Introduction to the Theory of the Lexicon (Einführung in die Theorie des Lexikons)

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Class time: Monday 12:30–14:00
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1 Course Outline

In this course, we will be concerned with what people know about words, particularly their semantic characteristics. We will investigate the structure of the lexicon from a semantic perspective, examining what information nouns, verbs, and adjectives carry with them, and how this information is structured in lexical entries. Both lexical semantics and grammatically-relevant aspects of lexical meaning will be examined. Potential topics include argument structure, argument alternations, qualia roles, eventivity and stativity, lexical aspect, the mass/count distinction, and scale structure. Along the way you will gain experience in how to analyze lexical meaning, and how to use tools from contemporary lexical semantics, particularly Generative Lexicon theory, to develop novel and in-depth analyses of word- and morpheme-level meaning. The language of instruction for the course is English, but questions can also be asked in German. The course presupposes some basic familiarity with semantics, logic, and morphology (Einführung Semantik, Einführung Morphologie, Methodenkurs Logik).

2 Requirements

BN: Complete all reading assignments in the course by doing a small writing assignment about the paper. The papers will be uploaded to ILIAS.

AP: All the requirements for a BN, in addition to writing a final paper. If you are interested in an AP, come talk to us, so that we can talk about a topic suitable for the course.

3 Schedule

This is an overview of the topics in the course. Readings will be posted on the ILIAS course website. Please see in-class handouts for information on what the particular writing assignment is for each reading, and how to turn it in.

7 October	Introduction 'What is the lexicon'?
14 October	What is contained within a lexical entry?
21 October	Verbs: arguments, argument structure, and thematic roles
28 October	Verbs: unexpressed & default arguments
	Pustejovsky (1995, section 5.2)
4 November	Verbs: event structure, linking, and verb alternations
	Fleischhauer (2016, p. 66–83)
11 November	Verbs: event structure, linking, and verb alternations
18 November	Verbs: monotonicity
	Koontz-Garboden (2007)
25 November	Nouns: concept types
	Löbner (2011, sections 1 & 2)
2 December	Nouns: argument structure and possession
	Vikner & Jensen (2002)
9 December	Nouns: types of nominals, qualia structure
16 December	Nouns: mass/count distinction
	Krifka (1991)
23 December	No class (winter break)
30 December	No class (winter break)
6 January	Multi-word expressions and lexicalization
13 January	How complex can lexical entries be?
	Beavers & Koontz-Garboden (2012)
20 January	What is an impossible word?
27 January	Final session

References

Beavers, John & Andrew Koontz-Garboden. 2012. Manner and result in the roots of verbal meaning. *Linguistic Inquiry* 43(3). 331–369.

Fleischhauer, Jens. 2016. *Degree gradation of verbs*. Düsseldorf University Press.

Koontz-Garboden, Andrew. 2007. Monotonicity at the lexical semantics–morphosyntax interface. In Emily Elfner & Martin Walkow (eds.), *Proceedings of North East Linguistic Society 37*, .

Krifka, Manfred. 1991. Massennomina. In Dieter Wunderlich & Arnim von Stechow (eds.), *Semantik – Ein internationales Handbuch zeitgenössischer Forschung*, 399–417. Berlin: de Gruyter.

Löbner, Sebastian. 2011. Concept types and determination. *Journal of Semantics* 28(3). 279–333.

Pustejovsky, James. 1995. *The generative lexicon*. The MIT Press.

Vikner, Carl & Per Anker Jensen. 2002. A semantic analysis of the English genitive: Interaction of lexical and formal semantics. *Studia Linguistica* 56(2). 191–226.