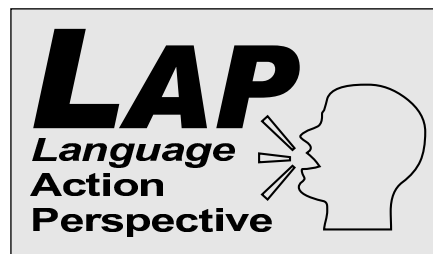


Mareike Schoop, Christoph Quix (eds.)

**Proceedings of the
Fifth International Workshop on the
Language-Action Perspective on
Communication Modelling
(LAP 2000)**



20 years of Language-Action Perspective:
Time to look back – time to move forward

14–16 September 2000
Aachen, Germany

Preface

Information technology has seen radical changes in the last two decades with systems to support cooperation and communication playing an ever-increasing role. In today's society, communication is present in many different facets, e.g. face-to-face dialogues, telephone conversations, email messages, information exchanges of agents. Communication is the key to smooth cooperation. Individuals working in groups coordinate their actions through communication. The modelling of these communication aspects has been studied for more than two decades.

Since 1980 a new paradigm has evolved in the field of information systems which emphasises the importance of communication in an organisational context: The Language-Action Perspective (LAP). LAP was introduced by Winograd, Flores, and Ludlow who stated that human beings are fundamentally linguistic beings who act through language. It was argued that language is not only used for exchanging information as in reports, statements etc. but also to perform actions, e.g. promises, orders, declarations.

The conventional perspective on information systems stresses the contents of messages rather than the way they are exchanged. For example, data flow diagrams are used as primary design tools. In contrast, the Language-Action Perspective emphasises what people *do* by communicating, how language is used to create a common basis for communication partners, and how their activities are coordinated through language. Here, the focus is on the pragmatic aspects of language, i.e. how language is used in particular contexts to achieve practical goals such as agreements or mutual understandings. The LAP approach argues that as social action is mediated through communication, one of the main roles of an information system should be to support intra- and inter-organisational communication.

Twenty years of LAP are a good occasion for looking back to the beginnings and for assessing what has been done in the past. What assumptions are still valid? What needs to be adapted? More importantly, two decades of LAP are a good reason to move forward and assess what LAP has to offer for work in current lines of research such as E-Commerce, intelligent systems, or new system architectures. Why is LAP more or less appropriate in certain contexts?

These are questions relevant for the Fifth International Workshop on the Language-Action Perspective on Communication Modelling, LAP 2000, that was held from 14 September to 16 September 2000 in Aachen, Germany. Each paper submitted to LAP 2000 was reviewed by at least three members of the programme committee. Eleven papers were selected for presentation.

Furthermore, one invited talk focusing on semantics and communication acts was given by Ronald Stamper, Emeritus Professor of Information Management, University of Twente, The Netherlands. A panel discussing the workshop theme summarised the participants' visions for the future of LAP research. The workshop provided an interesting programme and a good mixture of areas in which LAP research is conducted, such as computer-supported cooperative work, knowledge management, formal methods, business process modelling, and philosophical foundations.

Mareike Schoop
Chair of LAP 2000

Aachen, September 2000

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The proceedings are also available online on the workshop homepage at <http://www-i5.informatik.rwth-aachen.de/conf/lap2000/> .

