

## **Cross-Linguistic Semantics**

Dozent: Dr. Annemarie Verkerk  
Veranstaltungsart: MA + Lehramt  
Zeit: DO 10.00 – 12.00  
Raum: Ernst-Abbe-Platz 8, SR 601  
Sommersemester 2017, 03.04.2017 - 07.07.2017

Cross-linguistic semantics is the study of how meaning is expressed in different human languages. It concerns itself also with questions of linguistic relativity: does language impact cognition? In this course we will explore typological differences in a set of semantic domains, including:

1. motion - How do different languages express movement from one location to the other?
2. frames of reference – How do different languages express the location of objects, do they use terms like north and south, left and right, or others?
3. color - Languages have very different systems of words for colors – how do languages acquire words for colors? Why do some languages only have a term for black, white, and red and no other colors?
4. nominal classification – Many languages across the world distinguish groups of nouns on the basis of animacy, shape, and other characteristics. What is the reason for that and does this verbal classification affect cognitive classification?
5. cutting and breaking – How do different languages carve up the semantic space of actions which separate objects into smaller parts?

### **Prerequisite**

Basic knowledge of grammatical categories

### **Requirements**

Active participations in class & in small experiments:

1. Eliciting and analyzing a Frog Story in language of your choice;
2. Eliciting cutting and breaking verbs using video materials;
3. Investigating color terms in parallel corpus

Term paper (either for this class or for “Language Universals and Language Typology” by Prof. Dr. Holger Diessel)

### **Readings**

The readings can be downloaded from word wise: <http://www.wordwise.uni-jena.de/>  
Password for this course:

### **Course Schedule**

#### **06.4. introduction**

What is Cross-Linguistic Semantics?

How do we gather data? Experiments, corpora.  
History of the field, what semantic fields have been covered so far? Which  
will we cover in the course?

**13.4. introduction, read:**

Evans, Nicholas. 2011. Semantic typology. *The Oxford Handbook of Typology*, ed. by J.J. Song, 504-33. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

**20.4. motion, read:**

Slobin, Dan I. 1996. Two ways to travel: Verbs of motion in English and Spanish. *Grammatical constructions: Their form and meaning*, ed. by M. Shibitani & S.A. Thompson, 195-219. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Zlatev, Jordan & Peerapat Yangklang. 2004. A third way to travel: The place of Thai in motion-event typology. *Relating events in narrative: Typological and contextual perspectives*, ed. by S. Strömquist & L. Verhoveen, 159-90. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

**27.4. motion, read:**

Croft, William, Johanna Barðdal, Willem Hollman, Violeta Sotirova & Chiaki Taoka. 2010. Revising Talmy's typological classification of complex event constructions. *Contrastive studies in construction grammar*, ed. by H.C. Boas, 201-35. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

**04.5 Guest lecture by dr. Mattis List on colexifications, read:**

Materials to be announced

**11.05 frames of reference, read:**

Pederson, E., Danziger, E., Wilkins, D., Levinson, S., Kita, S. & Senft, G. (1998) 'Semantic Typology and Spatial Conceptualization', in: *Language*, Vol. 74: 557-589.

Li, P. & Gleitman, L. (2002) 'Turning the Tables: Language and Spatial Reasoning', in: *Cognition*, Vol. 83: 265-294.

**18.05 frames of reference, read:**

Levinson, Stephen C. 2003. Language and mind: Let's get the issues straight! *Language in mind: Advances in the study of language and thought*, ed. by D. Gentner & S. Goldin-Meadow, 25-46. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Gleitman, Lila & Anna Papafragou. 2005. Language and thought. *The Cambridge handbook of thinking and reasoning*, ed. by K.J. Holyoak & R.G. Morrison, 633-61. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**25.05 Himmelfahrt, fällt aus**

**01.06 color, read:**

Kay, Paul & Luisa Maffi. 1999. Color appearance and the emergence and evolution of basic color lexicons. *American Anthropologist* 101.743-60.

**08.06 color, read:**

Lenneberg, Eric H. & John M. Roberts. 1956. The language of experience: A study in methodology. *International Journal of American Linguistics* 22, memoir 13.

Regier, Terry, Paul Kay & R. S. Cook. 2005. Focal colors are universal after all. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 102.8386-91.

**15.06 nominal classification, read:**

Senft, Gunter. 2000. What do we really know about nominal classification systems. *Systems of nominal classification*, ed. by G. Senft, 11-49. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**22.06 nominal classification, read:**

Imai, Mutsumi & Henrik Saalbach. 2010. Categories in mind and categories in language: Do classifier categories influence conceptual structures? *Words and the mind: How words capture human experience*, ed. by B.C. Malt & P. Wolff, 138-64. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

**29.06 cutting and breaking, read:**

Majid, Asifa, J. S. Boster & Melissa Bowerman. 2008. The cross-linguistic categorization of everyday events: A study of cutting and breaking. *Cognition* 109.235-50.

**06.07 cutting and breaking, read:**

Majid, Asifa, Marianne Gullberg, Mirjam Van Staden & Melissa Bowerman. 2007. How similar are semantic categories in closely related languages? A comparison of cutting and breaking in four Germanic languages. *Cognitive Linguistics* 18.179-94.