

Semantics in the Netherlands VII

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1 From the editors

As enthusiastic organisers of the seventh edition of the *Semantics in the Netherlands-day (SiN VII)* (6 November 2009), we are now delighted to present the conference proceedings, published as a special issue of the *Linguistics in Amsterdam* on-line journal.

The SiN VII conference aimed at and, in our view, fully succeeded in providing a launching platform for graduate students in the Netherlands, working in various frameworks on a large range of topics in semantics. We were pleasantly surprised by the variety of topics discussed on this SiN edition. Six Ph.D. student speakers participated, followed, at the end of the day, by a special guest: our keynote speaker, prof. Fred Landman (Tel Aviv University). We would like to thank him once again for his inspiring talk and his participation.

We were also impressed by the quality and the diversity of the Ph.D. students' presentations. Our first speaker, Marie-Elise van der Ziel (Utrecht University), prepared a talk on L1 acquisition of scope freezing in Dutch, but unfortunately she was unable to join us due to illness. Therefore, we started the day with Ruggero Montalto's (Groningen University) presentation on scalar implicatures. Ruggero presented the results of a series of experiments he performed with children and adults to find out how several nearly-synonymous scalar implicatures work in Italian. The following speaker was Idikó Berzlánovich, also from Groningen University. She analysed lexical cohesion in encyclopedia entries and fundraising letters, showing that the factive descriptions of the former and the illocutionary force of the latter are clearly reflected by lexical cohesion: encyclopedia entries are characterised by hyponymic and meronymic relations, whereas fundraising letters contain collocation relations.

Sonja Gipper (Max Planck Institute, Nijmegen) presented a paper on evidentiality in Yurakaré, a language spoken in Central Bolivia. She pointed out that evidentiality markers are primarily used in this language with an interactional function, that is, not to provide information on the source but to request information and invite agreement. Sonja was followed by Hadil Karawani (ACLC/ILLC, University of Amsterdam), with a presentation on counterfactuals. Hadil argued that a counterfactual is not just evoked by past morphology; rather, it results in a compositional way from several temporal and modal features.

After lunch, the conference continued with Erwin Komen's (Radboud University Nijmegen) talk on negative concord in the Northeast Caucasian language Chechen. Chechen is a negative concord language, but it is special, in that negative concord may be overridden. Erwin analysed this phenomenon within the Optimality Theory framework. His talk was followed by a presentation by Bert le Bruyn (Utrecht University), who pleaded that the French article *des* should not be treated as a plural indefinite article, but rather as a partitive. He argued for this idea by means of a semantic-pragmatic feature analysis, as well as by referring to the diachronic evolution of French *des*.

We concluded the day with an inspiring talk by our keynote speaker, Fred Landman (Tel Aviv University). His SiN VII presentation, based on joint work with Susan Rothstein (Bar Ilan University), served at the same time as an ACLC seminar talk. Fred Landman offered a solution to the puzzle why, for instance, *?John arrived at his vacation destiny for six hours* is infelicitous, whereas *Tourists arrived at the hotel for hours* is perfectly fine. He showed that a correct analysis of such sentences must make use of his notion of incremental homogeneity, as well as of kind-predication.

SiN VII ended in a relaxed atmosphere, with a few drinks and a feeling of accomplishment and satisfaction. All participants seemed to agree with us that SiN VII was an interesting, fruitful and enjoyable event. This was undoubtedly due first of all to the valuable presentations of our speakers, to whom we are truly grateful. We would also like to thank our chairpersons (Robert Cirrillo, Katrin Schulz, Hedde Zeijlstra and Kees Hengeveld), for their indispensable contribution, as well as all the other conference attendants.

As a reaction to our invitation, some of the speakers subsequently submitted a paper based on their presentation. We made a careful selection of these papers, which resulted in this volume. In our opinion, the present issue of *Linguistics in Amsterdam* shows that the SiN series of conferences are not just a launching platform; rather, they have become a tradition. We are therefore very pleased that the Center for Language Studies (CLS) of Radboud University Nijmegen decided to organise the eighth SiN edition.

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