

Grammar and Language Use

Type of course: MA.AA.SW10, LG/LR.AA.SE1/2
Time: Friday 12-2 p.m. (12:15 - 13:45)
Venue: Carl-Zeiss-Str. 3, SR 314
Workload: 5 ECTS



Course description

Perhaps contrary to what you may expect from the title, this seminar is not concerned with discourse-pragmatic aspects of grammatical structures in language use, such as different registers, styles, media or idiomatic language. Instead, it is devoted to a relatively recent view of language as an emergent, dynamic phenomenon: The so-called 'usage-based theory of language', which is at the heart of the course, holds that our linguistic knowledge (or what is sometimes called 'competence') derives exclusively from our individual linguistic 'biographies', i.e. from the totality of linguistic raw data that we have been exposed to in actual communicative situations ('performance'), and that we organise and abstract from these data by means of basic cognitive mechanisms that are also applied to the processing of other domains of knowledge. In the course of the semester, we will thoroughly familiarise ourselves with the research that supports this view of language. The phenomena to be looked at span a wide array of constructions from both morphology and syntax, and they will invite us to systematically relate data from language acquisition, corpus linguistics and diachronic change to each other. Overall, then, the course offers students a modern, comprehensive perspective on language that accommodates many of the phenomena they may have encountered during their studies, and invites them to see linguistic structure from a psychologically informed angle.

Requirements and marking system

- *All participants*: thorough **preparation** of each session and active class **participation** = a noticeable commitment to the course!
- All students *except* for those in their Vorbereitungsmodul: **oral presentation** (poster session) of a research article. The presentation is an obligatory requirement to be eligible for the exam or the term paper, but it will not contribute to your final mark for the course.
- *Vorbereitungsmodul*: **written or oral examination** during the exam period (dates TBA)
- *All others*: **choice** between a **final exam** (90 minutes, 18 February 2016, 10-12h) or a **written research paper** (15 pages, to be submitted by 31 March 2016).

Weekly preparation

An essential part (and requirement) of the course is your in-depth preparation of each session at home. This usually comes in the form of **preparatory texts** (excerpts from textbooks, handbook or journal articles, handouts, etc.) and accompanying **homework**.

The course management system

The course management system of our department, called **WORDWISE** (www.wordwise.uni-jena.de), will be the online platform of this class. It is there that you download the weekly texts, follow-up handouts and materials, etc. Important information on the organisation of the course (e.g. announcements etc.) will also be distributed via WORDWISE (to your email address). Therefore, please enrol into this course on WORDWISE (the password was announced in class) and stay updated: Make sure your email address on WORDWISE is valid and that you check it regularly!

Course programme (syllabus)

DATE	TOPIC AND OBLIGATORY LITERATURE	THEMATIC AND METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES	
1	23.10.15	Introduction to the course <i>Aims and structure of the course. Organisation. Background to the usage-based approach.</i>	Historical background to and some selected tenets of a cognitive and usage-based approach to language structure.
2	30.10.15	<i>Consolidation: Central concepts and traditional notions of morphosyntactic analysis</i> McGregor 2009: 56-64, 67-69 & 103-115	Morphemes, allomorphy and conditioning factors. Strong suppletion and other challenges for morphological analysis. Phrase structure and syntactic categories.
3	06.11.15	Usage-based approaches to morphology <i>Mental representation (I): Morphology and the mental lexicon</i> Haspelmath and Sims 2010: Ch.4	Paradigmatic processes in morphology and the moderate word-form lexicon. Storage and decomposition in the usage-based approach.
4	13.11.15	<i>Mental representation (II): Morphological schemas</i> Bybee 2001: 20-28	Usage-based conceptions of 'rules' and 'generativity'.
5	20.11.15	<i>Morphological productivity</i> Schmid 2011: Ch.6	Corpus-based measures of productivity and their underlying logic. Restrictions on productivity.
6	27.11.15	<i>Diachronic change in inflectional morphology</i> No text, but data-driven homework assignment	Understanding frequency effects over time (irregular verbs, syncretism and analogical levelling).
7	04.12.15	<i>Usage-based processes of morphological change</i> Haspelmath 2002: 51-56 & Bybee 2010: 105-119	Where does morphology come from, and where does it go? Morphologization, reanalysis, secretion, analogy.
8	11.12.15	Usage-based approaches to syntax <i>The emergence of syntactic constituency</i> Beckner and Bybee 2009	Chunking, automatization and more on grammaticalization.
9	18.12.15	<i>Item-based effects in syntactic change</i> Bybee and Thompson 1997	Pathways of lexical diffusion and synchronic persistence effects.
10	08.01.16	<i>Frequency effects in language production</i> Gahl and Garnsey 2004	Experiential effects on syntactic representation.
11	15.01.16	<i>Mental representation: Syntactic schemas</i> Diessel 2015	Schematicity and redundancy: Constructional templates and constructional networks.
12	22.01.16	<i>Exemplar- and prototype categories in syntax</i> Dąbrowska 2008	Gradient, exemplar-based representation of long-distance dependency constructions.
13	29.01.16	<i>Poster presentations on further empirical studies in usage-based syntax</i>	Familiarisation with complex research articles, their structure and methodologies. Presentation skills.
14	05.02.16	Hilpert 2008, Tily et al. 2009, Wasow et al. 2011, Bybee and Eddington 2006 Guidelines for Writing Papers in Linguistics (PDF)	
		Conclusion	
15	12.02.16	<i>Wrap-up of the course. Organisation of the term paper. Course evaluation.</i> Diessel 2011	Bring any remaining questions, especially also in relation to the term paper.

Initial overview of the framework and some relevant reference works

In the *Oxford Bibliographies on "Linguistics"* (ed. by Mark Aronoff), Diessel (2014) provides the following succinct description of what the usage-based approach is all about, and he also provides a short bibliography on some of its foundational works:

Since the beginning of modern linguistics—that is, since Ferdinand de Saussure's *Cours de Linguistique Générale*—it has been a standard assumption of linguistic research that the study of the linguistic system, or "langue," needs to be distinguished from the study of language use, or "parole." In structuralist and generative linguistics, language, notably grammar, is seen as a self-contained system including discrete categories and combinatorial rules that are analyzed without reference to usage and development. This view of language has been challenged by the usage-based approach, in which grammar and usage are inextricably connected. In this approach, language is seen as a dynamic system of emergent symbolic units and flexible constraints that are shaped by general cognitive processes involved in language use. The usage-based approach has evolved from research in functional and cognitive linguistics combined with psycholinguistic research on sentence processing and language acquisition. The general goal of this approach is to develop a framework for the analysis of linguistic structure as it evolves from general cognitive processes such as categorization, analogy, automatization, and (joint) attention, which are not only relevant for language, but also for many other cognitive phenomena, such as vision, memory, and thought. In order to understand why linguistic structure is the way it is, usage-based linguists study language development, both in history and acquisition. On the assumption that language development is crucially influenced by the language user's experience with particular linguistic elements, usage-based linguists have emphasized the importance of frequency of occurrence for the analysis of grammar. There is a wealth of recent results indicating that frequency has an enormous impact on the language users' behavior in communication and information processing, and on the development of linguistic structure in acquisition and change.

Foundational works:

The usage-based approach has evolved from various strands of research in functional and cognitive linguistics and psycholinguistics. Of particular importance are the works of Joan Bybee and Ronald Langacker. A central theme of Bybee's research in Bybee 1985 and Bybee 2010 is the effect of frequency on usage and development. Langacker 1987 is primarily concerned with the conceptual foundations of linguistic structure. Hopper 1987 is a programmatic paper that characterizes grammar as an "emergent system" of fluid structures that are constantly restructured and reorganized. Givón 1979 is concerned with the influence of discourse and communication on the development of grammar, both in history and acquisition, and Croft 2000 outlines a new framework for the usage-based analysis of language change based on concepts from evolutionary biology. Tomasello 2003 presents a usage-based theory of first language acquisition; Goldberg 2006 is concerned with the emergence of grammatical generalizations and the nature of our grammatical knowledge; and Bates and MacWhinney 1989 proposes a psycholinguistic model of sentence processing and acquisition, the "Competition Model," that is closely related to usage-based research in functional and cognitive linguistics.

Bates, Elizabeth, and Brian MacWhinney (1989). Functionalism and the Competition Model. In: *The Crosslinguistic Study of Sentence Processing*. Edited by Brian MacWhinney and Elizabeth Bates, 3–73. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Bybee, Joan (1985). *Morphology: A Study of the Relation between Meaning and Form*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Bybee, Joan (2010). *Language, Usage, and Cognition*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Croft, William (2000). *Explaining Language Change: An Evolutionary Approach*. London: Longman.

Givón, Talmy (1979). *On Understanding Grammar*. New York: Academic Press.

Goldberg, Adele E. (2006). *Constructions at Work: The Nature of Generalization in Language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hopper, Paul (1987). Emergent grammar. In: *Proceedings of the Thirteenth Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society*. Edited by Jon Aske, Natasha Beery, Laura Michaelis, and Hana Filip, 139–157. Berkeley, CA: Berkeley Linguistics Society.

Langacker, Ronald W. (1987). *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar. Vol. 1: Theoretical Prerequisites*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Tomasello, Michael (2003). *Constructing a Language: A Usage-Based Theory of Language Acquisition*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bibliography of the basic course literature

Beckner, Clay and Joan Bybee (2009) A usage-based account of constituency and reanalysis. *Language Learning* 59: 27–46.

Bybee, Joan (2001). *Phonology and Language Use*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [20–28]

Bybee, Joan (2010). *Language, Usage and Cognition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [Ch.6]

Bybee, Joan and David Eddington (2006). A usage-based approach to Spanish verbs of 'becoming'. *Language* 82.2: 323–355.

Bybee, Joan and Sandra Thompson (1997). Three frequency effects in syntax. *Berkeley Linguistics Society* 23: 378–388.

Dąbrowska, Ewa (2008). Questions with long-distance dependencies: A usage-based perspective. *Cognitive Linguistics* 19.3: 391–425.

Diessel, Holger (2015). Usage-based construction grammar. In Ewa Dąbrowska and Dagmar Divjak (eds.), *Handbook of Cognitive Linguistics*. Berlin: de Gruyter Mouton. 295–321.

Diessel, Holger (2011). Review article of 'Language, usage and cognition' by Joan Bybee. *Language* 87: 830–844.

Gahl, Susanne and Susan M. Garnsey (2004). Knowledge of grammar, knowledge of usage: Syntactic probabilities affect pronunciation variation. *Language* 80.4: 748–775.

Haspelmath, Martin (2002). *Understanding Morphology*. London: Arnold. [51–56]

Haspelmath, Martin and Andrea D. Sims (2010). *Understanding Morphology*. 2nd ed. London: Hodder Education. [Ch.4]

Hilpert, Martin (2008). New evidence against the modularity of grammar: Constructions, collocations, and speech perception. *Cognitive Linguistics* 19.3: 491–511.

McGregor, William (2009). *Linguistics: An Introduction*. London, New York: Continuum.

Schmid, Hans-Jörg (2011). *English Morphology and Word-Formation: An Introduction*. Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag. [Ch.6]

Tily, Harry, Susanne Gahl, Inbal Arnon, Neal Snider, Anuba Kothari and Joan Bresnan (2009). Syntactic probabilities affect pronunciation variation in spontaneous speech. *Language and Cognition* 1.2: 147–165.

Wasow, Thomas, T. Florian Jaeger and David M. Orr (2011). Lexical variation in relativizer frequency. In: *Expecting the Unexpected: Exceptions in Grammar*. Eds. Horst J. Simon and Heike Wiese. Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter. 175–196.