ACLC Research Group: Lexical Constraints, 19 March 2021

Initiator: Eva van Lier

Summary:

In many languages, grammatical rules and processes are to some extent lexically restricted, in the sense that they apply to only a subset of lexical items. When these sub-classes are relatively small, the relevant grammatical phenomena are often considered non-canonical, exceptional, or idiosyncratic. Moreover, from the perspectives of learnability and processing, lexical restrictions would appear to be disadvantageous, because they increase the number of grammatical rules. Yet, lexical restrictions are cross-linguistically pervasive and often diachronically stable. This raises questions about what kinds of lexical constraints exist, about their role in language processing and language acquisition, and about their behavior in different genealogical and areal contexts.

This research group brings together researchers who try to answer (some of) these questions in the spoken or signed language(s) of their expertise. We will use a variety of methods (including description, typological comparison, corpus-study, and experiments) and theoretical frameworks (usage-based theory, FDG, generative approaches). Below, some collaborative sub-groups are suggested, including potential deliverables and activities. We plan to meet every two weeks.

Collaborative sub-groups

Description, typology, processing

- **Predicate classes and argument structure** (all projects are expected to yield journal articles)
  - o **Verb classes in sign languages: backwards verbs**
    Heleen Bos, Roland Pfau, Marloes Oomen, Cindy van Boven
  - o **Alternating verbs: Kamang, Chechen, typology**
    Katherine Walker, Pegah Faghiri, Zarina Molochieva, Eva van Lier
    Cong Luan Tran (BA Honours Program), Erik Westermann (rMA)
    Deliverables: two annotated corpora, in collaboration with multi-CAST project
    (https://multicast.aspra.uni-bamberg.de/)
  - o **Light verb constructions in Persian, Turkish, other Turkic languages, and heritage language varieties**
    Pegah Faghiri, Monique Flecken, Elisabetta Raganin (University of Venice)
  - o **Differential argument marking and non-canonical case marking**
    Sune Gregersen (University of Copenhagen): Oblique subjects in Middle English, typology of minority patterns in non-canonical argument structure
    Ewa Zakrzewska: Differential argument marking in Coptic
  - o **Lexical constraints on voice marking**
    Sune Gregersen (University of Copenhagen): passive alternation in Danish
  - o **Adjectival subclasses:** Lois Kemp
  - o **Argument structure mismatches in spontaneous speech errors:** Roland Pfau

- **Verbal categories (aspect, modality, evidentiality):**

- o **Slavic,** René Genis, corpus-based, comparative study of Slavic verbal aspect, especially prefixes (future PhD project); Slavic non-finite forms and aspect
  - o **Brazilian Portuguese and American Spanish,** Hella Olbertz, progressive aspect for the expression of temporariness (implicating counter-expectation) and simple (perfective) past for the expression of semelfactivity with individual verbs.
  - o **English:** Lois Kemp, evidential adverbs in complementation in English
  - o **Mandarin Chinese:** Hongmei Fang, habitual aspect

- - Auxiliaries:
  - o **Auxiliaries in sign languages:** Heleen Bos, Roland Pfau, Marloes Oomen, Cindy van Boven
  - o **Weakly grammaticalized auxiliary constructions in Spanish:** Hella Olbertz
  - o **Habitual auxiliary in Slowak:** René Genis

Theoretical modelling (Sterre Leufkens, Utrecht University)

- - We will organize an **"Interframework colloquium"** about different theoretical accounts of lexical constraints on grammatical structure. This will enhance contact between different theoretical persuasions
- - Some members will present their work at the 2022 FDG conference in School, the Netherlands

First and second language acquisition

- - **L1:** Jeannette Schaeffer, children's acquisition of lexical constraints
- - **L2:** Jan Hulstijn: Learner and native speaker Dutch corpora: Zipfian distribution and usage-based theory