

Experiments in Linguistic Meaning

Dr. Kajsa Djärv & Dr. Prof. Maribel Romero

WHEN & WHERE

When: Monday 15:15 - 16:45

Where: Zoom <https://zoom.us/j/96535193443?pwd=M3JvQmpSeTJRlUw4Z2Z2p0MEVYN1ovZz09>

Office hours, Prof. Romero: Wednesdays 9h – 10h (please book a slot in advance via my secretary at angelika.albrecht@uni-konstanz.de)

Office hours, Dr. Djärv: Tuesdays 10h – 11h (please book a slot in advance by emailing me at kajsa.djarv@uni-konstanz.de)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides a hands-on introduction to experimental data collection concerning meaning in language. A range of methodological aspects will be covered, from identifying a research question and a falsifiable null hypothesis, to determining how different experimental paradigms (e.g. acceptability judgment, inference tasks, picture-selection, etc.) can be used to test different hypotheses. The empirical domain will include different semantic and pragmatic phenomena, such as focus, presupposition, implicature and gestures, in children and adults. As part of this course, students will also be introduced to some of the basic tools used in experimental design. The course aims to prepare students to design their own experiments to collect original data, and to place students in a strong position to critically evaluate empirical claims.

REQUIREMENTS & EVALUATION

Designing a pilot experiment (presentation + write-up = 6 credits) + (all in English)
Additional class presentation, if applicable (additional 3 credits)

READINGS & COURSE MATERIALS

There is no textbook for this class; readings for each topic are listed below and will be posted on the course website. There are three folders for readings in Ilias:

- Mandatory Readings: Part I (Methods)
- Mandatory Readings: Part II (State-of-the-art)
- Optional Readings: Part II – *inspiration for class project*

Additionally, here are some further recommended reading:

- Cummins, C. & Katsos, N. (2019) *The Oxford Handbook of Experimental Semantics and Pragmatics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Podesva, R. J., & D. Sharma (2014) (eds.) *Research methods in Linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Godfrey-Smith, P. (2003) *Theory and Reality*.

- Spiegelhalter, D. (2019). *The Art of Statistics: Learning from Data*. London: Pelican Books.
- Harford, T. (2021). *How To Make The World Add Up/The Data Detective: Ten easy rules to make sense of statistics*. London: Penguin.

COURSE OVERVIEW

PART I: Methods

April 12 *Linguistics and the study of meaning as an empirical science* (Djäv)

- Optional Readings: see Lecture 1 slides

April 19 *Experimental paradigms I: Acceptability judgements* (Djäv)

- Sprouse, J & Schütze, C.T. (2014). Judgment Data. In Podesva, R. J., & D. Sharma (2014) (eds.) *Research methods in linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (Optional: Sprouse, J & Schütze, C.T. (2014). Grammar and the use of data (2018). In B. Aarts, J. Bowie, & G. Popova (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of English Grammar*. (Esp. Sec. 3.3.)

April 26 *Experimental paradigms II: Truth-value judgements* (Djäv)

- Reading: O. Bott, S. Featherston, J. Radó & B. Stolterfoht (2011). Experimental Methods in Semantics. In C. Maienborn, K. von Heusinger & P. Portner (eds.) *Semantics. An international handbook of natural language meaning*.

PART II: The state of the art

May 3 *Domaneschi et al 2017* (Romero)

- Negative polar questions and speaker bias
- Forced selection task
- Reading: Domaneschi et al (2017), *Glossa*, 25 pages

May 10 *Bade & Schwarz 2019* (Romero)

- Indefinites and Maximize Presupposition
- Expt 1: Comprehension task with visual world and auditory stimuli: Acceptability/felicity judgement with Picture selection task, Eye tracking, Response times
- Expt 2: Forced choice production task
- Reading: Bade & Schwarz (2019), *CogSci*, 7 pages

May 17

- **Guest lecture:** Dr. Anna Czypionka (University of Konstanz) on German discourse particles (Magnitude Estimation)
- Reading: TBA

May 24 (No class: Pfingstmontag)

May 31 (No class: Lecture-free period)

June 7

- **Guest lecture:** Dr. Andrea Beltrama (University of Pennsylvania) on social meaning
- Reading: TBA

June 14 *Djäv & Bacovcin 2020* (Djäv) (Consolidation week???)

- Factivity, projection, and QUD
- Auditory Stimuli and Likert Scale judgement data
- Expt 1: Inferential judgement task to measure projection with auditory S
- Expt 2: Acceptability judgement of auditory S given explicit QUD
- Reading: Djäv & Bacovcin (2020), JoP, 22 pages

June 21 *Sauerland & Yatsushiro and/or Zehr et al* (Romero)

- Zehr et al (2016, SALT) on $\forall/\exists$ projection from *none*; children vs. adults (20p)
 - Truth-value judgement task using Covered Box paradigm
 - One experiment with children, one with adults
 - semantics, pragmatics, semantic/pragmatic, theory, acquisition
- Sauerland & Yatsushiro (2018, SuB) on acquisition of disjunction in German (8p)
 - Truth-value judgement task using puppets; child and adult age groups
 - semantics, acquisition
- Reading(s): TBD

PART III: Designing your own pilot experiment

June 28 *Practical session: designing an experimental study* (Djäv, Romero)

- Identifying a research question and the best method for answering it
- We'll design a very small study: the steps, including notes on putting your fillers and controls to good use, and some common pitfalls and attempting to avoid them.
- Reading: TBD

July 5 “Our” Consolidation Week: Student meetings with Kajsa & Maribel during the week.

July 12

- Student presentations (experimental designs for project & Referat, if applicable)

July 19

- Student presentations (experimental designs for project & Referat, if applicable)