

Forschungsprojekt

Crosslinguistic Semantics and Semantic Interfaces

Fragestellung des Projektes

Semantics is a proper subdiscipline of linguistics with its own field or research, its own questions and its own methods. Semantic research is well established and we have a good (and continuously increasing) knowledge of semantic categories and semantic structures of natural language and languages. The project will extend current semantic analyses according to two aspects: (i) crosslinguistic semantics and (ii) the interface between semantics and other grammatical subsystems. The project assumes that crosslinguistic work in semantics and the analyses of different interfaces will not only provide more and new data, but it will also produce new and unexpected questions and open up a new field of research.

(i) Crosslinguistic Semantics

Semantic categories have different morpho-syntactic implementations in the languages of the world. Crosslinguistic or comparative research into the realization of semantic categories in related and unrelated languages is an interesting and expanding field of research. Research on referential categories (definiteness, specificity, genericity) has shown that such categories are differently encoded in particular languages. It is still an open question if such categories can be further analyzed into more basic semantic features or not.

(ii) Semantic Interfaces

Semantic structure closely interacts with other grammatical subsystems such as phonology, morphology, syntax and pragmatics. The project intends to investigate the links between these subsystems and intends to carefully model the dependency between semantic structure and properties, on the one hand, and those of other subsystems, on the other. This will give new insights into the architecture of grammar in general, but also into the interaction between the different subsystems in particular.

(iii) Particular fields of investigations

The project comprises three particular areas of research in which crosslinguistic investigations into interface problems is expected to yield new and interesting results that will contribute to a general understanding of semantic processes and the positioning of semantics in grammatical theory (or in “general semantics”):

- A: Referential categories and grammatical structure
- B: The semantics of derivational processes
- C: Intonation and information structure

Stand der Forschung

A: Referential categories and grammatical structure

Referential categories, such as animacy, definiteness, and specificity, determine or restrict the way we refer to objects, i.e. they are semantic (and pragmatic) by nature, but they are also reflected in numerous morphosyntactic phenomena. Thus, referential categories pose a challenge to semantic theory and to the interface between semantics and the grammar system of languages. Definiteness is the best investigated referential category (e.g. Hawkins 1974, Heim 1982, 1991, Kamp 1981, Lyons 1999); while Carlson & Pelletier (1995) have collected work on genericity. Specificity, on the other hand, is a quite recent concept that was coined by Baker (1966) for the first time. Since then there have been different approaches towards the analysis of specificity (Fodor & Sag 1982, Givón 1978 among others, and more recently Farkas 2002). However, there is no uniform semantic analysis of specificity – it is still controversial whether or not specificity is a semantic concept at all. More functional approaches discuss specificity as one parameter of differentiated object marking in various languages (Bossong 1985, Aissen 2003). However, the mapping between such a category and certain morphosyntactic phenomena is very difficult to draw for at least three reasons: First, the referential categories are often only described in informal terms, second, the morphosyntactic phenomena are seldom described in sufficient detail, and third there are only few investigations into the interaction between these categories.

B: The semantics of derivational processes

Derivational processes form new words from existing words - the new words have new meanings that should be compositionally built up from their bases and the meaning of the derivational process and/or the meaning of the affix (if one is involved). If, however, one process and/or one suffix exhibits different patterns, a simple compositional process is not possible. One can either propose homonymous forms with different functions or a more complex semantics of the derivational process. The project proposes an analysis in a two level semantics (Bierwisch 1983, Mayo et al. 1992, Stiebels 1997, Wunderlich 1997) that allows a uniform semantics for the derivational process. The different patterns of one process are explained by the interaction of the lexical semantics with the conceptual structure of the base (see also Plag 1998). An additional source of ambiguity can be traced back to referential shifts between different kinds of meanings of normalizations. A normalization can refer to an event, a situation, a result or even an object. The project intends to investigate the different conditions under which such shifts are possible. Furthermore, the different parameters, such as verb class, situation type etc, must be investigated (see Alexiadou 2001, Ehrich & Rapp 2000 among others).

C: Intonation and information structure

There are several distinct research traditions for intonation and information structure and their interaction with other areas of grammar. In particular, the following interfaces are intensively studied: intonation and phonology, focus and phonological phrasing, intonation (focus) and syntax, information structure and discourse analysis, association with focus and formal semantics. It is not possible to give an exhaustive or even an comprehensive overview of these research traditions. *Intonation in phonology*: Most recent approaches to intonation goes

back to the analysis of Bruce (1972), Liberman (1975) and Pierrehumbert (1980), who for the first time used abstract tones for representing the intonation contour. A good overview of intonational phonology can be found in Ladd (1996). The relation between intonational phrases and prosodic phrases, on the one hand, and to syntactic constituents on the other hand was investigated by Hayes & Lahiri (1991), Truckenbrodt (1995), among others. *Information structure and discourse analysis: One family of approaches* (Klein & von Steutterheim 1987, Hobbs 1990, Büring 1997) understands a discourse structure as representing the relations between propositions. Here the structure is represented as a tree of propositions. Such theories focus on the relation between sentences (or clauses), rather than on the relation between parts of sentences (or clauses). *Focus and formal semantics*: Since the beginnings of the 90s, formal approaches to the semantic effects of focus and association with focus has been widely discussed. Besides two extra editions of journals on this topic, there are several studies which go back to two theories: structured propositions (see Krifka 1992), and alternative semantics (Rooth 1985). These theories have developed in different directions. In a different approach, Steedman (1991) uses flexible constituents in categorial grammar in order to describe the information structure of a sentence.

Eigene Vorarbeiten

A: Referential categories and grammatical structure

Von Heusinger (2002b, eingereicht-b) investigates the difference between definiteness and specificity. Definiteness is analyzed as a discourse-pragmatic notion, while specificity is analyzed as a restriction of possible mappings from such a discourse representation to the actual referents (or objects in a model). Crosslinguistic investigations into the grammatical realization of specificity (von Heusinger 2002e) and studies on differentiated object marking in Spanish (von Heusinger & Kaiser 2003, im Druck), and Turkish (von Heusinger & Kornfilt (im Druck)) show that specificity closely interacts with other referential categories such as definiteness, genericity and animacy.

B: The semantics of derivational processes

Von Heusinger (2002c, 2002d) analyzes different derivational patterns of one nominalization suffix by an underspecified lexical semantics that is enriched by the conceptual information of the base. Von Heusinger & Schwarze (im Druck) uses this semantics for explaining two different types of denominal verbs in Italian that are both derived by the same morphological process.

C: Intonation and information structure

Von Heusinger (1999) accounts for the close interaction between phonological (or intonational) structure, on the one hand, and (discourse) semantic structure, on the other. Information structure is analyzed in terms of discourse semantics (see collection of works in von Heusinger & Schwabe 2001, 2002), von Heusinger (2001a, 2002a, 2004). Von Heusinger (eingereicht-a) shows that information structure in terms of Alternative Semantics gives new insights into the semantics of definite NPs. Von Heusinger (im Druck) argues that certain intonational patterns are the grammatical implementation of subclausal discourse relations.

List of Publications

- von Heusinger, Klaus 1999. Intonation and Information Structure. The Representation of Focus in Phonology and Semantics. Habilitationsschrift. Universität Konstanz.
- von Heusinger, Klaus 2001a. Information Structure and Discourse Semantics. *The Prague Bulletin of Mathematical Linguistics* 73-74, 13-32.
- von Heusinger, Klaus 2002a. Information Structure and the Partition of Sentence Meaning. In: E. Hajicová & P. Sgall & J. Hana & T. Hoskovec (eds.). *Travaux du Cercle Linguistique de Prague n. s. / Prague Linguistic Circle Papers* 4. Amsterdam; Philadelphia: Benjamins, 275-305.
- von Heusinger, Klaus 2002b. Specificity and Definiteness in Sentence and Discourse Structure. *Journal of Semantics* 19, 245-274.
- von Heusinger, Klaus 2002c. The Interface of Lexical Semantics and Conceptual Structure: Deverbal and Denominal Nominalizations. In: E. Lang & I. Zimmermann (eds.). *Nominalisierung*. ZAS Papers in Linguistics (ZASPiL) 27. Zentrum für Allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft (ZAS), Berlin, 109-124.
- von Heusinger, Klaus 2002d. *Italian Nominalization of -ata: Derivation and the Structure of the Lexicon*. Arbeitspapier 109. Fachbereich Sprachwissenschaft, Universität Konstanz.
- von Heusinger, Klaus 2002e. The Cross-Linguistic Implementations of Specificity. In: K. Jaszczolt & K. Turner (eds.). *Meaning through Language Contrast*. Vol. 2. Amsterdam; Philadelphia: Benjamins, 405-421. (Pragmatics and Beyond NS 100) .
- von Heusinger, Klaus (2004). Focus Particles, Sentence Meaning, and Discourse Structure. In: W. Abraham & A. ter Meulen (eds.). *Composing Meaning*. Amsterdam: Benjamins, 167-193.
- von Heusinger, Klaus (im Druck). Discourse Structure and Intonational Phrasing. In: D. Büring & M. Gordon & Ch. Lee (eds.). *Topic and Focus: Intonation and Meaning. Theoretical and Crosslinguistic Perspectives*. Dordrecht: Kluwer
- von Heusinger, Klaus (eingereicht-a). Alternative Semantics for Definite NPs. In: K. Schwabe & S. Winkler (eds.). *Information Structure and the Architecture of Grammar: A Typological Perspective*. Amsterdam: Benjamins. (Linguistics Today)
- von Heusinger, Klaus (eingereicht-b). Referentially anchored indefinite NPs. In: I. Comorovski & K. von Heusinger (eds.) (in Vorbereitung). *Existence: Syntax and Semantics*. Dordrecht: Kluwer. (Studies in Linguistics and Philosophy)
- von Heusinger, Klaus & Kaiser, Georg A. 2003. Animacy, Specificity, and Definiteness in Spanish. In: K. von Heusinger & G. A. Kaiser (eds.). *Proceedings of the Workshop "Semantic and Syntactic Aspects of Specificity in Romance Languages"*. Arbeitspapier 113. Fachbereich Sprachwissenschaft, Universität Konstanz, 67-101.
- von Heusinger, Klaus & Kaiser, Georg A. (im Druck) The evolution of differentiated Object Marking in Spanish. In: E. Stark & K. von Heusinger & G. A. Kaiser(eds.). *Specificity and the Evolution/Emergence of Nominal Determination Systems in Romance*. Arbeitspapier. Fachbereich Sprach-wissen-schaft, Universität Konstanz.
- von Heusinger, Klaus & Kornfilt, Jaklin (im Druck). The case of the direct object in Turkish: Semantics, Syntax and Morphology. *Turcic Languages*.
- von Heusinger, Klaus & Schwabe, Kerstin (eds.) 2001. Special Issue „NP-Interpretation and Information Structure“ *Theoretical Linguistics* 27.2/3.
- von Heusinger, Klaus & Schwabe, Kerstin (eds.) 2002. Special Issue „Specificity“ *Journal of Semantics* 19.3.
- von Heusinger, Klaus & Schwarze, Christoph (im Druck) Underspecification in the Semantics of Word-Formation. The Case of Denominal Verbs of Removal in Italian. *Linguistics*.

Dissertationsthemen

The research program invites dissertation projects on the following areas of research and in one or more languages (the list is not exhaustive; own ideas and connections between the different research areas are most welcome. Please contact me and discuss your project or your ideas with me)

A: Referential categories and grammatical structure

- What are the properties of referential categories, such as definiteness, specificity, genericity, animacy, and their interaction?

- How can we analyze the determiner system of a particular language?
- What are the morpho-syntactic reflexes of one or more of the referential categories in one particular language?
- What are the morpho-syntactic reflexes of one referential category in different languages?

B: The semantics of derivational processes

- What are the compositional properties of base and derivational affix?
- How much of the argument structure of the base is inherited by the derivation?
- What is the lexical semantic representation of nominalization and its interaction with syntax (thematic roles, argument structure)
- How can we describe/analyze the different processes of meaning shift of nominalized forms?
- How can we describe the historical development of nominalization/other derivations?

C: Intonation and information structure

- What is the relation between information structure and discourse structure?
- What kind of subclausal discourse structures do we find in different languages?
- What is the semantic counterpart to the phonological structure of intonation?

Verknüpfung mit anderen Projekten des Graduiertenkollegs

- Alexiadou (nominalisation, argument structure, derivational processes)
- Bäuerle (discourse structure, discourse relations)
- Kamp (lexical semantics, semantics of derivational processes)
- Möbius (information structure and intonation)
- Stein (lexical semantics, verb classes, argument structure)

Literatur

- Aissen, Judith 2003. Differential Object Marking: Iconicity vs. Economy. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 21, 435-483.
- Alexiadou, A. (2001) Functional structure in nominals: nominalization, and ergativity. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Baker, C. Leroy 1966. Definiteness and Indefiniteness in English. Unpublished Master's Thesis. University of Illinois.
- Bierwisch, Manfred (1983). Semantische und konzeptuelle Repräsentation lexikalischer Einheiten. In *Untersuchungen zur Semantik*, R. Ruzicka; and W. Motsch (eds.), 61-89. Berlin: Akademie Verlag..
- Bossong, Georg 1985. Empirische Universalienforschung. Differentielle Objektmarkierung in den neuiranischen Sprachen. Tübingen: Narr.
- Bruce, Gösta 1977. Swedish Word Accents in Sentence Perspective. Lund: Gleerup.
- Büring, Daniel. The 59th Street Bridge Accent. On the Meaning of Topic and Focus. London: Routledge, 1997.
- Carlson, Gregory & Pelletier, Francis 1995. *The Generic Book*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Ehrich, Veronika & Rapp, Irene 2000. Sortale Bedeutung und Argumentstruktur: ung-Nominalisierungen im Deutschen. *Zeitschrift für Sprachwissenschaft* 19, 245-303.,
- Farkas, Donka 2002. Specificity Distinction. *Journal of Semantics* 19, 213-243.
- Fodor, Janet & Sag, Ivan 1982. Referential and Quantificational Indefinites. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 5, 355-398.
- Givón, Talmy 1978. Definiteness and Referentiality. In: J. Greenberg & C. Ferguson & E. Moravcsik (eds.). *Universals of Human Language*. 4 vols. Stanford: Stanford University Press. Vol. 4, 291-330.

- Hawkins, John A. 1974. *Definiteness and Indefiniteness*. Ph.D. Dissertation. Cambridge: Cambridge University.
- Hayes, Bruce & Lahiri, Aditi 1991. Bengali Intonational Phonology. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 9, 47-96.
- Heim, Irene 1982. *The Semantics of Definite and Indefinite Noun Phrases*. Ph.D. Dissertation. University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms.
- Heim, Irene 1991. Artikel und Definitheit. In: A. von Stechow & D. Wunderlich (eds.). *Semantik. Ein internationales Handbuch der zeitgenössischen Forschung*. Berlin; New York: de Gruyter, 487-535.
- Hobbs, Jerry. "The Pierrehumbert-Hirschberg Theory of Intonational Meaning Made Simple. Comments on Pierrehumbert and Hirschbert." In: P. R. Cohen, J. Morgan, and M. E. Pollack (eds.). *Intentions in Communication*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT, 1990: 313—323.
- Kamp, Hans 1981. A Theory of Truth and Semantic Interpretation. In: J. Groenendijk & T. Janssen & M. Stokhof (eds.). *Formal Methods in the Study of Language*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam Center, 277-322.
- Klein, Wolfgang & von Stechow, Christiane 1987. Quaestio und referentielle Bewegung in Erzählungen. *Linguistische Berichte* 109, 163-183.
- Krifka, Manfred 1992. A Framework for Focus-Sensitive Quantification. In: C. Barker & D. Dowty (eds.). *Proceedings from the Second Conference on Semantics and Linguistic Theory (SALT 2)*. Working Papers in Linguistics 40. Ohio State University, 215-236.
- Ladd, Robert 1996. *Intonational Phonology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Lieberman, Mark 1975. *The Intonational System of English*. Ph.D. dissertation. MIT, Cambridge/MA..
- Lyons, Christopher 1999. *Definiteness*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mayo, Bruce; Schepping, Marie-Theres; Schwarze, Christoph; and Zaffanella, Angela (1995). Semantics in the derivational morphology of Italian: Implications for the structure of the lexicon. *Linguistics* 33, 883-983.
- Pierrehumbert, Janet 1980. *The Phonology and Phonetics of English Intonation*. Ph.D. dissertation. MIT, Cambridge/MA.
- Plag, Ingo (1998). The Polysemy of *-ize* derivatives: On the role of semantics in word formation. In *Yearbook of Morphology 1997*, Geert Booij and Jaap van Marle (eds.), 219-242. Dordrecht: Kluwer..
- Rooth, Mats 1985. *Association with Focus*. Ph.D. dissertation. University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Distributed by Amherst/MA: Graduate Linguistics Student Association (GLSA).
- Steedman, Mark 1991. Structure and Intonation. *Language* 67, 260-296.
- Stiebels, Barbara (1997). Lexikalische Argumente und Adjunkte. Zum semantischen Beitrag von verbalen Präfixen und Partikeln. *Studia grammatica* 39. Berlin: Akademie Verlag.
- Truckenbrodt, Hubert 1995. *Phonological Phrases. Their Relation to Syntax, Focus, and Prominence*. Ph.D. dissertation. MIT, Cambridge/MA.
- Wunderlich, Dieter (1997). CAUSE and the structure of verbs. *Linguistic Inquiry* 28, 27-68.