Workshop descriptions

SLE 2010

(The lists of speakers will be added later. See the programme schedule for the moment)

1. **Bound morphology in common: copy or cognate?**

Convenors: Martine Robbeets (K.U.Leuven & Mainz University) & Lars Johanson (Zürich University & Mainz University)

Recent decades show an increase in contact studies, while genealogical studies seem to lose in interest. However, contact linguistics and genealogical linguistics are no antonyms: they complement each other. Shared properties between languages may have arisen independently in each of them by chance or nature, they may be copied or diffused between them, or they may have arisen only once, when the languages were one and the same. Whereas chance explanations can be ruled out by regularity and paradigmaticity and violations of the arbitrary relationship between sound and meaning can often be unmasked at face value, it is much more difficult to distinguish between copies and cognates. A major obstacle for the establishment of language families and the reconstruction of proto-languages is the fact that copies are often mistaken for cognates.

Going beyond the concept of basic vocabulary on which lists of copy-proof meanings, such as the Swadesh list or the Leipzig list, are based, we would like to organize a panel on the stability and copiability of bound morphology. As a result of the marked difference in the ease of linguistic borrowing between grammar and lexicon and between bound and free morphemes, bound morphology is held to be one of the most fruitful parts of language structure when it comes to the distinction between copies and cognates. The goal of the workshop is to discuss a hierarchy of morphological copiability and to work out criteria to distinguish between cognates and copies in bound morphology. The approach is empirical. We welcome comparisons of borrowed and inherited morphology in a particular group of languages that display contact in their family as well as typological contributions that compare borrowing patterns with genealogical patterns in a cross-linguistic sample of languages.

Specific issues to be addressed include, among others:

- Are there any constraints on morphological borrowing?
- Is it possible to copy processes of grammaticalization?
- Is agglutinative morphology more copiable than fusional morphology?
- Is derivational morphology more copiable than inflectional morphology?
- Is nominal morphology more copiable than verbal morphology? Is there an inequality for different parts of speech when it comes to morphological borrowing?
- Is there an inequality for different verbal categories when it comes to morphological borrowing?
- Are there universal tendencies that allow predictions about the stability of structural features in morpho-syntax?
- Is shared paradigmatic morphology a *conditio-sine-qua-non* for genealogical relationship?
- Is it possible to establish linguistic relationship on the basis of shared morphology alone?
- Should phonological comparison always precede morphological evidence in matters of genealogical relationship?
- Is it possible to find tendencies or to set up criteria to distinguish between cognates and copies in bound morphology?
2. Subject and transitivity in Indo-European and beyond: A diachronic typological perspective

Convenors: Leonid Kulikov (Leiden University) & Ilya Seržant (University of Bergen)

The recent decades are marked with a considerable progress in the study of grammatical relations (subject, object) and their relationships with transitivity (see, among others, Hopper & Thompson 1980; Kittilä 2002; Næss 2007). Impressive results are achieved both in the study of the notion of prototypical transitive and intransitive clauses, with canonical subject and object marking (see, in particular, Aikhenvald et al. 2001; Bhaskararao & Subbarao 2004), and in the research of intermediary, ‘quasi-transitive’ (‘quasi-intransitive’) types, often correlating with non-canonical encoding of the core relations (non-nominate subjects etc.). Meticulous research of subject properties has discovered an amazing variety of criteria of subjecthood that can be used as a powerful tool for detecting (non-canonical) subjects and, virtually, to arrive at a more adequate definition of subject.

Indo-European languages are particularly notorious for their diversity of non-canonical subject marking, ranking from nominative (standard), to dative, genitive, accusative etc., as in Icelandic (1) (see, among others, Barddal 2001), Lithuanian (2a), Polish (Holvoet 1991), or Bengali (Onishi 2001):

(1) Icelandic

Mér likar þessi tilgáta
'I like this hypothesis.'

(2) Lithuanian

a. Man nuo lietaus sušalo rankos
‘My hands became frozen because of rain.’

b. (Kol ėjau į universitetą,) sušalau rankas,
(While I was going to university) freeze:PAST:1SG hand:ACC.PL
(nes visą kelią spaudžiau sniegą rankose.)
(because all the way I pressed snow in the hands)
‘While I was going to the university, I froze up my hands, because all the way I pressed snow in the hands.’

While the synchronic study of subject and transitivity in Indo-European languages (and beyond) has furnished detailed descriptions of syntactic patterns, inventories of features and types and valuable cross-linguistic observations, little attention was paid to the diachronic aspects of the phenomena in question. We cannot yet explain why and how the non-canonical subject marking emerges and disappears, how does it correlate with changes in the system of transitivity types. Correlations between different transitivity types and the status of the syntactic arguments (in particular, their subject/object properties) can be illustrated with the Lithuanian example in (2b). In contrast with (2a), it instantiates a higher degree of control of the subject over the situation, and the canonical subject marking is in correlation with the whole construction becoming more transitive as compared to (2a) (Seržant, forthc.):

Another issue relevant for a diachronic typological study of subject and transitivity is the evolution of alignment systems. The developments in the system of subject-marking and expansion of non-canonical subjects, typically accompanied by rearrangements of transitivity types, may open the way to dramatic changes in the type of alignment – for instance, from nominative-accusative to ergative-absolutive (as in Indo-Iranian), or from ergative-absolutive to nominative-accusative (as it was, presumably, the case in Proto-Indo-European, according to some hypotheses; cf. Bauer 2001 and Bavant 2008, among others). The relationships between these syntactic
phenomenon are not yet sufficiently studied. In particular, our knowledge of the subject and transitivity features of the Indo-European proto-language is still quite limited (see Barðdal & Eythórsson 2009).

Indo-European languages, with their well-documented history and long tradition of historical and comparative research, offer a particularly rich opportunity for a diachronic typological study of the above-listed issues (see Barddal 2001 on Icelandic). One of the first research projects concentrating on the diachronic aspects of these phenomena started in 2008 in Bergen, under the general guidance of J. Barddal (see http://ling.uib.no/IECASTP).

The idea of our workshop is to bring together scholars interested in comparative research on subject and transitivity in Indo-European and to open up new horizons in the study of these phenomena, paying special attention to its diachronic aspects. While the workshop concentrates mainly on evidence from Indo-European, papers on non-Indo-European languages which could be relevant for a diachronic typological study of the issues in question will also be welcome.

The issues to be addressed include, among others:

• theoretical and descriptive aspects of a study of subject and transitivity:
  - criteria for subjecthood and subject properties in Indo-European
  - features of transitivity and transitivity types in Indo-European; how to define transitivity in constructions with non-canonical subjects and/or objects?
  - mechanisms of the rise or disappearance of non-canonical subject-marking
  - evolution of transitivity and changes in the inventory of transitivity types in the history of Indo-European
  - relationships between subject marking and transitivity types: evolution of subject-marking with different semantic classes of verbs
  - the main evolutionary types (from the point of view of subject marking and transitivity types) attested for Indo-European
  - subject and changes in the type of alignment: the emergence of ergativity out of constructions with non-canonical subject
  - voice, valency-changing categories and subject marking: their relationships in a diachronic perspective

References


3. Theory and Data in Cognitive Linguistics

Convenors: Nikolas Gisborne (University of Edinburgh) & Willem Hollmann (Lancaster University)

Cognitive linguistics has an honourable tradition of paying respect to naturally occurring language data, as is witnessed by the workshop series ‘Empirical Methods in Cognitive Linguistics’, a regular biennial occurrence since its first instalment in 2003 at Cornell University (see also Gonzalez-Marquez et al. 2006). There have been fruitful interactions between corpus data and aspects of linguistic structure and meaning, see e.g. Gries & Stefanowitsch (2006) for applications in construction grammar; Cuyckens et al. (2003) for uses in lexical semantics; Bybee (2001) for a usage-based approach to phonology. More recently, dialect data and sociolinguistic data collection methods/theoretical concepts have started to generate interest, see e.g. Hollmann & Siewierska (2006, 2007). In addition to this, there has also been an increase in several kinds of experimental work (e.g. Bergen et al. 2007, Dąbrowska 2008), as well as in attempts to combine evidence from various sources, e.g. Gries et al. (2005).

However, not all linguistic data is simply naturally occurring or derived from experiments with statistically robust samples of speakers. Other traditions, especially the generative tradition, have fruitfully used introspection and questions about the grammaticality of different strings to uncover patterns which might otherwise have gone unnoticed: the difference between ‘control’ and ‘raising’ patterns (Rosenbaum 1967), the distributional constraints on reflexive pronouns (Reinhart 1983), the existence of island constraints (Ross 1967), and that-trace effects (e.g. Chomsky & Lasnik 1977) all come to mind. Some of these data sets have benefited from a response from within the cognitive tradition: Van Hoek (1997) wrote on anaphora, and island constraints were discussed by Deane (1991), who attempted to locate the constraints in a view of language that was consistently embedded within a larger theory of human cognition. Barðdal’s work (e.g. 2008) offers a cognitive perspective on ‘quirky’ case marking, another topic that has received extensive discussion in the generative literature. Polarity, another traditionally popular topic in logic-based approached to language structure and meaning, has received a cognitive linguistic treatment in the work of Israel (e.g. 2004). Moreover, some data which have been discussed within the generative tradition have been subject to challenges as to their reliability status from cognitive linguists, as in e.g. Dąbrowska’s (1997) study on WH-clauses. We might call the data sets analysed in these studies ‘theoretically uncovered’ data, i.e. facts about language that linguists have discovered as a result of their wearing particular ‘theoretical goggles’.

There is also a diachronic tradition which has to pay attention to real language data (because it could not otherwise describe phenomena) but where the degree to which data are (necessarily) idealized is contingent on whether language change is viewed as sudden and abrupt (e.g. Lightfoot 1979) or gradual and incremental (Croft 2000, Hopper & Traugott 2003). The gradualist tradition is in line with cognitive assumptions about the organization of lexical and grammatical categories, and although it’s usually not explicit, most (functionalist) work in grammaticalization is consistent with many of the research results of the cognitive tradition. (There is now an emerging body of work in diachronic construction grammar (Israel 1996, Traugott 2003, Trousdale 2008, Patten 2010) which addresses just this issue.) However, although there is work where the grammaticalization tradition has examined the same data sets as generative linguists, such as the emergence of the English modals, there are areas where the two research paradigms have not converged. For instance, generative grammarians are more apt to explore changes in word order or negation (see e.g. Van Kemenade 1999, Pintzuk 1999, Koopman 2005) than cognitive linguists.

Linguistic typology has not received as much attention from cognitive linguists as one would perhaps expect, given that crosslinguistic facts may give clues as to cognitive structure (see e.g. Croft 1998). But again we see that the response to the data is different here than in generative grammar. Generative work (e.g. Baker 2009) is generally motivated by a search for Universal Grammar and tends to be based on relatively small language samples. Cognitive work on linguistic typology, by contrast, continues the legacy of the Greenbergian approach by using relatively large language samples, and in arguing that what is universal does not lie in language structure as such, but in speakers’ conceptual spaces and in the constraints on the mappings between functions and structures (see e.g. Croft 2001, Cristofaro 2003).

Summing up the observations made thus far, we can see that the divide between generative and cognitive approaches to language is intimately connected to the kinds of data drawn on, and the way in which generalisations are derived from these data. The divide is wide, but we note that there are attempts to bridge it, to some extent on the cognitive side (Croft 1999), but more clearly by generative linguists (e.g. Culicover & Jackendoff 2005). There are other cognitive approaches to data which have been tackled within the generative tradition; for example, Hudson (2003) is an exploration of gerunds, within a cognitive theory of linguistic categories and Gisborne (2010) includes a discussion of the perception verb complements which were a motivation for situation semantics and event semantics. We would like to suggest that in order to add to growing
perception of cognitive linguistics as an (at least) viable alternative paradigm even to colleagues raised and working within formalist traditions, the onus is on us to provide coherent and empirically sound accounts of the kinds of theoretically uncovered data referred to above. The great advantage of our treatment then obviously lies in the compatibility with findings in cognitive psychology. In addition, we believe that just as is the case in some recent work in generative grammar, we must critically evaluate our growing set of theoretical constructs and assumptions. Some of these may not make clear contributions to our understanding of language (see e.g. Broccias & Hollmann 2007). Importantly, this may lead to resistance in linguists, cognitive and generative alike, and thus hamper the development of the field.

Against this background, the specific questions we would like to address are given below. Against each question we also indicate some of the workshop participants who will address this question, either implicitly or explicitly. In our introductory talk to the workshop we will elaborate on these connections, anticipating the general discussion to be held at the end of the event.

1. Can cognitive linguistics uncover generalisations not so easily uncovered in other approaches? (e.g. Barðdal, Gisborne, Patten, Trousdale)
2. Are there theoretically uncovered data that other linguists haven’t thought about at all? (e.g. Broccias, Dąbrowska)
3. Are there theoretically uncovered data which cognitive approaches cannot say very much about? (e.g. Broccias)
4. What is the reliability status of theoretically uncovered data and generalisations? (e.g. Dąbrowska, Hollmann)
5. Are there assumptions in cognitive theories which do not have obvious benefits in the analysis of linguistic data? (e.g. Broccias, Cristofaro, Hollmann)

References


4. Future Tense(s) / Future Time(s)

Convenors: Philippe De Brabanter (Université Paris 4-Sorbonne - Institut Jean Nicod), Mikhail Kissine (FNRS, Université Libre de Bruxelles) & Saghie Sharifzadeh (Université Paris 4-Sorbonne)

Among tenses and linguistic expressions that anchor events and situations in time, those that refer to the future occupy a special place. The most obvious reason is the ‘open’ or ‘indeterminate’ character of the future: at least from our present point of view, the future course of events is not fixed while there is arguably only one past. This problem has exercised the minds of all those who have attempted to provide a semantic account of future temporal reference. Not surprisingly, this has led numerous linguists to argue that (at least certain) linguistic markers of futurity belong to the categories of modality or evidentiality or aspect rather than to the tense system proper. Interestingly such judgments are sometimes extended beyond periphrastic expressions of futurity (e.g. modal auxiliary + infinitive in Germanic languages) to non-periphrastic future tenses, those that constitute a separate morphological paradigm. On those accounts, future time reference is only inferred or derived indirectly.

In this workshop we invite our participants to tackle one of the following issues:
- what are the relations between future tenses (or other expressions usually assumed to indicate futurity) and grammatical/semantic categories such as modality, evidentiality, or aspect?
- under what conditions do expressions of futurity (as traditionally understood) locate eventualities in the present or the past? Can this happen independently of the expression of a modal, evidential or aspectual value?
- how do ‘less well-known’ languages represent futurity? Do they do so by means of a future tense proper or by enlisting markers of aspect, modality or evidentiality?
- what other verbal forms can be used to locate an eventuality in the future? What is the modal/evidential/aspectual supplement (if any) that is contributed by such uses?
- How do languages express proximity vs. remoteness in the future?
In our selection of papers, we have sought to represent several ‘ways of doing linguistics’, with the hope that fruitful exchanges can take place across languages— Indo-European: Romance, Germanic and Slavic; Inuit; Native American; Hebrew; others still — and across methodological and theoretical barriers. The future-related topics in those languages are thus approached from radically different angles. Some of the papers are written in a Functionalist or a Cognitive-Linguistic vein; others appeal to various brands of Formal semantics; others still are more typological in essence; and finally some are written from a linguistic pragmatics perspective.

5. Baltic Languages in an Areal-Typological Perspective

Convenors: Peter Arkadiev (Institute of Slavic Studies, Moscow) & Jurgis Pakerys (University of Vilnius)

The languages of the Baltic area have been subject to areal-typological research for quite a long time, especially during the last several decades (cf. such contributions as Stolz 1991, Dahl & Koptjevskaja-Tamm (eds.) 2001, Wiemer 2002, 2004, Holvoet 2003, 2004, Nau 2006, Kehayov 2008). The current workshop aims at focusing specifically on the Baltic language group (Lithuanian, Latvian, Latgalian and their dialects), which has been up to now underrepresented in the general linguistic and typological discourse.

The main topics the workshop will cover include, but are not limited to, the following:

- contact-induced phenomena at different levels of language structure (phonology, morphosyntax, grammatical categories, semantics, and lexicon);
- the interplay between inherited and contact-induced features in the structure of Baltic languages;
- typological divergences between different Baltic varieties due to areal influences of other languages (Slavic, Germanic, Finnic);
- the role of the Baltic data for the more general issues of areal linguistics, language typology, and linguistic theory.

References:


6. Variation in clause combining: Views from the New World

Convenors: Pier Marco Bertinetto (Scuola Superiore, Pisa), Marianne Mithun (University of California, Santa Barbara) & Jeanette Sakel (University of Manchester)

It has long been recognized that the density of syntactic complexity is greater in written varieties of certain languages than in their spoken counterparts (Chafe 1985, Romaine 1992, Newmeyer 2002, Karlsson 2007,
Such differences are not surprising: writers have the luxury of time to construct elaborate complex sentences, and readers the leisure to unpack them, while speakers and listeners must perform on the fly. Furthermore, writers must communicate without the benefit of prosody, a key dimension of speech which can indicate much about the relationships between propositions. Writers are obligated to specify such relationships by other means, typically complex syntactic constructions. Some languages with uniquely oral traditions have been argued to lack syntactic complexity altogether, as seen in the recent flurry of discussion about Pirahã (Everett 2005, 2009, Nevins, Pesetsky, and Rodrigues 2009a,b, Sakel and Stapert in press). Many languages without longstanding written traditions have recently borrowed conjunctions, complementizers, and relativizers from the European languages of colonizers, languages with deeply entrenched literary practices. Spanish loans of this type, for example, are particularly prominent in indigenous languages of Mesoamerica and South America. We know that structures developed within literary genres can enter the speech of writers, perhaps first in more formal registers. From there they might be passed on to other languages without writing through bilinguals. The effects need not be restricted to lexical loans. As illustrated by Johanson (2002), Heine and Kuteva (2006), and others, contact can affect grammar through grammatical replication or copying of structures from one language to another, even with no transfer of substance. These observations raise questions about how and why languages might differ in their distribution of information over sentences, in particular, in the forms, functions, and density of dependent clause constructions.

In addition to the written/spoken channel, and exposure to languages with extensive literary traditions, certain typological features might correlate with differences in clause-combining strategies. There might, for example, be correlations between basic constituent order and the types of dependent clauses that develop and that can be processed easily enough by listeners to persevere. Certain patterns of syntactic complexity, such as clause chaining, might be handled more easily than others in spoken language. Many languages, particularly in the New World, can convey within a single word what can only be expressed in a multi-word sentence in most European languages. Does the difference in the distribution of information between morphology and syntax impact the distribution of information between simple and complex sentences? In a number of languages of the Americas (and beyond), formal dependency marking is used not only to mark syntactic dependency within the sentence, but also discourse dependency in larger stretches of speech (Mithun 2008). Such patterns raise interesting questions about the status of the sentence in languages without prescriptive norms for written texts.

The goal of this workshop is to investigate what various languages indigenous to the Americas, most without lengthy literary traditions and many with quite different grammatical structures from those of Europe, can tell us about variation in the functions and density of syntactic complexity, both across and within languages. Among the issues to be considered are the following.

* The status of the sentence: How clear is the notion of the sentence in the language in question, and does it correlate tightly with that of better-known languages?

* Interclausal relations: Is there a strong contrast between clause coordination and subordination? Are intermediate structures detectable?

* Order: Are all alternative orders possible between main and subordinate clauses, and if so, does order have syntactic, semantic, or pragmatic consequences?

* Inventories of dependent clauses: What kinds of dependent clauses exist in the language? What are their forms and functions? Do their uses and densities correspond to those of better-known languages? If formally dependent clauses are rare or nonexistent, what alternatives are there for indicating relationships among propositions?

* Prosody: How do prosodic patterns correlate with grammatical patterns of clause combining?

* Genre: Do patterns and densities of clause combining differ across genres or registers within the language? Ritual language, for example, can resemble literary languages in the fact that it is not typically created on the fly, but is the result of generations of polishing, and is familiar to both the speaker and the listeners. Formal oratory and traditional legends often show similar characteristics. Do such genres differ significantly in their complexity of clause combining from more informal speech, particularly conversation?

* Contact: Can any effects be discerned of contact with a language that does have a literary tradition (Spanish, Portuguese, French, English)? Is it possible to correlate these effects with degrees of bilingualism in the communities?

* Translations: How do the density and functions of dependent clauses in translations of works from European languages, such as the Bible, correlate with those in native speech?
*The impact of writing: If the indigenous language is written, how does the density and nature of syntactic complexity differ in written language from that of spoken language? How old is the written tradition, and how widespread is it? What proportion of writers are bilingual in another language with a lengthy written tradition?

References

7. Diphthongs – phonetic, phonological, historical, and typological perspectives
Convenors: Adrian Simpson (Universität Jena) & Klaus Geyer (Universität Erfurt)

Around one third of the world’s languages are assumed to have diphthongs as a part of their sound systems, but a sufficiently fine-grained means for analysis and description is still lacking – a fact, that could explain why the issue of diphthongs is often left aside in many language descriptions. Taking, on the other hand, a closer look at in principle very well described and documented languages such as Finnish with it’s rather extensive diphthong inventory or system, as provided by grammatical sketches and reference grammars, reveals surprisingly wide differences and even contradictions – although, at first glance, discerning, analysing, and describing diphthongs seems to be a simple task: Most often, the objects of “diphthongology” are defined as combinations of two vowels which occur within one syllable. But this is where the trouble starts: Is it vowels or rather vocoids that are the basic sound elements in diphthongs? What does two mean in this context? Furthermore, what types of diphthongs can be identified according to their features, e.g. opening vs. closing, rounding vs. de-rounding/spreading, rising vs. falling, crescendo vs. decrescendo? How do diphthongs and diphthong types vary cross-linguistically? Besides that, questions like the analysis of diphthongs within the non-linear syllable structure and their controversial status as mono- or biphonemic units could be addressed.

8. Situational and non-situational deixis
Convenors: Nicole Delbecque (K.U.Leuven) & M. Josep Cuenca (University of Valencia)

Deixis has a special status in language and language evolution. Cognitive linguistics, discourse analysis and contrastive analysis highlight its complexity as a linguistic process by which referents are introduced, actualized and maintained in discourse. Findings in linguistic typology, historical linguistics, language acquisition and developmental psychology, among other fields, support the idea that deixis in general and demonstratives in
particular constitute a basic class of linguistic items. They seem to be a universal category, have a key-role in children’s communication, and are source for many grammatical markers cross-linguistically. From a communicative point of view, demonstratives relate text and context in a number of complex ways which can exhibit subjective and intersubjective effects.

The first in-depth studies of deixis have shown that situational deixis or, in Bühler’s terms, *ad oculos*, is only one of the uses of deictic units. (A good overview of the various (non-situational) uses of demonstratives can be found in Himmelmann. 1996.) However, grammars usually restrict the description of demonstratives to this use, that is, they are characterized in terms of spatial proximity or distance. Yet, any corpus analysis highlights many uses which do not fit this perspective since nonsituational uses of demonstratives (e.g. text deixis, deixis am Phantasma, so-called ‘expletive’ uses, etc.) do not follow neither a unique nor a simple pattern which can be accounted for in terms of physical proximity or distance.

For instance, text-deictic referential processes transform the prototypical pointing function of demonstratives, allowing these linguistic units to refer to entities in the metaphorical spatial text domain. By using a demonstrative and by choosing a proximal or a distal form, the addressor can convey her current state, as for the adoption of a certain point of view or her emotional implication. She can also indicate that she considers an element as new to the reader, while outlining it as medium or high focus in discourse, that is, she can express «the degree of attention the hearer should pay to the referent» (Strauss, 2002: 135). In fact, differences in the use of demonstratives uncover dissimilarities in the distribution of deictics and purport various discourse and cognitive values. Thus the traditional description of demonstrative systems in absolute terms of two or three degrees within a spatiotemporal opposition (proximal vs. distal) fails to explain how demonstratives work in discourse as text-deictic devices and in other non-situational uses.

In this session several non-situational uses of demonstratives (determiners, pronouns or adverbs) will be addressed: text deictic uses, deictic elements in impersonal constructions, grammaticalization of modal and locative deictic elements, the relation between indicating and describing, the functionality of ternary vs. binary deictic systems. The main aim of the session is discussing a variety of non-situational uses and seeing to what extent they are conditioned by subjective and intersubjective values.

The analyses show that demonstratives as non-situational deictics often create an array of cognitive non-identificational effects. It also suggests that choosing one demonstrative expression or another often implies a shift in the deictic center or a different specification of the (inter)subjective perspective.

9. Multiple source constructions in language change

Convenors: Freek Van de Velde (University of Leuven / Research Foundation FWO), Lobke Ghesquière (University of Leuven / IAP) & Hendrik De Smet (University of Leuven / Research Foundation FWO)

In recent work on grammaticalization and language change in general, it has often been stressed that change does not affect individual lexemes, but entire constructions (see Bybee et al. 1994: 11; Croft 2000:62, 156, 163; Heine 2003: 575; Bybee 2003: 602-3, 2007; Traugott 2007). However, although most case studies on diachronic language change now recognize the importance of the source construction as a whole, they generally focus on just one such construction, drawing gradual, yet straight lines from one particular source construction to one specific syntagm. Using the metaphor proposed in Croft (2000: 32-37), constructions form diachronic lineages as they are replicated in usage, and change is typically conceived of as occurring within a lineage through altered replication. Recent studies, however, demonstrate that innovations in language change may derive not just from one, but from different sources at once. That is, change often seems to involve some interaction between lineages or between the branches of a lineage.

Multiplicity of source constructions can be witnessed on two levels. On the macro-level, the involvement of multiple source constructions entails a merger of clearly distinct lineages. One linguistic item or construction can then be traced back to two independent items or constructions, each with its own prior history. Several types of merger can be discerned, which are however not mutually exclusive:

- **Syntactic blends** (‘intraference’ in Croft 2000): the formal and functional features of different lineages are recombined into a new construction. For example, the Lunda passive has been argued to combine two source constructions, a left-dislocated object construction and an impersonal construction (Givón & Kawasha 2006). The history of English gerunds and present participles seems to be a protracted series of mergers, with exchange of formal, semantic and distributional features (Fanego 1998; Miller 2000), to the point that the two clause types are now believed to have merged completely (Huddleston & Pullum 2002).
- **Contact-induced change** (‘interference’ in Croft 2000): the function of a foreign construction is merged with a ‘home-bred’ form. Examples are the use of the locative preposition *bei* instead of *von* to mark the agent of
passives in Pennsylvania Dutch under the influence of English (Heine & Kuteva 2003: 538), or the emergence of a periphrastic perfect in Silesian Polish, calqued on the German perfect (Croft 2000: 146).

- Two lineages produce paradigmatic alternates in a single construction. Here lineages merge on a functional level, but their different forms are retained and integrated in a new paradigm. The clearest case is morphological suppletion, as in English go/went or Classical Greek trekh-/dram- ‘run’. However, the phenomenon also occurs in syntax, as illustrated by the alternation of Dutch hebben/zijn or German haben/sein as perfect auxiliaries. As is well known, the choice for one auxiliary or the other depends on the semantics of the verb: transitives and unergatives take hebben/haben; unaccusatives take zijn/sein. Though currently functioning as alternates within a single grammatical category, the hebben/haben-perfect and the zijn/sein-perfect can be traced back to different source constructions (Van der Wal 1992:152-153).

- A constructional slot attracts new items: it has been proposed that when functional domains recruit new items through grammaticalization, this may in part be due to analogical attraction by a more abstract syntactic construction (Fischer 2007). This seems particularly plausible when, in the extreme case, an abstract slot recruits productively from a single source domain. For instance, the English evidential be-Ved-to-V-construction has become productive for verbs of perception, communication and cognition (Noël 2001). But the issue is more complicated when items from different source domains are involved. Prepositions, for instance, may be derived from very different sources yet converge on a single new category, as illustrated by German statt and wegen, deriving from nominal constructions, as opposed to während, deriving from a participle (Kluge 2002).

On the **micro-level**, innovation can take place within what is historically a single lineage, but under the influence of different uses of the same item.

- In lexical semantics, Geeraerts (1997) proposes that two senses of a polysemous lexical item may conspire to produce a third.

- The same seems to happen in grammar. New uses of a grammatical or grammaticalizing item may be triggered by pragmatic implicatures arising (seemingly?) independently in a number of its collocations. For example, the aspectual meanings of the English phrasal verb particle out arose in several specific collocations at once (De Smet forthc.). The development of the emphasizing meaning of particular was influenced by two other sense strains of the adjective – a descriptive and a determining one – each associated with its own specific collocational set. (Ghesquière 2009).

- The most dramatic cases are certain examples of degrammaticalization. For example, Fischer (2000) has argued that, long after it had been reanalysed as an infinitive marker, English to has developed back in the direction of the preposition to.

The recurrent involvement of multiple source constructions in language change raises a number of questions, from methodological/descriptive to theoretical:

1. **How do we prove that different source constructions have a genuine impact?** Clearly, mere resemblance of constructions does not necessarily imply that they actually interact as sources of an innovation.

2. **How should we typologize the various changes involving multiple source constructions?** For a start, involvement of multiple sources may be more likely in some domains of grammar than others (semantics, morphology, syntax) and is certainly more conspicuous in some cases than in others (macro-level vs. micro-level). It is not entirely clear, then, whether in all cases we are dealing with a similar phenomenon, triggered by fundamentally similar mechanisms.

3. **How common is the involvement of multiple source constructions in language change?** It is possible that the involvement of multiple source constructions is a significant catalyst for change, which could even imply that ‘uncontaminated’ lineage-internal changes form the exception. Alternatively, the involvement of multiple sources could be merely apparent or accidental and have no great impact on change.

4. **How can developments involving multiple source constructions be modelled in a theory of grammar and language change?** Especially if change canonically involves multiple sources, this has implications for how constructions are represented in speakers’ minds and how language change takes place (Joseph 1992). Proper theoretical modelling of different changes is also necessary to determine to what extent multiplicity of source constructions in change is a homogeneous phenomenon.

References


10. The languages of the Caucasus: Occurrence and distribution of intriguing grammatical properties

Convenors: Silvia Kutscher (Humboldt University Berlin) & Stavros Skopeteas (University of Potsdam)

It is widely acknowledged that languages of the Caucasus display a long array of intriguing grammatical properties that significantly differ from the properties of the neighbouring languages and language families. Some textbook examples are the large sets of consonants and the minimal vowel inventory in North-West Caucasian languages, the availability of inclusive/exclusive distinction in several languages of North Caucasus, noun classification in North-East Caucasian languages, large systems of spatial cases and complex functions of preverbs in several languages, different alignment patterns such as ergative-absolutive (e.g., Ingush, Lezgian), split ergativity and case inversion (Georgian), etc. (see also outline in Comrie 2005).

It is clear that languages of the Caucasus contain languages from different language families: three indigenous Caucasian language families as well as single languages from non-indigenous families (Indo-European, Altaic and Semitic). The distribution of grammatical properties in languages of the Caucasus as well as the historical facts support the view that the languages at issue do not constitute a single historical unit but rather a geographically determined set of languages, several subsets thereof are historically related in terms of language genealogy and/or in terms of language contact (see Tuite 2004).

The enterprise for the research on the languages of this geographical area is to describe the distribution of grammatical phenomena and its relation to areal and/or genetically related language groups, as well as to identify the extent to which particular grammatical properties allow us to assume a typological profile that distinguishes the languages of this area from other languages.
This workshop hosts original empirical studies that promote the linguistic understanding of intriguing grammatical phenomena that are characteristic of particular languages of the Caucasus: spatial preverbs and their functions (Schwiertz, Kutscher, Khizanishvili), aspectual categories (Molotchcheva), focus position (Skopeteas), noun classification (Khalilova), complement clauses (Forker). Beyond a thorough description of the phenomenon at issue, each contributor will give an outline of the distribution of the property at issue in the languages of the Caucasus and discuss the relevance of the phenomenon for the identification of the typological profile of the languages of this area.

References


11. Multidisciplinary perspectives to learner corpora

Convenors: Nicolas Ballier (Université Paris Diderot/Paris 7) & Ana Díaz-Negrillo (Universidad de Jaén)

After the major achievements of learner corpus research in its first two decades, the workshop is aimed to raise awareness of the complex network of subdisciplines which play a role in this booming area of research and, more important, which may benefit from the use of corpora.

In a recent publication, Meurers (2009: 469) lays emphasis on the need “[…] to determine which learner language properties are useful or important to analyse in order to provide feedback and model language acquisition — a question that highlights the need for an intensive interdisciplinary dialogue between the fields of Intelligent Computer-Assisted Language Learning (ICALL), Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and Foreign Language Teaching (FLT)”. Contributions of the multidisciplinary nature of learner corpora are, therefore, in higher and higher demand, although research still requires discussions and consensus among the parts involved. This workshop proposal is intended to bring together researchers on learner corpora from a range of such perspectives to foster dialogue among them about their respective objectives, approaches and exploitation in the analysis of learner language. Some general perspectives comprehend the fields of Descriptive Linguistics, Corpus Linguistics, Computational Linguistics, Foreign Language Teaching (FLT) and Second Language Acquisition (SLA), which are intended to be covered in the workshop. In these general areas, the speakers will discuss issues related to phonetics and phonology, morphology, syntax and text structure, with a view to tackle questions like:

- State of the art in learner corpus research
- Interlanguage studies
- Methodological approaches to the study of learner language performance and acquisition
- Spoken and written learner corpora and querying interfaces
- Interoperability of tools
- Annotation practices: tools and schemes
- Current research projects

12. Partitives

Convenors: Silvia Luraghi (Università di Pavia) & Tuomas Huumo (University of Tartu)

Some languages, notably Baltic Finnic and Basque, have a partitive case, which is usually said to indicate partial affectedness of patients (cf. Blake 2001: 151). Such function is also attributed to other cases in languages that do not have a separate partitive, as in the case of the Hungarian partitive/ablative, and the partitive/genitive of various Indo-European languages (a separate partitive, lexically restricted, also exists in Russian).

Depending on the language, the use of partitives may be more or less restricted. In Basque, for example, the partitive occurs in negative sentences and it can indicate either the object of transitive verbs or the subject on intransitive verbs (in other words, it can substitute the absolutive case in negative sentences; it only occurs as subject with unaccusative verbs). A connection between negation and partitive (genitive) also occurs in the Slavic and the Baltic Finnic languages. The alternation between the partitive and other cases sometimes also has
connections with aspect: this has been argued for Baltic Finnic, Slavic (see e.g. Fischer 2004), and possibly Sanskrit (Dahl 2009). In fact, partivity is not only a possible feature of patients: in Finnish existentials, for examples, even agentive intransitive verbs such as *juosta ‘run’, opiskella ‘study’, etc. (unergative), take partitive subjects.

In some Indo-European languages, besides partitive objects and partitive subjects (mostly with unaccusative verbs, cf. Conti 2009 on Ancient Greek), partitive adverbials also exist, for example in time expressions (such as *Nachts ‘during the night’ in German). In Ancient Greek, some locative occurrences of the partitive genitive are attested (see Luraghi 2003, 2009):

ê halòs ê epi gêş
or sea:GEN or on land:GEN
“either at sea or on land” (Homer, *Od*. 12.26-27).

In one of the few existing cross-linguistic description of partitives, Moravcsik (1978: 272) summarizes typical semantic correlates of partitives as follows:

a. the definitness-indefinitness of the noun phrase;

b. the extent to which the object is involved in the event;

c. the completedness versus non-completedness of the event;

d. whether the sentence is affirmative or negative.

Moravcsik further remarks that marking difference brought about by the partitive “does not correlate with any difference in semantic case function”. Thus, the use of the partitive seems to be at odds with the basic function of cases, that is “marking dependent nouns for the type of relationship they bear to their heads” (Blake 2001: 1): rather than to indicate a specific grammatical or semantic relation that a NP bears to the verb, the partitive seems to indicate indeterminacy (in various manners). In fact, this has been noted by several authors. For example, Laka (1993: 158) suggests that “what is referred to as ‘partitive case’ in Basque is a polar determiner, much like English *any*”. In Finnish, the functions of the partitive are also related to indeterminacy, unboundedness and polarity, and it is noteworthy that the partitive is not the sole marker of any grammatical function but participates in a complementary distribution with other cases in all its main functions, i.e. as marker of the object (PART~ACC), the existential subject (PART~NOM) and the predicate nominal (PART~NOM), or as complement of adpositions (PART~GEN).

In this connection, one must mention the so-called partitive article of some Romance varieties, which derives from the preposition which has substituted the Latin genitive (Latin *de*). In French, the partitive article is clearly a determiner and not a case marker, as shown by its distribution:

*L’enfant joue dans le jardin / un enfant joue dans le jardin*

the child plays in the garden / a child plays in the garden

*Les enfants jouent dans le jardin / des enfants jouent dans le jardin*

the children play in the garden / some(=part. art.) children play in the garden

The brief survey above shows that there are striking similarities among partitives across languages, which are not limited to the indication of partial affectedness. However, research on partitives is mostly limited to individual languages. In this workshop we would like to bring together and compare data from different languages in which a case (or an adposition, as in French) are classified as partitive.

Research questions

(a) The distribution of partitives in different syntactic positions (objects, subjects, other roles) and across constructions;

(b) Partitives as determiners;

(c) Types of verbs with which partitive subjects (or objects) can occur;

(d) The diachrony of partitives: what are the sources of partitive markers? What is the diachronic relation between ablative, genitive, and partitive? (cf. Heine and Kuteva 2002: 32-33, 241);

(e) Partitives as non-canonical grammatical markers: Finnish partitive subjects and objects have been treated under the heading of ‘non-canonical marking’ (Sands and Campbell 2001). However, it is highly questionable that the occurrence of partitive subjects and objects marked by a partitive article, as in French, should also be
considered under this heading. Is the change from case marker (including adpositions) some kind of grammaticalization process and at what stage should a morpheme start to be considered a determiner, rather than a case marker?

(f) Discourse functions of partitives: Since partitives indicate indeterminacy, it might be expected that they are not topical elements in discourse. For instance, Helasvuori (2001) has shown that the referents of Finnish partitive subjects (unlike those of nominative subjects) are typically not tracked in discourse. What is the discourse function of partitives crosslinguistically?

(g) Partitives, aspect and quantification: The Baltic Finnic partitive object is well-known for its function of indicating aspectual unboundedness. Other BF partitives (existential, copulative) do not share the aspectual function proper but often indicate an incremental theme (in the sense of Dowty 1991), which gives rise to unbounded “nominal aspect” (Huumo 2003, 2009). What are the aspectual and quantificational functions of partitives crosslinguistically?

13. Ergativity in Indo-Aryan

Convenors: Eystein Dahl (University of Bergen) & Krzysztof Stroński (Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań)

Although cross-linguistic investigations like Klimov (1974) or Dixon (1994) have contributed significantly to our understanding of the synchronic and diachronic properties of Ergativity systems, studies of this type inevitably limit themselves to a somewhat simplified account of complex language-specific data. This workshop aims at bringing together linguists working on Ergativity in the Indo-Aryan languages from different perspectives thereby complementing existing studies on the origin and typology of Ergativity systems by focusing on data from one specific language family.

The Indo-Aryan languages present a broad array of data which significantly enrich previous research on Ergativity, partly because this language family has a longer written record than most other comparable languages and partly because the semantic principles motivating the patterns of Ergative marking and their relationship to coexisting Nominative/Accusative patterns varies considerably across the individual languages. Accordingly, we envisage two minor sections in the workshop, one primarily focusing on diachronic issues and another mainly dealing with synchronic and comparative issues. From a historical perspective it is significant that Old Indo-Aryan in many respects appears to have a more consistent nominative/accusative structure than its Indo-European sister languages which in turn has developed into a variety of different Ergative patterns. Even though several individual works have studied particular aspects of the Indo-Aryan data, various central issues remain controversial. An important question concerns the origin of the Ergative marker found in Hindi and Nepali, which has been variously interpreted as an instrumental and as a dative (cf. Butt 2001, 2005 with references). Another, related question concerns the passive to ergative shift vs. genuine ergative patterns in Old and Middle Indo-Aryan as well as the influence from substrate languages on the argument realization patterns inherited from Old Indo-Aryan (cf. e.g. Miltner 1965; Pirejko 1968; Klaiman 1978; Zakharyin 1979, 1982; Andersen 1986a, 1986b; Hock 1986; Bubenik 1996, 1998; Peterson 1998; Bynon 2005). Other important questions concern the evolution of the tense-aspect system motivating ergative alignment (cf. e.g. Montaut 2006) and subject/object case marking (cf. e.g. Butt 2005). In recent years, the problem of ergativity in the less documented IA dialects has been investigated in some detail (cf. e.g. Sigorsky 2000), suggesting that extensive field work within the dialectology of New Indo-Aryan can still shed new light on the intricacies of ergativity patterns existing in Indo-Aryan. Hence, our understanding of the origin and typology of Ergativity in the Indo-Aryan languages remains far from satisfactory and more detailed research within this field is a desideratum both from the perspective of Indo-Aryan linguistics and linguistic typology more generally. We conceive of the present workshop primarily as a forum for researchers with particular interests closely related to ergativity in Indo-Aryan from a synchronic, diachronic and comparative perspective, but we also solicit papers dealing with closely related topics such as evolution of verbal aspect and the origin and evolution of subject/object case marking within Indo-Aryan. We expect the papers to be accessible to an expert audience as well as an audience with a more general interest in typological aspects of Ergativity.
14. Binominal syntagms as a neglected locus of synchronic variation and diachronic change: Towards a unified approach


In recent years various theoretical frameworks have shown an increasing interest in the semantico-syntactic organization of noun phrases in general and that of binominal syntagms in particular. Binominal syntagms are a type of complex noun phrase attested in many European languages (e.g. Akmajian, Adrian & Lehrer 1976, Everaert 1992, Aarts 1998, Keizer 2001, Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2001, Denison 2002, Joosten 2003, Brems 2003, Foolen 2004, Willemsse 2005, Verveckken 2007, Traugott 2008, Rijkhoff 2009, Langacker forth.) that involves two nominal elements, possibly linked by means of a linking element (prepositions, case markers, etc.), e.g. *a lot of people*, *that swine of a professor*, *in front of the building*. Despite the recent attention, this construction still poses many descriptive-theoretical challenges to both formal and cognitive-functional frameworks.

A key problem in the literature has been that of identifying the head of binominal syntagms. Some authors or reference grammars argue for one analysis that covers all instances of the binominal construction (Quirk et al. 1985); others consider a distinction between a syntactic and a semantic head of the construction a useful way out (Halliday 1994); yet others allow head status to shift between NP1 and NP2 (e.g. Brems 2003, Traugott 2008). Different semantic and syntactic tests for determining head status have been proposed in the literature (e.g. Hudson 1987, Aarts 1998). It would be interesting to address their reliability and conclusiveness in the workshop.

Another central issue is the question of whether different types of binominals can be distinguished and on what grounds. Syntactically speaking, binominals may differ according to the presence or absence of determiners with the second nominal element (e.g. *a wonder of a man*, *the book of John*, *heaps of people*, *un bouquet de roses* (French: *a bouquet of roses*), *la moitié du travail* (French: *half of the work*)), presence or absence of a linking element (e.g. *the poet Shakespeare*, *John’s book*, *the majority of the guests*, *ogi pitin bat* (Basque: *a bit of bread*, lit. ‘bread bit a’)) and allowing non-nominal elements in the NP2-slot, e.g. (comparative) adjectives (*loads softer, massa's lekker* (Dutch: lit. ‘masses tasty’), De Clerck & Colleman 2009). From a semantic point of view, the nominal elements may have referential value (e.g. *city in a wonder of a city*), intensifying value (e.g. *wonder in a wonder of a city*), possessive value (*the manager's office*), quantifier value (*heaps/lots of people*), hedging meaning (*kind of in She is kind of a groupie*), (ex)phoric value (*the lights of a car*), aspectual value (*un colpo di telefono* (Italian: *a ring* lit. ‘a blow of telephone’) etc. Furthermore, different types of relations between the two nominal elements have been observed (Keizer 2007): modification, complementation, predication, qualification, quantification. Typically, the traditional typology of binominal syntagms comprises possessive constructions, partitive constructions, pseudo-partitive constructions, ‘predicative’ binominal noun phrases, close appositions, etc. An important question is whether these constructions can be linked in a constructional network, with macro-, meso- and micro-level schemas generalizing over subsets of binominal syntagms, and if so, to what degree this taxonomic pattern holds cross-linguistically.

In addition to the attested synchronic variation, this workshop also wants to address the claim that binominals are a locus of (ongoing) grammaticalization, subjectification and decategorialization processes. In some (types) of binominal constructions, the nominal elements seem to have lost or are losing typically nominal features such as the potential for pre- and postmodification, pluralization, etc. (e.g. *a nice wonder of a city*, *bunches of idiots*, etc.) and may be shifting to the categories of quantifier, intensifier, hedger, etc. Such issues also touch on interesting concepts such as ‘categorial gradience’, i.e. fuzzy boundaries between two or more categories (Denison 2006, Aarts, Denison, Keizer & Popova 2004). The current variation in binominal constructions could then be seen as a case of synchronic layering (Hopper & Traugott 2003).

This workshop aims to arrive at a better understanding of the organization and development of (different types of) binominal constructions in order to account for the rich synchronic and diachronic semantico-syntactic variety they harbour. We particularly welcome empirically based talks that contribute to the aforementioned theoretical issues. We welcome papers on English as well as on other languages and contributions may be language-internal or comparative in nature. The following list sums up possible avenues of thinking that may be addressed in the talks:

- How can the synchronic variation in binominal syntagms be analyzed syntactically, semantically, collocationally, etc. in a unified way?
- Are there (partial) syntactic and/or semantic tests to determine headedness and categorical noun status of the nominal elements in a binominal syntagm and what is their validity?
• What are possible typologies of binominal syntagms and on what grounds?
• Which kinds of tests can be used to distinguish between types of uses, and what is their validity (e.g. Rijkhoff 2009)
• Binominal syntagms as a locus of grammaticalization, e.g. in which paths of change do binominals engage crosslinguistically?
• Which properties in the binominal as a source construction explain the wide variety of synchronic variation and potential for diachronic change it displays?
• What can specific theoretical frameworks contribute to the analysis of binominal syntagms, e.g. cognitive grammar, construction grammar, functional grammar, usage-based approaches?

References:

Akmajian, Adrian and Adrienne Lehrer. 1976. “NP-like quantifiers and the problem of determining the head of an NP”. Linguistic Analysis 2: 395-413.
De Clerck, Bernard & Timothy Colleman. 2009. “Het was massa’s lekker! From noun to intensifier: massa’s in (Flemish) varieties of Dutch”. Presentation at Current Trends in Grammaticalization Research, Groningen, 7-9 October 2009.
15. Evidentials. Towards a unified account of evidential markers of the languages of Europe.

Convenors: Bert Cornillie (K.U.Leuven & Research Foundation Flanders), Katerina Stathi (Free University Berlin) & Bjoern Wiemer (University of Mainz)

Evidentiality defines a functional-conceptual domain pertaining to the cognitive and/or communicative ground (e.g., hearsay, perceptual evidence or reasoning leading to different kinds of inferences) on the basis of which the speaker makes a statement. Languages have several means for encoding the source of evidence for a judgment; e.g., Germ. 
{sollen} as a hearsay auxiliary, Engl. 
{apparently}, 
{be supposed to} or parenthetical 
{it seems} as markers of perception-based inferences or hearsay. The encoding of evidentiality can be arranged along a lexicon-grammar cline ranging from grammatical markers (bound affixes, e.g. Turk. -m|š, or functional extensions of tense, mood or aspect paradigms) via auxiliaries (see above) toward functional lexemes such as particles (e.g. Russ. 
{budto by}, 
{vrode}), complementisers (Pol. 
{jakoby} etc.) or adpositional phrases (headed, e.g., by Germ. 
{laut}, 
{zufolge}).

As a categorial distinction, evidentiality has become a subject of research in both functional and formal linguistic frameworks. With evidentiality studies proliferating, there is a need for a more unified and verifiable theoretical framework (see Mainz workshop 2009). Such a framework involves several ongoing tasks:

(i) on what functional criteria are evidentiality and its subfunctions best delineated?

(ii) how can conflations of evidential and epistemic function be described and explained?

(iii) how are various markers of evidentiality to be distinguished along a lexicon-grammar cline, and how are these distinctions related with their structural and distributional properties?

(iv) which procedures allow to distinguish stable semantic components from pragmatically triggered ones?

(v) along which diachronic paths do evidential markers develop?

(vi) which are the specific discourse conditions favouring the evolution of evidential markers, and how are they distributed over genres and registers?

An appropriate joint treatment of these six issues provides an integrated approach to evidentiality marking.

The workshop aims at further disentangling the research lines involving the above-mentioned questions and, by doing so, is concerned with research directed toward an integrative theory of the marking of evidential functions. It is a follow-up of previous workshops (see Lund 2005, at SLE 2006, Bremen, and at the DGFs-meeting 2008, Bamberg), but first of all of the workshop Database of evidential markers in European languages (Mainz University 2009), as it pursues the aim of elaborating on theoretical and technical details needed to establish a database of evidential markers in European languages. During the Mainz workshop a preliminary version of the database was defined, the template of entries was agreed upon and participants started using it with a sample of markers of their respective languages. The present workshop will present new data and new problems arising from them.

16. Modelling language contact: linguistic data and interdisciplinary approaches

Convenors: Johannes Kabatek (Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen) & Lucía Loureiro-Porto (Universitat de les Illes Balears)

This workshop will bring together scholars who have studied specific examples of language contact, scholars who have provided general typologies of language contact from a linguistic point of view, and scholars who are trying to systematize language contact by designing interdisciplinary models. The aim is to enrich the vision of this complex phenomenon by breaking traditional discrete classifications of disciplines.
Language contact has been a hot issue in linguistics above all since Weinreich published his *Languages in Contact* in 1953, because it represents one of the most common environments of language variation and change. Likewise, it is the scenario for the study of bilingualism, language competition and shift and the emergence of new linguistic varieties, including creoles and code-switching varieties (cf., to cite just a few, Hamers & Blanc 1989, Romaine 1989, Fishman 1991, Grenoble and Whaley 1998, 2006, Nettle and Romaine 2000, Bradley and Bradley 2002, Mufwene 2004, 2008). Since the emergence of the study of language contact, myriads of case-studies have been published on specific situations all over the globe.

The exact role of the factors involved in any of these phenomena has always been of high interest among scholars who would like to provide general typologies and/or models that would allow for individual analyses of specific situations. Thus, general characterizations and classifications of bilingualism have been proposed, among others, by Appel and Muysken (1987), Hamers and Blanc (1989), and Romaine (1989). The emergence of creoles and the existence or not of “killer languages” have been intensely addressed by scholars such as Mufwene (2001, 2008). The emergence and structure of code-switching varieties has been carefully studied by Auer (1999), who offers a typology of bilingual speech in which he makes a distinction between code-switching, language mixing and fused lects, and by Muysken (2000), who provides a typology of code-mixing, based on insertion, alternation and congruent lexicalization. Both approaches have proved highly valuable as a tool of analysis of utterly different situations (cf. Pena-Díaz 2006, Deuchar et al. 2007). Language competition and shift has also undergone different attempts to be modelled, usually with the aim of finding a way of preserving or revitalizing endangered languages (cf., for example, Grenoble and Whaley 1998).

In addition to these (socio-)linguistic approaches to language contact, which are on occasions combined with sociological or psycholinguistic aspects, recently scholars from other disciplines have begun to design models of language contact that attempt to account for the major factors that are involved in language maintenance. Thus, Abrams and Strogatz (2003), two engineers, provided the first non-linguistic model of language competition, which was based on the effects of prestige and density of speakers of each of the languages in the community. At about the same time, other research groups offered other models, including factors such as bilingualism or the transmission of languages from generation to generation (cf., Wang and Minett 2005, Minett and Wang 2008), and combining these models with complex networks in which the interaction among agents represents a crucial factor (cf. Castelló et al. 2007).

The contribution of all these multi-disciplinary works to the understanding and systematization of language contact is highly valuable, however, the forums in which scholars from the different disciplines meet do not usually allow for a clear inter-disciplinarity in which members from all fields can trade knowledge and opinions about ongoing work. It is within this context that we propose a workshop that can serve as a meeting point for researchers that try to approach the systematization of language contact from different perspectives. Thus, the questions we would like to answer in this workshop are:

a) In what way can case-studies contribute to the general modelling of language contact?

b) Is it really possible to systematize multilingual human behaviour, or the variables involved are too many to be seized in a model?

c) What are the basic steps to be followed in the search for a model of language contact?

d) Do existing models exclude one another or are they complementary?

e) Is there any possibility that contact linguistics can profit from other disciplines, at the same time that other disciplines profit from contact linguistics?

f) In what way does the topological structure of a community affect language maintenance in a situation of language contact?

g) What is the role of bilingualism in language maintenance or death?

h) Have factors such as pride and prestige been overestimated in the literature on language maintenance?

References


