
PLENARVORTRAG 1 | PLENARY TALK 1

Termin | Date: 08.03.2023, 09:30-10:30 Uhr

Raum | Room: Hörsaal A1, Hörsaalgebäude

Language as shaped by and for social interaction

Mark Dingemans

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When we laud the supreme generativity and expressivity of language, we rarely stop to think about the full range of resources that underpin it. Received views tend to focus on our remarkable mental capacities for composition and decomposition, a cognitivist perspective that makes it easy to overlook the contributions of public interaction. In this talk I present some results from a research programme that tries to round out the picture by exploring how language is shaped by and for social interaction. I sketch how interjections—long overlooked as mere performance—are streamlined and conventionalized tools that help streamline linguistic interaction and scaffold language development. I also show how interactional resources like repair and continuers provide us with an infrastructure to balance creativity and convention in turn-by-turn interaction. The research I report on is part of the NWO-funded project Elementary Particles of Conversation and represents joint work with colleagues including Marieke Woensdregt, Andreas Liesenfeld, Marlou Rasenberg and Ada Lopez.

***Profile:** Mark Dingemans investigates how language is shaped by and for social interaction. His empirical focus is on language in its primary habitat of social interaction, where he looks at the semiotic and interactional resources people use in reaching mutual understanding and coordinating action. Methodologically, he combines field research with comparative linguistics and computational modelling. His approach is strongly collaborative and interdisciplinary, combining insights from the sciences of language, culture and mind. Among other things, his work has led to the discovery of some potential pragmatic universals of conversational infrastructure. Dingemans thus approaches the interaction of creativity and routine in language from the perspective of the social situation—the primordial ecology of language—and thus covers an important area in the exploration of the conference’s framework topic.*

Profil: Mark Dingemanse untersucht, wie Sprache durch und für soziale Interaktion geformt wird. Sein empirischer Fokus liegt auf Sprache in ihrem ureigentlichen Lebensraum der sozialen Interaktion, wo er die semiotischen und interaktionalen Ressourcen erforscht, die Menschen verwenden, um einander zu verstehen und ihr Handeln zu koordinieren. Methodisch kombiniert er Feldforschung mit komparativer Sprachwissenschaft und computergestützter Modellierung. Seine Herangehensweise ist von Zusammenarbeit und Interdisziplinarität geprägt: sie kombiniert Erkenntnisse aus Sprach-, Kultur- und Kognitionswissenschaft. Seiner Arbeit ist unter Anderem die Entdeckung einiger potentieller pragmatischer Universalien der Gesprächsinfrastruktur zu verdanken. Dingemanse nähert sich dem Zusammenspiel von Kreativität und Routine in der Sprache also aus der Perspektive der sozialen Situation – dem ursprünglichen Lebensraum der Sprache – und deckt hiermit einen ganz wesentlichen Bereich bei der Erkundung des Rahmenthemas der Konferenz ab.

PLENARVORTRAG 2 | PLENARY TALK 2

Termin | *Date*: 08.03.2023, 11:30-12:30 Uhr

Raum | *Room*: Hörsaal A1, Hörsaalgebäude

Order shaped by cognition: Evidence for (and against) the effect of domain-general biases on word and morpheme order

Jennifer Culbertson

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A foundational goal of linguistics has been to understand why languages look the way they do. A range of possible explanations exist---from domain-specific representations to cognition-external factors like history and grammaticalization--and all of these undoubtedly play some role. But determining exactly how these link with specific typological patterns remains challenging, and the role of domain-specific mechanisms has been particularly contentious. In this talk, I highlight a growing new approach, which uses artificial language experiments to link individual-level biases to cross-linguistic trends in language structure. Using word and morpheme order as case studies, I will show how a range of different paradigms and learner populations allow us to make progress on this crucial issue in the cognitive science of language. For some ordering patterns, experimental evidence points to variation across populations, suggesting that the best explanation for these patterns likely has its roots in language history and grammaticalization. In other cases, the evidence points to the role of universal but domain-general cognitive biases, like transparency and simplicity. These domain-general biases interact with linguistic representations in important ways. Taken together these studies help adjudicate between alternative explanations for a number of specific typological patterns, and suggest a new sense of domain-specificity in the evolution of language.

***Profile:** Jennifer Culbertson's research is devoted to the question of how languages are shaped by learning and use. She investigates how typological universals, for instance frequency differences of linguistic patterns in the languages of the world, arise from properties of our cognitive apparatus. Methodologically, she approaches this question by means of miniature artificial languages learned by children and adults whose behaviour is modelled computationally. Jennifer Culbertson's research thus contributes to the study of the interplay between linguistic creativity and routine by examining cognitively determined routines and creative deviations from these routines during acquisition, with a probabilistic approach being central.*

Profil: Die Forschung von Jennifer Culbertson ist der Frage gewidmet, wie Sprachen durch Lernen und Gebrauch geformt werden. Sie untersucht, wie typologische Universalien – bspw. Häufigkeitsunterschiede von sprachlichen Mustern in den Sprachen der Welt – aus Eigenschaften unseres kognitiven Apparats erwachsen. Methodisch nähert sie sich dieser Frage mittels Miniatur-Kunstsprachen, die Kinder und Erwachsene erlernen, deren Verhalten komputationell modelliert wird. Jennifer Culbertsons Forschung trägt zur Erforschung des Zusammenspiels von sprachlicher Kreativität und Routine demnach durch die Untersuchung kognitiv bedingter Routinen und kreativer Abweichungen von diesen Routinen während des Erwerbs bei, wobei eine probabilistische Herangehensweise zentral ist.

PLENARVORTRAG 3 | PLENARY TALK 3

Termin | *Date*: 10.03.2023, 09–10 Uhr

Raum | *Room*: Hörsaal A1, Hörsaalgebäude

Creativity and routine at the prosody-syntax interface: Playing with intonation unit boundaries

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In principle, the mapping between grammatical and prosodic units at the level of the intonation unit (IU) is flexible: IUs may be as short as a single syllable and as long as a chain of rapidly delivered clauses. On the other hand, there are strong tendencies in that, for example, many IUs consist of a single clause, and many clauses occur in an IU of their own. Mapping relations at the prosody-syntax interface hence provide a rich source for modelling the interplay between creativity and routine in linguistic interaction.

The main focus of the talk will be on ways for “playing with” prosodic boundaries as a prime example of linguistic creativity. Creativity presupposes a default (a standard way for placing and producing an IU boundary) and possibilities to circumvent this default, thereby creating a special effect. Examples come from a range of different languages and linguistic areas.

Profile: *Nikolaus P. Himmelmann’s main research interests are typology, grammaticisation, discourse and conversation analysis, and language documentation and description, with a special focus on Austronesian and, more recently, Papuan languages. He has done field work in the Philippines, Indonesia and East Timor, since 2009 working closely together with the Center for Endangered Languages Documentation in Manokwari (West Papua). He has a strong interest in questions of methodology, in particular the quality of the data that provide the basis for cross linguistic generalizations. One aspect of particular interest in this regard is prosody and the prosody-syntax interface, as understanding prosody is essential for taken spoken language seriously.*

Nikolaus P. Himmelmann is Professor in General Linguistics at the University Cologne, where he also functions as the spokesperson for the Key Profile Area Skills and Structures in Language and Cognition. He has published widely on morphosyntactic topics (e.g. parts of speech, secondary predicates, demonstratives and deictics more generally, word order, the suffixing preference), the grammaticisation of phrase structure and grammaticisation theory, language documentation and prosodic chunking (intonation units).

Profil: Nikolaus P. Himmelmanns Forschungsschwerpunkte sind Typologie, Grammatikalisierung, Diskurs- und Konversationsanalyse sowie Sprachdokumentation und -beschreibung, mit besonderem Fokus auf austronesische und papuanische Sprachen. Er war zur Feldforschung auf den Philippinen, in Indonesien und Osttimor und arbeitet seit 2009 eng mit dem Center for Endangered Languages Documentation in Manokwari (West Papua) zusammen. Fragen der Datenqualität und, damit verbunden, die methodischen Grundlagen des Sprachvergleichs beschäftigen ihn seit den Studientagen. Hier gilt sein Hauptaugenmerk der Prosodie und der Schnittstelle zwischen Prosodie und Syntax, da ohne Prosodie die Analyse gesprochener Sprachen – und die große Mehrheit aller menschlichen Sprachen gibt es nur in gesprochener Form – nicht gelingen kann.

Nikolaus P. Himmelmann ist Professor für Allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft an der Universität zu Köln, wo er auch als Sprecher des Kernprofilbereich Skills and Structures in Language and Cognition fungiert. Er hat zahlreiche Publikationen zu morphosyntaktischen Themen (z.B. Wortarten, sekundäre Prädikate, Demonstrativa und Deiktika im Allgemeinen, Wortstellung, Suffixpräferenz), zur Grammatikalisierung von Phrasenstruktur, Grammatikalisierungstheorie, Sprachdokumentation und zu prosodischer Segmentierung (Intonationseinheiten) veröffentlicht.

PLENARVORTRAG 4 | PLENARY TALK 4

Termin | Date: 10.03.2023, 10-11 Uhr

Raum | Room: Hörsaal A1, Hörsaalgebäude

Good-enough language processing: Is it all routine?

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Psycholinguists have traditionally assumed that although people sometimes flail and struggle as they work to understand a sentence, they will almost always eventually succeed in obtaining the interpretation mandated by the sentence's form. Similarly, speakers might expend some effort planning and choosing what to say, but eventually they will succeed in finding a linguistic form that captures their communicative intentions. In recent years, both these assumptions have been challenged: In the area of comprehension, models increasingly acknowledge the importance of good-enough or noisy channel processing; and in production, new approaches acknowledge the reality that sometimes speakers' utterances are barely "good enough" to convey their thoughts, and occasionally speakers don't even quite know what they want to say until they start speaking. To a large extent, these tendencies are attributable to the use of routines or familiar, prepackaged linguistic sequences that allow people to get close to their communicative goals while managing the time and social pressures associated with real-world interactions. But it is often also important for language comprehenders and producers to be creative and flexible, and to adapt to current circumstances, requiring them to overcome these pre-potent routines and processing biases. In this presentation I will focus on how current research speaks to the interplay of these two pressures in comprehension and production, and I will suggest some avenues for future research.

Profile: *Fernanda Ferreira's psycholinguistic research is dedicated to speech processing and speech production. Building on key insights from theoretical linguistics, especially in the areas of phonology and syntax, her goal is to model the psycholinguistic mechanisms that enable people to understand and produce language in real time as well as in interaction with other cognitive systems. Her methodological spectrum includes behavioural and neural measures, such as eye movement recording and event-related brain potentials. A highly influential concept developed by Fernanda Ferreira is that of good-enough parsing, which accounts for the observation that during speech comprehension, people often think they have understood an utterance if they can extract something plausible from the utterance,*

regardless of whether it was actually said or not. In recent research, Ferreira looks further into misunderstandings and 'faulty' communication. Thus, her research is highly relevant to the interaction of creativity and routines, as errors are deviations from routines and thus, in a sense, creativity. Her research thus represents an essential building block for the exploration of the conference's framing theme.

Profil: Fernanda Ferréiras psycholinguistische Forschung ist der Sprachverarbeitung und der Sprachproduktion gewidmet. Aufbauend auf wesentlichen Erkenntnissen der theoretischen Sprachwissenschaft vor allem in den Bereichen Phonologie und Syntax ist ihr Ziel die Modellierung der psycholinguistischen Mechanismen, die es Menschen ermöglichen, Sprache in Echtzeit sowie in der Interaktion mit anderen kognitiven Systemen zu verstehen und zu produzieren. Ihr methodisches Spektrum umfasst Verhaltens- und neuronale Maße, wie zum Beispiel die Aufzeichnung von Augenbewegungen und ereigniskorrelierten Hirnpotentialen. Ein sehr einflussreiches Konzept, das Ferreira entwickelt hat, ist das des Good-Enough-Parsing, welches der Beobachtung Rechnung trägt, dass Menschen während des Sprachverstehens oft meinen, eine Äußerung verstanden zu haben, wenn sie aus der Äußerung etwas für sie Plausibles extrahieren können, unabhängig davon, ob dies genau gesagt wurde oder nicht. In neuester Forschung befasst sich Ferreira weitergehend mit Missverständnissen und ‚fehlerhafter‘ Kommunikation. Somit ist ihre Forschung hochrelevant für die Interaktion von Kreativität und Routine, da Fehler Abweichungen von Routinen und damit in gewissem Sinne Kreativität sind. Ihre Forschung stellt damit einen wesentlichen Baustein für die Erforschung des Rahmenthemas der Tagung dar.