

Social Encounters with Artificial Others

Linguistic, Emotional, and Cognitive Relationality in Contemporary Human–AI Interaction

Workshop 16.–17. April 2026

Organisation: University of Zurich, Switzerland

Venue: ETH Zurich, Switzerland

Address: Rämistrasse 101, 8006 Zürich

Rooms: ETH Main Building (HG E22, HG E41, HG F33.1, HG F33.5)

Conference Office: ETH Main Building (HG F33.3)

Website: https://www.ds.uzh.ch/de/tagungen/social_encounters_with_artificial_others

Emergency Contact: Mathilda Hevler (+41 76 549 19 71)

Conference Theme

Over the past years, interactions between humans and artificial interlocutors have increasingly become part of everyday life. AIs such as ChatGPT, Woebot, and Replika are perceived not merely as tools, but as helpers, confidants, or even romantic partners. These encounters compel us to rethink the linguistic, social, and epistemic foundations of concepts such as "(social) interaction," and furthermore to reconsider the boundaries of subjectivity and identity.

This interdisciplinary workshop explores how language functions as a medium through which humans and machines establish, negotiate, and sustain relationships. It seeks to address how identity, intimacy, and social and emotional connection are linguistically and discursively constructed in dialogues with artificial entities – and how such exchanges transform broader understandings of being human in the age of personable AI. The workshop aims to provide a space for discussion, exchange, and collaboration across disciplinary boundaries, with a focus on understanding the linguistic and psychological mechanisms that shape human engagement with artificial interlocutors.

Programme: Thursday, 16. April 2026

MORNING

9:00 – 10:00	Registration: HG F33.3 (<i>Conference Office</i>)
10:00 – 11:00	Coffee break (<i>PolySnack</i>)
11:00 – 12:00	Conference Opening Keynote: Prof. Dr. Miriam Lind (HG E22) <i>Artificial relationality? Of algorithmic friends, lovers, and families</i>

PARALLEL SESSIONS · 12:00 – 13:00

Section I · HG F33.1

12:00 – 12:30

Jeanette Landgrebe

"ADDICTED TO VIRTUAL LOVE": A social-interactional perspective on the forming of emotional bonds and attachment with AIs

12:30 – 13:00

Karsten Senkbeil et al.

Between Anthropomorphism and Technicity: Studies on Interactions with an Embodied AI in Virtual Reality

Section II · HG E22

12:00 – 12:30

Julia Marija Sugawara

Constructing AI as Social Actor: Agency Framing in Japanese Workplace Discourse

12:30 – 13:00

Adrian Rudershausen & Benjamin Buck

Designing for Adoption: How Social Cues Shape the Success of Human-AI Collaboration in Organisations

13:00 – 14:30

Lunch break (*PolySnack*)

Programme: Thursday, 16. April 2026

AFTERNOON

Section I · HG F33.1

14:30 – 15:00

Oliver Spiess

Interactional relevance at the heart of participancy: Evidence from a comparison of human- and LLM-generated utterances in argumentative context

15:00 – 15:30

Daniel Knuchel & Luca Kaltenbach

Humanizing Artificial Others: Relational Positioning and Metapragmatic Awareness in Student Writing with AI

15:30 – 16:00

Nicole Katzir & Natalia Levshina

Signaling Confidence: Comparing Stance in Human and LLM outputs

16:00 – 16:30

Florina Züllli

"I Can Imagine How Difficult That Must Be for You..." Linguistic Constructions of Empathy and Human Identity in Psychotherapeutic Dialogue with Large Language Models

Section II · HG F33.5

14:30 – 15:00

Madlen Glass & Michael Bigos

Between Empowerment and Alienation: Narrative Encounters of Students with Migration Backgrounds with Generative AI – A Media-Anthropological Study

15:00 – 15:30

Alexandra Gubina

The Emergence of Social Relations in Learner-AI Interaction: A Conversation Analytic Perspective

15:30 – 16:00

Marjut Johansson & Hilla-Marja Honkalammi

Speaking with an embodied social robot: A job interview simulation in a foreign language interaction task

16:00 – 16:30

Monowar Hossain

Negotiating Face with Artificial Others: Pragmatic Co-construction in Multilingual Human-AI Encounters

16:30

Reception Apéro (Uhrenhalle, ETH Main Building Floor F)

20:00

Conference Dinner (Dozentenfoyer, ETH Main Building)

Programme: Friday, 17. April 2026

MORNING

Section I · HG F33.1

9:30 – 10:00

Thomas Messerli

Praised by ChatGPT: Compliments and relational work in Human-Chatbot interaction

10:00 – 10:30

Angeliki Alvanoudi

Indexing stance in 'initiating actions' in human-AI interaction

10:30 – 11:00

Coffee break (*PolySnack*)

11:00 – 13:00

Workshop «Human-Machine Teamwork: AI Assistants for Effective Use in Organizations»

Room: HG E41

Speaker: Adrian Rudershausen | Benjamin Buck (English)

13:00 – 14:30

Lunch break (*PolySnack*)

Programme: Friday, 17. April 2026

AFTERNOON

Section I · HG F33.1

14:30 – 15:00

Sasha Coelho et al.

*How Expressive are We when Communicating with Robots?
Expressive Speech Acts and Emotions in Human-Robot vs.
Human-Human Interaction*

15:00 – 15:30

Simone Dinse de Salas

*Crafting Artificial Others: Adolescent Chatbot Design and
Reflexive Negotiations of Personhood in Human-AI
Interaction*

Section II · HG F33.5

14:30 – 15:00

Erik Lagerstedt & Christina Howes

The Butler Effect

15:00 – 15:30

Thomas Zurfluh

Polite Fictions: Sociality in Socratic Voice-AI Dialogues

15:30 – 16:00

Coffee break (*PolySnack*)

16:30

Guided city tour of Zurich (German or English)
Meeting point: In front of HG E41

Workshop: Human-Machine Teamwork: AI Assistants for Effective Use in Organizations

FRIDAY, 17. APRIL 2026 · 11:00 – 13:00 · HG E41



This workshop explores the possibilities and challenges of designing AI systems that can convincingly emulate human roles, personalities, and behaviors and, equipped with specific knowledge and skills, participate productively in work processes.

At its core, the workshop addresses two central questions: How can human behavior patterns, personalities, and decision-making capacities be modeled in such a way that AI systems not only understand them but also integrate them meaningfully and effectively into everyday professional contexts? What new opportunities for hybrid forms of collaboration arise from this? How does work change when AI ceases to be merely a tool and becomes an active participant, a "team member"? We will explore the conceptual space between humans and machines: Which notions, structures, and semantic frameworks enable collaboration between AI and human teams? Which shared concepts, vocabulary, and codes already exist, and where does the cultural terra incognita begin that still awaits exploration?

Workshop: Human-Machine Teamwork: AI Assistants for Effective Use in Organizations

FRIDAY, 17. APRIL 2026 · 11:00 – 13:00 · HG E41

The workshop combines psychological and sociocultural approaches such as the Big Five, Sinus Milieus, and narrative role profiles with persona engineering, AI architecture, and prompt design. It demonstrates how AI assistants can be designed and integrated into work processes through the interaction of these components, for instance as target group personas, knowledge mediators, or learning companions.

Finally, we will put two distinct types of AI to the test: Do they convincingly embody what they claim to represent? Do they fulfill their respective tasks? Are they useful? And perhaps most importantly, do we want to work with them?

Big Five & Sinus Milieus

Psychological and
sociocultural profiling
approaches

Persona Engineering

AI architecture and
prompt design

Hybrid Collaboration

AI as active team
member in work
processes

Live Testing

Two distinct AI types
evaluated in real time



Practical Information



Dates

16.–17. April 2026



Organisation

University of Zurich, Switzerland



Venue

ETH Zurich, Switzerland
Rämistrasse 101, 8006 Zürich



Rooms

HG E22, HG E41, HG F33.1, HG F33.5
Conference Office: HG F33.3

Social Programme & Cultural Events

Thursday, 16 April · 16:30

Reception Apéro
Uhrenhalle, ETH Main Building Floor F

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Friday, 17 April · 16:30

Guided City Tour of Zurich
German or English
Meeting point: In front of HG E41

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