourse), and in Language & Computers (corpus-linguistics, remote online learning, and human-computer interaction). He has been active in the ICE (International Corpus of English) and ESSE (European Society for the Study of English) networks. His current research projects focus on the use of internet data in linguistic analysis, national and subnational variation of Englishes in Africa and China, and disciplinary conventions of academic writing.

The talk is part of the 2021-2022 course *English and Communication Skills for Engineering* and is funded by the Erasmus+ Becoming a Digital Global Engineer (BADGE) project. For more information on the talk, please contact maria.freddi@unipv.it