Constructionist approaches to creativity
From routine constructions to creative constructs

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Creative language use has recently attracted considerable attention in constructionist research (Hoffmann ed. 2018; Hoffmann ed. 2020). Goldberg (2006: 22) already claimed that '[c]onstructional approaches share with mainstream generative grammar the goal of accounting for the creative potential of language (Chomsky 1957: 1965).' Yet, a closer look reveals that most linguists, including Chomsky and Goldberg, only have a very narrow definition of verbal creativity that, essentially, boils down to productivity. In these cases, speakers make 'original use of the established possibilities of the language' (Leech 1969: 24; Sampson 2016 calls this 'F(ixed)-creativity'). In contrast to this, too little attention has been paid to 'E(nlarging/extending)-creativity' (Sampson 2016), i.e., when a speaker 'creates new communicative possibilities which are not already in the language' (Leech 1969: 24).

The present talk will explore the cognitive mechanisms that underly F-/E-creative and routine language use and will show how constructionist approaches can further our understanding of all types of linguistic creativity. In addition to this, it will adopt a sociocultural psychological perspective (Glăveanu 2013) that does not just focus on the new artifact (the novel construct) or the creative speaker/writer, but also takes into account the socio-cultural affordances (constructions, context and cotext), the creative processes in the working memory as well as the audience/addressees. Such a holistic view can then explain how utterances such as *Not the shiniest penny in the piggy bank*.[1] or *The Dalai Farmer!*[2] can be primed and licensed by their specific discourse contexts.

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[1] Source: http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/funny_old_game/2912483.stm

[2] Source: https://youtu.be/gpSot6Dda3o?t=791 | mins 13:11-13.21