Overview: Semantic typology (ST) studies languages as engines for external expressions of speakers’ internal representations. It seeks to uncover universals and variation in the constraints different languages impose on the encoding of these representations, combining methods and approaches of semantics, pragmatics, field linguistics, language typology, and experimental psychology.

Goals: ST is a field of linguistic inquiry still very much in its infancy. Although the pioneering work of the Cognitive Anthropologists in the 1960s and 1970s has demonstrated the enormous potential of empirical studies in crosslinguistic semantics for shaping theoretical approaches on the interface between language and cognition, few broad-based and methodologically sound investigations have been carried out to date. An explicit research program for ST has been formulated by the members of the Language and Cognition Research Group at the Max Plank Institute for Psycholinguistics. The Nijmegen methodology involves the following steps:

a. Preliminary determination of parameters of variation on the basis of previous research
b. Construction of an etic grid that captures the possible value combinations of these parameters
c. Exhaustive encoding of the cells of the etic grid in sets of nonverbal stimuli
d. Collection of preferred descriptions and ranges of possible descriptions in a typologically broadly varied sample of unrelated languages with multiple speakers per language according to a standardized protocol
e. Additional elicitation aimed at probing the full semantic extension of the expressions collected in (d)
f. Tests to filter out pragmatically generated meaning components and isolate lexical (and constructional) semantic representations
g. Statistical analysis of correlations
h. Formulation of implicational generalizations.

The goal of this seminar is to familiarize students both theoretically and practically with the approach to ST sketched above so as to enable them to formulate and carry out their own research projects. To this end, we will discuss theoretical and methodological prerequisites and review key studies, starting with the work of the ethnosemanticists (Berlin & Kay; Berlin, Breedlove, & Raven; Kay & McDaniel; Lounsbury) and leading via some of the work conducted by members of the Language and Cognition Group in the domain of spatial semantics to new research in the field of event encoding directed by the instructor.

ST requires the collection of primary data from a wide variety of typologically diverse languages. This in turn presupposes the ability to collect and analyze semantic data in field research, i.e., in work with native speaker consultants. Part of the seminar is dedicated to familiarizing students with methods of semantic field work. This part is designed to be useful to students, not just in carrying out ST projects, but in any field research on problems of linguistic meaning. Students will be given the opportunity to conduct term projects using a stimulus of their choosing from a battery of different elicitation tools or developing their own design.
Prerequisites: LIN415/515 (Syntax I); LIN438/538 (Semantics I)

Meetings: TR 15:30-16:50 109 Baldy
Instructor: Dr. Jürgen Bohnemeyer – Office 642 Baldy Phone 645-0127
E-mail jb77@buffalo.edu Office hours TR 10:00-12:00

Coursework: Every student is expected to present a 20-to-30-minutes oral summary of one of the readings listed on the syllabus in class, based on a handout elaborated by the student. In addition, every student carries out an ST project involving data collection from a minimum of 2-3 speakers of a language other than the student’s L1. The project can be self-designed (bonus points!) and/or rely on one of a range of different stimulus kits created by the instructor and/or his former colleagues at the MPI for Psycholinguistics. The studies will include semantic and syntactic analysis of the collected data and write-up of a 5-to-10-page summary of the results; bonus points if a comparison to data obtained from (an)other language(s) (by other students/researchers or by the same student) is added. The overall grade will be computed as follows:

- Literature presentation, including handout – 30%
- Data collection project, including analysis, comparison, and report – 50%
- Overall participation – 20%

Outline
Syntax of the reading assignments:
- \(a; b\) – read \(a\) and \(b\)
- \(a; (b)\) – read \(a\) plus optionally \(b\)
- \(a/b\) – read \(a\) or \(b\), depending on which one was selected for discussion in class (and read the other optionally in addition if you’re interested)
- \((a,b)/c\) – read either \(a\) and \(b\) or \(c\), depending on which one was selected for discussion in class (and read the other optionally in addition if you’re interested)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>intro</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>this seminar; linguistic categorization; outline and course work</td>
<td>Levinson 2003</td>
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<tr>
<td>library studies</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>the classics: library studies I: lexicalization and polysemy patterns</td>
<td>Viberg 1984/Evans &amp; Wilkins 2000</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>the classics: library studies II: motion event framing</td>
<td>Talmy 2000: ch.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>semantics</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>field semantics; semantic elicitation</td>
<td>Vaux &amp; Cooper 1999: ch.4</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>the empirical basis of field semantics</td>
<td>Bohnemeyer 2003a</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>diagnostics in lexical semantics</td>
<td>Cruse 1986: ch.1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>folk definitions and the lexicon</td>
<td>Casagrande &amp; Hale 1967/Hale 1971</td>
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</table>

\[1\] Participation is assessed as follows: regular active participation – A; regular attendance and occasional active participation – B; regular attendance, no active participation – C; irregular attendance, no active participation: D; poor attendance, no active participation: F.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. New frontiers: ethnophysiography</td>
<td>O’Meara &amp; Bohnemeyer 2008</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1. Linguistic typology; the Nijmegen approach; basics of spatial semantics</td>
<td>Croft 1991: ch.1 / Jackendoff 1983 ch. 9 / Jackendoff &amp; Landau 1992 / Levinson &amp; Wilkins 2006a</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Topological relations markers</td>
<td>Levinson &amp; Meira 2003</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Spatial frames of reference I: typology</td>
<td>Levinson 1996</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>1. Spatial demonstratives</td>
<td>Levinson 2006 / Enfield 2003 / Bohnemeyer ms. / Diessel 1999</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>1. Parts and places</td>
<td>MacLaury 1989 / Levinson 1994 / Bohnemeyer 2008</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Semantic composition in spatial descriptions</td>
<td>Pérez Báez &amp; Bohnemeyer 2008</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>1. Events in language and cognition: basics</td>
<td>Tenny &amp; Pustejovsky 2000</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Event segmentation: the macro-event property</td>
<td>Bohnemeyer et al. 2007: 495-508; (Pawley 1987)</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>1. Event segmentation: motion events</td>
<td>Bohnemeyer et al. 2007: 508-532; (Bohnemeyer 2003b; Givón 1991)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Event segmentation: causal chains</td>
<td>Bohnemeyer et al. in press</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>1. Verbs of cutting and breaking: lexicalization</td>
<td>Majid, Boster, &amp; Bowerman 2008</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Verbs of cutting and breaking: argument structure</td>
<td>Bohnemeyer 2007</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>1. The Linguistic Relativity Hypothesis: state of the art</td>
<td>Gentner &amp; Goldin-Meadow 2004; (Bohnemeyer 2002)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Spatial frames of reference II: evidence for Whorfian effects</td>
<td>Pederson et al. 1998</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>1. The Levinson-Gleitman debate</td>
<td>Li &amp; Gleitman 2002 / Levinson et al. 2002 / Li, Abarbanell, &amp; Papafragou 2005 / Majid et al. 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>1. The bottom line: so how much variation is there in linguistic categorization?</td>
<td>tba.</td>
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</table>

**Reading list**


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Readings will be uploaded to UBlearn under “Course Documents” as we go along.


