

ACADEMIC COMPONENT – INTERNATIONAL

INTERNATIONAL 1 – MEETING WITH FRENCH SOCIETY OF ZOOSEMIOTICS

CONTEXT

GENERAL CONTEXT

The French Society of Zoosemiotics (in French “Société française de Zoosémiotique” abbreviated SfZ) has a website (see in the References and links section) where it introduced itself as follows:

“The SfZ is a learned society that brings together researchers uniting their disciplines to develop the fields of research between human and social sciences, life sciences and technologies, medical sciences around animals, their intelligences, emotions and languages. The SfZ wishes above all to connect the sciences of language and all spheres of linguistics with animals.

The SfZ works on 5 research axes:

- Axis 1: Intraspecific languages (exchanges between individuals or groups of the same species)
- Axis 2: Interspecific languages (exchanges between individuals or groups of different species)
- Axis 3: Metaspecific languages (around/beyond species: lexicon, terminology, neology, zoolinguistics, zoosemantics)
- Axis 4: The semiotics of non-human animal cultures (transmission of cultural practices between animals of the same species or not)
- Axis 5: The semiotics of human animal cultures in connection with non-human cultures (history, art, literature, society, law, philosophy, politics, sociology, religions, psychology, advertising, communication, biomimicry, robotics, AI, etc. ...)

The SfZ organizes seminars, round tables and conferences in the Sorbonne and international conferences open to all.”

INSIDE THE PROJECT

In the context of the project, a partner that is both compounded of academics – or, for some members, professionals of related fields, outside of academia – and involved in popularization while being focused on animal communication, behaviour or cognition is a relevant and suitable partner.

Different kinds of outcomes – both from academic and popular perspectives – can be expected if a long-term partnership is set up.

INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY

CHOICE OF PARTNER

The SfZ was an easy choice, as I am still General Secretary of the society, and had consequently frequently communicate there about the current project. They were already interested in collaboration and partnership.

In another hand, the Society is also deeply involved in popularization of science, by the organization and hosting of seminars open to general public. A meeting with the Society was also an opportunity to present the project to the general audience.

POTENTIAL OF THE PARTNERSHIP

The partnership is a good way to create a long-term bridge between the French zoosemiotics scholars and the Tartu biosemiotics school. The partnership could also increase the opportunities to introduce biosemiotics and zoosemiotics projects to general audience, through the public seminars system. Eventually, the partnership could also be a support regarding the publication of results for general public, as the SfZ is directing a collection of zoosemiotics books for non-scholar public.

MEETING

FORMAT OF THE MEETING

The format chosen was a hybrid “double public” conference. The aim was to present the current project and its results to members of the SfZ, but also to general audience, in order to evaluate the interest of the public for the project, the subject, and the way they were introduced.

SUBJECTS OF THE MEETING

Three focus points were introduced:

- Introduction to results of the previous study regarding the rats in Paris (Delahaye 2021)
- Introduction of the book (Delahaye 2022) resulting from the previous study and of the other communication items proposed to create contact with general audience (such as the project website, see References and links section)
- Introduction to the project ongoing in Tartu as a scientific and logical consequence of the first project

AGENDA OF THE MEETING

The complete agenda of the meeting, and elements introduced to both the committee and the general audience, are available in the Project Presentation (see Documents section).

FEEDBACKS

PERSONAL FEEDBACK

This kind of format is a very efficient one. It was relevant for scholar and academics, members of the committee, but also for general audience, which was compounded of science enthusiasts that simply fancy listening researchers doing popularization, of animal activists that came to gather scientific data that support their aims and actions, and of students of various fields that simply seem to enjoy enlarging their point of view on a subject.

I would like to propose this kind of format in Tartu, maybe hosted by the university itself.

PARTNERS' FEEDBACK

The member of the committee are really happy with the results of the seminar which, taking place at a very non-practical hour – a Monday evening at 5 PM – still managed to attract around 40 participants.

They are currently looking for a way to correct recording issues and to upload the entire seminar on their Youtube channel (see References and links section). At least three members of the committee would like to see the same seminar proposed again when the project will be finished, in order to introduce the final results gathered.

GENERAL PROJECT – CURRENT STATE OF PLAY

IMPLICATIONS OF THE CURRENT STEP

The current step has two main interests:

- Finding and developing partnership with academic groups potentially interested into promoting, diffusing or helping the project, its development or the communication about it. This aspect is clearly completed in the present situation.
- Gathering first-hand data about the way general audience could be involved, interested or sensitized into the project main objectives or results. This aspect is also completed, mainly due to some written feedbacks that some participants send to the SfZ.

PROPOSITIONS FOR OTHER ASPECTS OF THE PROJECT

RESEARCH ASPECTS

Some members of the committee showed interest about the potential generalization of the results of the project. This aspect should be enforced in the current and future steps of the project.

POPULARIZATION ASPECTS

Feedbacks send by participants from general audience showed the real interest that the public can have for this kind of subject, and for any popularization initiative in general. All the different aspects of the feedbacks can be summarized with this one (some changes in layout have been done):

Retour de conférence. Ma première en "distentiel". Un peu de mal avec zoom au début (je suis un homme et déjà plus très jeune, deux handicaps). J'ai beaucoup aimé. Et appris. Bravo à vos équipes pour ce que je crois être un tour de force et merci à vous P. Depierrefixe pour votre diligence. Mettez, s'il vous plaît, mon mail de côté pour les prochaines confs du Dr Pauline Delahaye ou d'autres "chercheuses" en zoosémiotique.

Translation: Conference feedback. My first one "online" [the word used in French is a neologism]. Some issues with Zoom at the beginning (I am a man, not that young, two disabilities). I loved it. And I learned a lot. Congratulations to the team for what appears to be a tour de force and thank you P. [Pauline] Depierrefixe for your celerity. Please note my email for future conference of Dr Pauline Delahaye or any other "researcher" [the word used is a neologism trying to expressed simultaneously feminine and masculine forms] in zoosemiotics.

NEXT STEPS

Feedbacks, both from the members of the Society and from the general audience, are going to be used to improve aspects of the projects. Feedbacks from academics and scholars will be used in the two papers in

progress (see Documents P1 & P2). Feedbacks from general audience will be used on the website and in future Communication and Dissemination steps.

ANNEXES

REFERENCES AND LINKS

REFERENCES

Delahaye, Pauline. 2021. « Rats, Mice and Humans ». *Linguistic Frontiers* 4 (1): 44-52.
<https://doi.org/10.2478/lf-2021-0004>.

———. 2022. *Étude de la cohabitation urbaine interespèce: Brigitte, rongeur urbain*. Zoosémiotique. Paris: l'Harmattan.

LINKS TO WEBSITES

Introduction of the French Society of Zoosemiotics (in French): <https://societefrancaisedezoosémiotique.fr/la-sfz/>

Website of the project: <https://www.crows.ut.ee/>

Youtube channel of the French Society of Zoosemiotics:
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjFyOKEJ6s4_GPOD-lj2qew

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The various members of the audience who gave enthusiast and sometimes detailed feedback.

DOCUMENTS

Presentation “Liminaire et voisinage” (in French) at the public seminar of the French Society of Zoosemiotics – Paris (PDF version – 22/07/2022)