## Florence Oloff (University of Oulu, Finland)

# “I can’t find the ‘okay’”: Learning how to use smartphones in adult education courses

Abstract

Smartphones, tablets and other mobile communication devices are now part and parcel of our everyday life. Human sciences - and especially linguistics - have investigated mainly texts, reading, and writing in the new and social media; however, there is a considerable lack of studies interested in the actual use of mobile devices in face-to-face encounters and in the way human beings adapt to new technologies across the lifespan. Research interested in digital skills and in their situated acquisition primarily focuses on young children and students, and there has been less interest in how elderly adults learn about and use mobile technologies. In this presentation I will first summarize how technologies-in-use have been investigated in past and current research. I will then illustrate how a qualitative and micro-analytic framework such as multimodal conversation analysis can give new insights into the ways in which less experienced or first-time users approach their smartphones. Based on video recordings in adult education centres (“Volkshochschule”) in Germany, I will show how the course participants are instructed to use their mobile devices and how they respond to these instructions. Looking at the details of talk and of the device manipulation in these introductory smartphone courses allows us to better understand both the actual challenges related to the learning of technology use and the concrete digital skills these users already have. I aim to show how this type of analysis can lead to findings regarding teaching practices in adult education, regarding possible age-related differences in the use of communication technologies, and, more generally, regarding the potential impact of mobile technologies on our social and linguistic routines.

Bio

Florence Oloff is Assistant Professor in "Multimodal Interaction and Discourse" at the Research Unit of Languages and Literature (Faculty of Humanities) of the University of Oulu, Finland. As a trained linguist and expert in conversation analysis, she is interested in language use and social interaction in mundane as well as in professional settings. Using video recordings of social encounters in various languages, she has for example worked on simultaneous talk, on response tokens, on multilingual practices in professional settings, or on object use and interactional space. She is currently leading a research project focusing on the use of smartphones by younger and older adults.