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Discourse level variability in social media

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It is well known that linguistic expressions vary between different media (such as spoken conversation vs. written newspaper article). In this talk I address two specific aspects of this: I discuss phenomena and dimensions in which language differs on the discourse level (as opposed to more commonly studied phonological, lexical, and syntactic levels). And I try to pinpoint which aspects of a certain medium or channel leads to a given discourse variability, by comparing text types from different social media. I will present a corpus of blog posts and tweets from the same individuals, which allows me to investigate individual variation at the discourse level. Phenomena discussed include intensifiers, coherence relation marking, and tag questions. The findings show that the specific social media differ along dimensions such as formality, conversationality, and closeness of participants.