

MULTICULTURAL AND INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES TO LANGUAGE AWARENESS: CURRENT RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES AND CHALLENGES

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May
26th
2025

NANCY

Campus Lettres et Sciences Humaines

ATILF | Bâtiment CNRS
Salle Paul Imbs



PROGRAM

9.00 ▶ 9.15

Welcome / Introduction

Mathieu Constant (Director of the research unit ATILF)
Hélène Vinckel-Roisin, Petra Daryai-Hansen, Alex Boulton
(Organisers)

● Moderator: **Petra Daryai-Hansen** ●

9.15 ▶ 10.00

Claudia Finkbeiner (University of Kassel, President of the Association for Language Awareness) | **Keynote speaker**

Linguistic Diversity, Multilingualism and Language Awareness in the Era of Artificial Intelligence: A Multiperspective Approach

10.00 ▶ 10.30

Florence Oloff (University of Mannheim, Leibniz-Institute for German language)
Noah Bubenhofer (University of Zurich – online)

Language awareness and digital tools: A metapragmatic approach

10.30 ▶ 11.00

Coffee Break

● Moderator: **Alex Boulton** ●

11.00 ▶ 11.30

Mirjam Schmuck (University of Copenhagen)
Hélène Vinckel-Roisin (Université de Lorraine, CNRS, ATILF)

Gender bias in digital tools and language awareness: A corpus-linguistic perspective

11.30 ▶ 12.00

Vitek Dovalil (University of Prague)
Language awareness as a part of language management using digital tools

12.00 ▶ 12.30

Rute Costa (NOVA University Lisbon)
Carolina Flinz (University of Milan – online)
LSP-data in circular economy: Representation in lexicography and terminology. Reflections for developing language awareness

12.30 ▶ 14.00

Lunch

● Moderator: **Hélène Vinckel-Roisin** ●

14.00 ▶ 14.45

Constanze Weth (University of Luxembourg) | **Keynote speaker**

Awareness of visible inflectional morphology fosters spelling of multilingual learners: German and French

14.45 ▶ 15.15

Véronique Lemoine-Bresson (Université de Lorraine, CNRS, ATILF)

When monolingualism collapses: The effects of Language Awareness on teachers' beliefs and practices in a collaborative research

15.15 ▶ 15.45

Coffee Break

15.45 ▶ 16.15

Petra Daryai-Hansen (University of Copenhagen)

Johannes Müller-Lancé (University of Mannheim)

Plurilingual education in German and Spanish programmes in higher education: Conceptualization, language awareness and student/teacher perspectives

16.15 ▶ 16.45

Alex Boulton (Université de Lorraine, CNRS, ATILF)

Language awareness and communicative ability through exposure: Data-driven approaches with corpora and GenAI

16.45 ▶ 17.15

Final Discussion

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

Claudia Finkbeiner

(University of Kassel, President of the Association for Language Awareness) | **Keynote speaker**

Linguistic Diversity, Multilingualism and Language Awareness in the Era of Artificial Intelligence: A Multiperspective Approach

This presentation will focus on linguistic diversity, multilingualism and the role of language awareness in the era of Artificial Intelligence. The Language Awareness movement emerged 30 years ago and is now facing new challenges with the rise of Artificial Intelligence. Language Awareness will be even more important in the future to understand language issues and make well-informed choices, for example in the work place, with respect to language rights, and education.

Today's globalizing world needs communication across cultures and languages which has traditionally favored the use of a lingua franca or majority language. This should never have been nor should it be at the expense of the several thousand languages we still have on this earth. However, with the rise of Artificial Intelligence and the increase of AI-based translation tools there might be another turn as the learning of languages as such might be interrogated. Some learners, researchers and developers might think that we can lean back as intelligent tools can do the task for us. Can they really do the task? What are the opportunities and challenges involved in this? What is the role of the learner, the teacher, the language and the AI? Are there hidden ideologies involved?

There are many reasons why it is important to safeguard linguistic diversity and develop language awareness in order to value learners' heritage languages. Language is identity and contributes to social cohesion as well as to personal development.

In this presentation an overview will be given with respect to the most recent developments and studies as well as the most important constructs described above. This can be summarized into linguistic diversity, multilingualism, language awareness, and Artificial Intelligence.

Second, a report on a study in a highly diverse linguistic and cultural setting will be given. This study is situated in the frame of the CoGILH-project which is an ongoing international cooperative higher education project in teacher education between Germany and Israel and other countries, such as Hungary. Higher education students from four different universities, who are enrolled in teacher education programs, professors and tutors cooperate over 12 weeks. The students work in permanent linguistically and culturally highly diverse groups and evaluate AI applications. Furthermore they develop tasks for the specific AI.

Finally and third, the presentation will showcase a trial run which was conducted to test opportunities and limitations of AI in a linguistically and culturally diverse setting. The role of prompt-engineering in creating adequate AI generated text will be discussed, and illustrated with examples. It will become clear that for good prompt-engineering, and understanding the prompt-writers' intentions, training in Critical LA will be invaluable.

The presentation will conclude with recommendations for a multiperspective classroom that makes utmost use of learners' linguistic and cultural diversity on the one hand as well as of the opportunities AI can provide on the other hand.

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Florence Oloff

(University of Mannheim, Leibniz-Institute for German language)

Noah Bubenhofer

(University of Zurich – online)

Language awareness and digital tools: A metapragmatic approach

Digital language tools, including translation apps and AI-driven language learning platforms, increasingly shape linguistic practices and influence how language is perceived, used, and discussed. This talk employs a metapragmatic approach, rooted in theories by Silverstein (1976) and Spitzmüller (2013, 2019), to examine language awareness as revealed through reflections on digital linguistic tools and practices.

Metapragmatics, understood as linguistic and communicative reflection by ordinary or institutional language users, allows for the analysis of language ideologies—beliefs, evaluations, and attitudes about language—embedded within discursive practices. Such reflections can be explicit, as seen in social media discussions about the limitations of translation tools, or implicit, as when specific language choices (e.g., dialect use in a standardized context) signal certain attitudes.

This presentation addresses two complementary empirical perspectives:

1. Interactional and discourse analyses (cf. Busch et al. 2022) explore explicit reflections by users on social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter/X, or Reddit, cf. Dynel 2023) and in naturally occurring communication settings (e.g., adult education courses on smartphone usage, talk among friends about their experience with specific apps), examining their practical experiences and challenges with digital language tools such as automated translation services.
2. Corpus-based discourse analysis (Bubenhofer 2009, 2024) highlights evolving perceptions of digital tools in educational contexts, but also in society in general. Tracing shifts in language use reveals changes of ideologies and practices over time, specifically within Switzerland (e.g., Dreesen & Bubenhofer 2020).

Ultimately, the presentation demonstrates how a metapragmatic approach facilitates a deeper understanding of societal attitudes towards digital linguistic technologies, emphasizing the importance of language awareness for comprehending the broader social implications of these tools. It will also reflect on the role of different types of empirical data and how these can be usefully exploited within a metapragmatic approach.

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Mirjam Schmuck

(University of Copenhagen)

Hélène Vinckel-Roisin

(Université de Lorraine, CNRS, ATILF)

Gender bias in digital tools and language awareness: A corpus-linguistic perspective

Gender bias in AI technologies has been at the center of recent research, e.g. in recruitment tools (Dastin 2022), search engines (Feng & Shah 2022) and MT tools (Vanmassenhove et al. 2018, Prates et al. 2020). The observed gender inequalities in terms of discrimination against women have been attributed to a) pre-existing bias (social inequalities) or b) algorithmic bias, e.g. due to unbalanced data sets (O'Connor & Liu 2023). Text corpora amass language users' every day lexical choices and inevitably reflect human biases that are reinforced and amplified in the process of deep learning. Stereotypes regarding the representation of women and men in linguistic corpora have been addressed by Pearce 2008 (BNC-corpus) and particularly Müller-Spitzer & Lobin 2022 (German Reference Corpus), who conclude that stereotypical gender roles are most pronounced in newspapers and less so in fictional texts.

Building on these previous findings, we seek to further explore gender bias in digital tools through the prism of Language Awareness to a) raise critical awareness of gender bias accumulated in certain text types and b) explore corpus selection as an additional lever to mitigate bias in mono- and multilingual digital tools that rely on language corpora. Based on two web corpora, German (deTenTen23, 19,9 billion tokens) and French (frTenTen23, 23,2 billion tokens) available via Sketch Engine, we unveil cross-linguistic collocational biases for nouns referring to women/men reflected in stereotypical agent or patient roles and the use of modifiers e.g. referring to age, marital status, race/religion (women) vs physical/mental power (men). In addition to 'woman'/ 'man' which were the main focus of previous studies, we also include gendered/ungendered occupational terms (e.g. German *Lehrer/Lehrerin* and French *enseignant/enseignante* 'teacher'/'teacher-FEM'). Our results 1) underscore corpus selection as a key means to confront stereotyped language, but 2) show considerable differences between the individual languages, and *last but not least*, 3) highlight the urgent need to develop and strengthen critical language awareness among lexicographers, computational linguists and developers of digital tools and raise critical awareness of how language use indexes structures of power.

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Language awareness as a part of language management using digital tools

The concept of language management (LM) is defined as *behavior towards language as it appears in discourse*. LM takes place in numerous everyday situations, as both individual speakers and institutions conduct metalinguistic activities of very different kinds (comments on other language users' expressions, stylistics, attitudes, spelling, evaluative remarks, corrections, sanctions of "wrong" forms, language cultivation etc.). However, LM can also be carried out by digital tools.

LM is theorized in the following key parts:

- 1) Agency/social actors: who behaves how to whose language-related activities?
- 2) Types of LM: simple management in interactions at the micro level, organized management carried out by institutions at the macro level, situations where micro and macro levels are interconnected
- 3) Management process: expectations of social actors → deviations from these expectations → noting the deviations → evaluation → adjustment designs → implementation
- 4) Levels of LM: sociocultural LM → communicative LM → LM in the narrow sense (management of language structures)

The whole process of LM – as someone's, or a machine's behavior towards language – is based on paying attention to various (linguistic) phenomena, or simply on someone's noting the deviations from his/her expectations. At the same time, the term *noting* should not be confused with *noticing* a deviation/phenomenon. *Noting* suggests a discursive activity, in which a metalinguistic utterance is generated and communicated to other participants, while *noticing* primarily denotes a psychological act of perception that does not necessarily lead to an utterance (however, noticing the deviations from the expectations can be indirectly assessed by carefully designed psycho-/neurolinguistic experiments; see e.g. Hanulíková et al. 2012, or Hanulíková 2021). When noticed phenomena are not articulated outwardly, the interlocutors have no chance to find out what is happening in the speaker's consciousness, what exactly the speaker is paying (or has paid) attention to, etc. (for more details see Marriott and Nekvapil 2012).

As such processes regarding metalinguistic awareness can also be activated by digital tools, the presentation will illustrate some phenomena that represent various forms of LM as carried out by digital tools. Traditional digital tools, contributing to language standardization, are spellcheckers and grammar checkers. Spellcheckers and grammar checkers may be viewed as LM tools that go through all phases of the management process except implementation. Unlike human oversight, these programs do not "overlook" deviations. Hence, variants are noted (identified), evaluated, and – once this evaluation is negative (based on the grammar checkers' setting) – adjustments are designed by these tools. If the adjustments comply with the users' expectations, they can be easily implemented in the final step.

In which sense do such digital tools indicate peculiar patterns of LM? What is the background against which they identify variants as deviations from the norm? The analysis tries to find out to what extent it is possible to argue that large amounts of data form the basis of facticity, which may bring about specific normative effects. The question of agency and specific patterns of LM processes in which digital tools are involved will be analyzed in relation to LMT (Kimura & Fairbrother 2020, Dovalil 2022).

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Rute Costa

(NOVA University Lisbon)

Carolina Flinz

(University of Milan – online)

LSP-data in circular economy: Representation in lexicography and terminology. Reflections for developing language awareness

The circular economy refers to an economic model that focuses on minimising waste and maximising the efficient use of resources. It promotes the principles of reducing, reusing, and recycling at every stage of a product's life cycle (OECD, 2024). This model introduces a new way of thinking that influences both specialised and everyday discourse, bringing with it new terms and linguistic expressions.

In our presentation, we will focus on German vocabulary, both specialised and non-specialised, related to the circular economy. We investigate how it is represented in lexicographic and terminological resources and explore how such representations can contribute to developing language awareness, particularly in the context of German as a foreign language. Special attention will be given to terms and expressions related to “recycling” and “reusing,” as the distinction between them is often fluid and context-dependent. This ambiguity influences how these concepts are described and represented in lexicographic and terminological resources (DeCesaris, J., & Lorente, M., 2024)

Using examples from lexicographic resources, specialised corpora, and terminology databases in German, we will identify the semantic fields associated with “recycling” (*Recycling*) and “reusing” (*Wiederverwendung*), as well as the complex expressions and collocations in which these terms serve as key elements (L'Homme, 2009; Ramos et al 2020). In doing so, we will also address the challenges of capturing the dynamic and context-dependent nature of circular economy terminology within dictionaries and terminological tools. By mapping the conceptual and discursive variability of LSP (Flinz, 2023) we argue for lexicographic and terminological models that are not only corpus-driven and cognitively informed, but also pedagogically oriented. In particular, we highlight how such models can support metalinguistic reflection and facilitate the acquisition of specialised vocabulary in German as a foreign language. The paper underscores the importance of language awareness as a key competence for engaging with emerging domains, enabling learners and users to navigate the interplay between lexical choices, knowledge construction, and communicative intent.

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Constanze Weth

(University of Luxembourg) | Keynote speaker

Awareness of visible inflectional morphology fosters spelling of multilingual learners: German and French

A growing number of grammar teaching methods aim to strengthen students' metalinguistic awareness (Watson et al., 2021). Several studies in different languages have shown that training in visible morphological structures has a positive effect on spelling. In German and French, this has been shown for both lexical stems and inflectional morphology (Bangel & Müller, 2018; Bîlici et al., 2018; Brucher et al., 2020; Pacton et al., 2012).

This paper provides insights into the spelling performance in the area of inflectional morphology in German and French of 4th grade students (n=171) who learn to read and write in both languages. It presents a training study aimed at raising students' awareness of the noun phrase as an inflected unit, using those visible inflectional morphemes that are most salient and stable in both writing systems: Plural spelling in French and noun capitalisation in German (Weth et al., 2024).

The paper first presents the training materials used in the study to promote awareness of inflectional morphology, then the results of the intervention study, namely the effects of the GLMM analysis representing the students' spelling performances across the four test points in both languages for the training and control groups. Finally, the students' spelling performance is presented as a cluster analysis to show how spelling in the stronger language might influence learning in the weaker language. The results obtained with both methods and for both languages have implications for the concept of visible inflectional morphology across languages and for the teaching of both languages.

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Véronique Lemoine-Bresson

(Université de Lorraine, CNRS, ATILF)

When monolingualism collapses: The effects of Language Awareness on teachers' beliefs and practices in a collaborative research

Many teachers working in bi/plurilingual classroom contexts advocate for a strict separation of languages within both the classroom and school environment. They consider this approach, called 'the two solitudes' (Cummins, 2007) to be an optimal model for second language acquisition. These teachers demonstrate resistance to establishing connections between the dominant language (e.g., French), the target language (e.g., English), and students' home languages (e.g., Arabic, Romanian, Creole, Portuguese, Turkish). Their pedagogical approach assumes that the most effective way of fostering competence in the less-used target language is to adopt a monolingual approach in the classroom, where only one school language is used at any one time. When you look at the posters in classrooms, you often see orders such as 'Only English' or 'no French'. Consequently, such choices may limit opportunities for translanguaging – both between the languages of schooling and between these languages and students' home linguistic repertoires – thus restricting the potential benefits for learning and cognitive development.

This contribution presents a study as part of a collaborative research project between researchers and a group of teachers working in a primary school in Nancy in France (Mary et al., 2023). In this school supporting a policy of strict separation of languages in the classroom was initially the case. School subjects such as maths, science, literature and art are taught in English. A large majority of the teachers were trained for a year or two in Utah in the United States, using the Dual System model. Since the program started in 2011, the one teacher/one language model has been followed and approximately half the day is spent in each language French and English. The team of 4 researchers from 2 different universities in France (University of Lorraine and University of Strasbourg) and 11 teachers engaged in a collaborative research of alternative pedagogical approaches that take care of the language diversity of the school. This process involved critical engagement with the scientific literature by reading and discussing articles and analysis of examples of classroom practice.

This study examines teachers' discourses on the roles and functions of the dominant language (French), the target language (English) and students' home languages. Data were collected between 2019 and 2021 through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, stimulated video recall sessions (Fox-Turnbull, 2009) and focus groups to identify identities' dynamic in discourses (Lemoine-Bresson, 2020).

The results indicate a change in teachers' linguistic awareness, particularly with regard to the possibilities of combining the two school languages in teaching, or when using students' L1 as a teaching and learning resource, as well as an increased interest in exploring innovative teaching strategies that incorporate the full repertoire of students' languages (Juvonen & Källqvist, 2021). Some teachers have initiated long term classroom projects that include both languages, indicating a growing openness to moving away from monolingualism. However, the study also highlighted the difficulties associated with adopting more translanguaging pedagogies (Fortune & Tedick, 2019 ; Cenoz & Gorter, 2021), underlining the need for long-term professional development support.

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*Plurilingual education in German and Spanish programmes in higher education:
Conceptualization, language awareness and student/teacher perspectives*

In educational research, plurilingual education and pluralistic approaches to languages (Candelier et al., 2010) have been subject to growing interest in a European context. Research on foreign language pedagogy in, for instance, German-speaking countries has supported the teaching of Romance foreign languages using a pluralistic approach for at least three decades. Despite the extensive research conducted on this subject and the publication of plurilingual course materials and textbooks (Holzinger et al. 2012), both questionnaire surveys of teachers (Heyder/Schädlich 2015) and textbook analyses (Schöpp 2015) have shown that pluralistic approaches have not yet become established in foreign language teaching in these countries. However, the survey results indicate that teachers' attitudes towards plurilingualism are, in general, positive. Research conducted in other contexts, including Denmark, has also shown that plurilingual education is not well embedded in national curricula and educational practice (Daryai-Hansen et al., 2015; Drachmann et al., 2023). Studies in the Danish and Norwegian contexts likewise report a discrepancy between teachers' monolingual practices and their generally positive beliefs about plurilingualism (Haukås, 2016).

The present joint paper will direct its focus towards two projects that have previously been coordinated and in which plurilingual education has been implemented in foreign language programmes in higher education:

The first project was conducted within a German programme at Roskilde University (RUC), Denmark. Since 2012, RUC has offered supplementary curriculum-related courses in French and German to all students enrolled in the bachelor's programmes in the humanities and social sciences (Bojsen et al., 2023). The so-called Language Profiles are represented as 'plurilingual internationalization' (Daryai-Hansen/Kirilova, 2019), with the aim of promoting foreign languages other than English, drawing on translanguaging to reflect real language use in multilingual settings, thereby strengthening students' plurilingual competences. Students are 'explicitly asked to use *translanguaging* (García, 2009) in order to enhance their *linguaging* (Jørgensen, 2010); in other words, they are invited to use translanguaging strategies in order to achieve interactional and social aims' (Daryai-Hansen et al., 2016, 30; Daryai-Hansen et al., 2023). A data set was collated for the German programme, with the objective of investigating the practices and attitudes of students and teachers towards this approach.

The second project is the MeZiKo project (Mehrsprachigkeit und Zielsprachliche Kompetenz), located in the Spanish programme at the University of Mannheim, Germany (Eibenstein et al., in press; Kropp/Müller-Lancé, in press). In order to convince teachers to adopt a pluralistic approach, it seems crucial to provide empirical evidence that such approaches have a positive effect on target language competence. However, a paucity of research has yet been able to provide empirical evidence to support such claims (Eibenstein/Müller-Lancé 2020; Heyder/Schädlich 2015). The MeZiKo project aimed to fill this research gap: Utilising a quasi-experimental research design with pre- and post-tests, the study investigated the effects of a plurilingual intervention on the development of target language competence in L3/Lx Spanish in higher education. A particular emphasis was placed on the responses of heritage language speakers to plurilingual approaches, given the existence of previous research that suggests specific characteristics for this group of learners.

The purpose of the paper is twofold: firstly, to present the two projects by investigating how the German Language Profiles at Roskilde University and the MeZiKo project at the University of Mannheim, respectively, position themselves in the field of

plurilingual education and what contribution they have made to the field; and secondly, to explore the implications that the two projects have had for students' and teachers' metalinguistic, practical and critical language awareness (van Lier, 2004; Daryai-Hansen et al., 2024). The analysis regarding the German Language Profiles is based on three datasets: the audio record of students' and teachers' translanguaging practices, student questionnaires and semistructured qualitative interviews with teachers. For the MeZiKo project, the data consists of the results of target language reception and production tests as well as questionnaires considering learning experiences and socio-economic status.

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Language awareness and communicative ability through exposure:

Data-driven approaches with corpora and GenAI

Learning an additional language is traditionally seen to lie along one of two paths. Input is rich in second-language environments where the language is used every day (e.g. learning French in France); massive exposure is essential but may not be sufficient without help in noticing. In foreign-language contexts (e.g. learning French in Germany), classroom instruction has long been the main tool available. And while formal instruction certainly makes a difference (Norris & Ortega, 2000), it lacks frequent exposure with the language essential to support it (e.g. Tomasello, 2005). Today of course, technology offers ways to combine both, with informal learning (via videos, reading material and interactive spoken and written exchanges) and non-formal learning (with online courses, websites and apps). Learners today are in a position to benefit from both in ways that are radically different from that of their peers 30 years ago, though inevitably not all of them engage in such practices. Research is interested in how learners can draw full advantage from such input by raising their awareness of language and the possibilities for exploring it (Dressman & Sadler, 2019).

With the development of corpus linguistics over 40 years ago, some teachers started using corpus tools and techniques for pedagogical purposes in what came to be known as data-driven learning (DDL; Johns, 1990). Learners or their teachers could use concordancers or other software to explore authentic language from a corpus or other collection of their own choosing – even a single novel or *ad hoc* collection, potentially from any language. The advantage here lies in sorting the data to make chosen language points salient and thus more amenable to noticing. In those days of course, very few people had access to anything like the technology we have today: Google can now be used as a surrogate concordancer, with its databases a substitute corpus (Pérez-Paredes & Boulton, 2025). Another more recent possibility has opened up with the appearance of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) which relies on large language models (LLMs), derived partly from corpus linguistics (Crosthwaite & Baisa, 2023). Again, a GenAI chatbot such as ChatGPT is not a concordancer and an LLM is not a corpus, but there are a number of parallels and the principles can be similar, allowing learners to interact with the language in different ways (Lin, 2023).

This presentation first examines DDL and the research to date via meta-analyses (e.g. Boulton & Cobb, 2017) and other syntheses (e.g. Boulton & Vyatkin, 2021, 2024). This allows us to identify a certain number of difficulties, obstacles or barriers to its implementation (Sun & Mizumoto, 2025). We then move on to GenAI to see if and where this might fill in some of the blanks. However, teachers and others have been quick to pounce upon the problems with chatbots too. In conclusion, the proposal is not to kill off DDL by replacing it with GenAI (though this may happen), nor to castigate GenAI to preserve DDL. Rather, each has its own strengths (and weaknesses), and it is by playing to these that we may find ways to integrate both into effective language learning and teaching (Crosthwaite & Boulton, in press). This indeed is the topic of DC14 (Vetter & Boulton) in the forthcoming EuLawa project.

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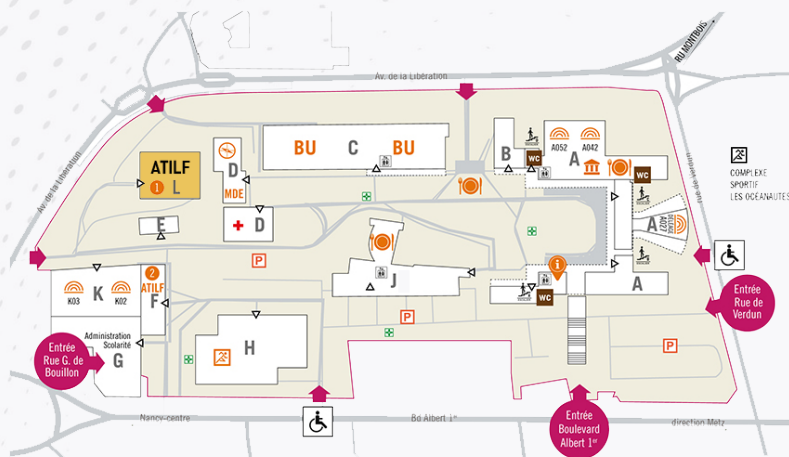
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