

**Eric Fuß**

**Titel: From sets to strings: Merge, Vocabulary Insertion, and the creation of linear order**

Abstract:

This talk addresses the question of how the hierarchical, unordered structures generated by narrow syntax are mapped onto the linear sequences of phonological exponents required by the sensorimotor (SM) interface. It will be shown that the linearization of syntactic structure comprises (at least) three sub-problems, each of which may require a different formal treatment:

- Problem 1: How are Head+XP structures linearized (basic head-complement configurations)?
- Problem 2: How are XP+XP structures linearized (specifiers, moved elements)?
- Problem 3: Given cyclic Spell-out/Transfer, how are the linearizations of successive spell-out domains assembled into a single string?

Assuming a realizational model of grammar, in which syntactic terminal nodes are supplied with phonological content in the post-syntactic computation (Halle & Marantz 1993, Embick & Noyer 2001), I will argue that the mapping from hierarchic structures to linear strings is tied to the process of Vocabulary Insertion. More specifically, I propose that linearization (LIN) is not a uniform operation, but consists of two distinct procedures, depending on whether the syntactic subtree subject to LIN contains a Head. This distinction is independently motivated by the operation of the Labeling Algorithm at the conceptual-intentional (CI) interface. For Head+XP configurations, I propose a PF variant of the Head Parameter (cf. e.g. Richards 2004), according to which directionality is encoded in the lexical content of phonological exponents associated with functional heads, in a way comparable to the placement of affixes within complex words. For XP+XP configurations – arising through external Merge of specifiers and internal Merge (movement) – I assume that both logically possible orderings are in principle available (Marcolli, Chomsky & Berwick 2025). The choice between the options depends on structural and discourse-semantic asymmetries between the two XPs and, potentially, on language-specific preferences. Time permitting, I will discuss how this hybrid model extends to two further linearization problems: the assembly of individually linearized spell-out domains into a global string under cyclic Transfer, and the PF realization of movement chains.

**Jutta Hartmann**

**Title: Focus marking in mismatching contexts: Creative construal of focus alternatives?**

Abstract:

In this talk, I discuss to what extent focus alternatives are construed on the basis of syntactic and/or prosodic focus marking by looking at focus marking in mismatching contexts. Mismatching contexts are contexts in which the licensing conditions of a given focus marking are not fulfilled, for example, givenness marking in a context where the marked constituent is not given, lack of relevant focus alternatives in a context, etc. We investigate to what extent and under what conditions listeners creatively amend the context to make sense of the focus marking. I will discuss experimental rating data as well as results from a picture selection task addressing these questions.

**Katrin Axel-Tober & Sigrid Beck**

**"DIACHRONIC PATHWAYS IN CONDITIONAL AND INTERROGATIVE  
COMPLEMENTIZERS: THE CASE OF GERMAN 'WENN'**

Abstract:

In our talk we are going to discuss two typical diachronic pathways in conditional and interrogative complementizers by using German WENN as an illustrative example. WENN developed its usage as a conditional complementizer, which is still the prevalent usage in present-day Standard German, from a *wh*-adverb in a free-choice relative construction. In certain dialects it was subject to a further change and came to be used as an interrogative complementizer (Axel-Tober & Weiß to appear). In those dialects where WENN has undergone further development, the conditional and interrogative complementizer have become homophonous. This so-called 'conditional-interrogative' link, which also occurs in English /*if*/, is widely attested in Indo-European languages and beyond. For both pathways we are going to propose that the pertinent reanalyses occurred in bridging contexts characterized by interpretive closeness in the sense of Constant Entailments (Beck & Gergel 2015, Axel-Tober & Beck 2024). As our approach does not hinge on a particular type of 'morpho-syntactic' shape of the subordinators/complementizers, our proposal has wider implications for the evolution of complementizers in further languages – Germanic and beyond."

**Roland Hinterholzl**

**Title: On the information structure underlying VP-ellipsis and coreference**

Abstract:

Traditionally, two types of anaphoric relations, binding and coreference are distinguished in the prominent approach, initiated by Reinhart (1983) and further developed by Heim (1998), Fox (2000), Büring (2005), Reinhart (2006) and Roelofsen (2008), which assumes that only one type of anaphoric relation, namely binding, is syntactically encoded (and thus subject to rules of syntactic well-formedness), while coreference is not syntactically encoded and thus not constrained by rules of grammar. I will show that the C-domain plays a crucial role in accounting for valid and invalid cases of coreference. In particular, I will argue that discourse anaphors are bound by a context operator, implying that the mechanism that corresponds to coreference is syntactically encoded. The crucial empirical evidence comes from the licensing of strict and sloppy readings in VP-ellipsis. The talk will discuss Dahl's puzzle, vehicle change and show that semantic identity and parallelism (necessary for licensing deletion) can be defined on the propositional and on the speech act level.

**Svetlana Petrova**

**Title: Correlates of argument clauses in Old and Middle Low German**

Abstract:

This is a follow-up of my previous DG/SG-talk dealing with the role of correlates of sentential arguments in diachronic scenarios on sentence embedding. I am analysing the corpus evidence from Old (ReA 1.2) and Middle Low German (ReN 1.1) which displays two types of correlates of argument clauses, namely the personal pronoun of the neuter *\_it\_* and the simple demonstrative *\_that\_*. The main focus is on the distribution as well as the syntactic and information-structural status of these correlative pronouns in terms of anaphoric pro-forms or 'true' placeholders, respectively. The main observation is that, as also shown for Old and Middle High German by Axel-Tober (2012), the distinction of a placeholder construction and one involving a pro-form seems less tightly related to the lexical choice of the correlative pronoun, in contrast to modern German correlative constructions involving these types of correlates (Pütz 1986, Sudhoff 2003, Axel-Tober et al. 2016). In this talk, I address an additional asymmetry concerning correlative constructions involving subject and object clauses, showing that they behave differently with respect to the distribution of the correlative elements and the givenness of the associated CP.

**Tara Struik & Chiara de Bastiani**

**Title: The background to Vaux: A multifactorial approach to verb order in Old English adverbial subclauses**

Abstract: TBA

**Ans van Kemenade**

**Title: Prosodic evidence for the syntactic status of auxiliaries in Middle English and early Modern English.**

Abstract:

There is a wealth of literature on the historical development of modals and other auxiliaries in which it is argued that they underwent a development from main verb status to auxiliary status (i.e. function word status). Contra much other literature that claims that this shift took place in the early 16th century, Getty 2002 argues, based on metrical evidence, that stress on (pre-) auxiliaries was lost before the end of the Old English period.

This paper presents syntactic and prosodic evidence that auxiliaries in V2 constructions over the Middle English period (1100-1500) could carry primary stress. I will present fine-grained evidence from metrical prose texts such as the *Ormulum* (ca. 1200) and from 13th and 14th century verse texts, that fronted auxiliaries in V2 constructions occur highly frequently with stress on the stem.

The syntactic shift to auxiliary status is argued by Lightfoot (1979); Warner (1993), Haerberli & Ihsane (2022) to have taken place in the early 16th century. I argue that this led to the loss of primary stress on fronted auxiliaries, as is evident from the loss of V2 in clauses with initial unstressed adverbs such as *then*.