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The so-called ‘ethical datives’ (ED) have received linguists’ attention in various languages and through the prism of various theoretical approaches, typically focusing on the 2\textsuperscript{nd} pers. sg. variant. This bias no doubt stems from the most commonly encountered pragmatic properties of EDs, which is their inherent hearer-centered nature, and is also supported by ED distribution cross-linguistically, which is consistent with two referential hierarchies relevant in argument expression (referential types and sg/pl hierarchy, with discourse participant in sg being the highest ranking combination). While the ED inventory is not universally restricted to only indexing the addressee, non-2nd pers. patterns are still rather poorly understood. Particularly the 1\textsuperscript{st} pers. pl. offers an interesting puzzle in that its referential range as well as pragmatic functions are much less straightforward, having to do both with the speaker reference and the plural. On the basis of Czech conversational data, I explore the interactional properties of the plural dative pronoun and come to the conclusion that the conversational context clearly motivates special intersubjective meanings concerning the nature of evidence in combination with expressing specific kinds of collectivity based on potentially shared interest. Although Czech is not an evidential or egophoric language in the standard sense, the usage of these datives presents a mixture of evidential, epistemic and at the same time attention-grabbing functions, albeit from a slightly different perspective. The analysis also shows that the production and reception of these datives in actual discourse involves conventional expectations about their form, meaning, and function, on a par with any other piece of grammatical knowledge speakers must share in order to use and interpret these items with a native-like fluency. I make use of the multidimensional nature of grammatical constructions, in order to represent these forms as a piece of conventional linguistic knowledge and to demonstrate how the cognitive, interactional, and grammatical aspects of linguistic structure can be integrated in a single, formalizable representation.
Language is at once impressively repetitive and impressively creative. This presentation brings together behavioral, neural, and theoretical evidence that combine to demonstrate that speakers retain a vast amount of item-specific linguistic knowledge while they also generalize over that knowledge. I will focus on several ways in which the functions of constructions play a key role in online processing, generalization, and representation.
Are cognitive universals of language a myth?

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While there was a lot of enthusiasm for language universals from the 1960s through the 1990s, this seems to have given rise to widespread skepticism in the 2000s: Generative grammarians are no longer optimistic about the parametric model, and Evans & Levinson (2009) have prominently tried to debunk “the myth of language universals”. In this talk, I will outline some of the reasons for these developments, but I will end up with a more optimistic assessment: While we need to be more cautious with sweeping claims and cannot always move directly from observed cross-linguistic patterns to claims about their cognitive foundations, there are indeed robust patterns in the grammatical diversity of languages, and their explanation requires a cognitive component.

The phenomena I will talk about come from three different domains: coexpression patterns, word order patterns, and form-frequency correspondence patterns.

Coexpression universals (also known as polysemy or multifunctionality patterns) have been successfully modeled by semantic maps, but whether these can be regarded as “cognitive maps” is a matter of dispute (cf. Cristofaro 2010, Croft 2010). I will emphasize that the nodes in a comparative semantic map need to be comparative concepts (Haspelmath 2010), and that semantic-map statements cannot replace language-specific semantic analysis.

Word order universals have been claimed to be unsupported by a diachronic-typological approach (Dunn et al. 2011), but there is in fact excellent evidence for most of the Greenbergian generalizations (Dryer 2011), and some kind of cognitive explanation seems required, even though it is not easy to say what it is, because word order is a very stable feature of languages.

The clearest class of cognitively motivated universals that I will talk about is the large set of form-frequency correspondence universals (also known as “typological markedness patterns”). I will in particular report on recent research on causal-noncausal alternations (Haspelmath et al. 2014) and uniplex-multiplex alternations (Haspelmath & Karjus 2016), showing that patterns which have often been given a semantic explanation in fact have an explanation in terms of predictability and economy of coding. This is a cognitive explanation, but it requires crucial reference to the interactional nature of human language.

References
Baseline and Elaboration

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Many aspects of language and cognition involve an asymmetry describable in terms of a baseline (B) and various dimensions and levels of elaboration (E). Some examples are: any departure from a norm; the relation between an autonomous structure and one dependent on it; a prototype within a complex category; the activation of a unit to categorize a target; and a core system within a larger system. The baseline has some kind of priority—being already established, in place, or under control—and is generally more substantive than elaborating elements. B/E organization is reflected in the control cycle, a very general cognitive model with many manifestations in everyday experience. Elements of this model are an actor, the actor’s dominion (the structure it controls—corresponding to the baseline), a field of potential interaction, and a target which the actor captures and incorporates in the dominion (elaboration). Since elaboration produces a higher-level baseline, B/E organization involves successive strata, each a substrate for the next, which draws on additional conceptual resources creating a wider range of potential. Seriality and hierarchy represent special cases of this layered organization: in a serial structure each element provides the substrate for interpreting the next; and in composition, component structures function as a dual baseline for apprehending (“capturing”) the more elaborate composite structure. Recognizing B/E organization eliminates the need to posit “zero” elements, as the zero member of a system is simply the baseline structure.
Theory: the Entrenchment-and-Conventionalization Model.
Methods: corpus-crunching, web-crawling, brain-imaging, and eye-tracking

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In tune with the motto of this conference – bringing theory and method together – this talk sketches the outlines of a model of how language works and illustrates several methods for testing some of its predictions.

The model is referred to as the Entrenchment-and-Conventionalization Model (cf. Schmid 2014a, 2014b, forthcoming; Schmid and Mantlik forthcoming). It is a usage-based, emergentist, dynamic, procedural, and sociocognitive model. It strives to be unitary and parsimonious while being able to produce testable predictions. The key components of the model are usage and the activities involved in it, cognitive processes taking place in the minds of language users (subsumed under the label entrenchment), social processes taking place in social situations and speech communities (subsumed under the label conventionalization), and various types of forces acting on usage, entrenchment, and conventionalization. The model predicts that the interaction of the four components brings about and perpetuates linguistic structure.

Following a short description of the model and some of its central predictions, four case studies will be presented. These probe different aspects of the model by using different methodologies.

First (“corpus-crunching”), selected data from a historical corpus study (Schmid and Mantlik forthcoming) will be used to demonstrate the need to take individual differences in types and degrees of entrenchment into consideration. The findings suggest that there is massive individual variation going on below the surface of apparent homogeneous conventionality, thus stressing the need to separate individual entrenchment from collective conventionalization.

Second (“web-crawling”), insights from a longitudinal web-based study on neologisms carried out by Daphné Kerremans will be reported (Kerremans, Stegmayr and Schmid 2012, Kerremans 2015). A tailor-made webcrawler, the so-called Neocrawler, retrieves new occurrences of selected neologisms from the Internet. The data are coded in such a way that some of the main factors influencing the success or failure of neologisms can be determined and their effects measured. The study investigates the pragmatic and social forces acting on conventionalization processes, and also looks into the role of entrenchment processes that foster or impede the diffusion of neologisms.

Third (“brain-imaging”), a work in progress by Yu-Chun Chang (Chang, Lee and Schmid 2014, accepted) using ERP-measures to illuminate the way in which constructs are processed by the brain will be reported. The participants of the study belong to two groups: members of local churches in Taiwan and a control group of non-members. Stimuli for the test – a passive oddball design targeting mismatch negativity (MMN) – include expressions typically used by the target group, but also understandable to participants in the control group. Results indicate that the target and control group participants process the stimuli differently, indicating that exposure to and use of utterance types affect degrees and types of entrenchment in ways that are predicted by the Entrenchment-and-Conventionalization Model. Revealing neuronal and cognitive substrates of social variation, the study demonstrates key aspects of the interaction between entrenchment and conventionalization processes.

Fourth (“eye-tracking”), insights gained by Franziska Günther (Günther 2014, forthcoming) will be discussed. Using the eye-tracking method, her work targets the link between linguistic construal and linguistic relativity, with a particular focus on speech community-internal variation. Günther finds that whether or not language-perception and language-cognition effects occur depends on the linguistic preference patterns of individual speakers and thus presumably on patterns of entrenched linguistic knowledge. This has very strong implications for research on linguistic relativity and indicates that entrenchment is not only subject to social variation, but also to variation between individual speakers.

Overall, the four studies support central assumptions of the Entrenchment-and-Conventionalization Model:

- the assumed benefit of separating cognitive and sociopragmatic processes for an adequate description of the emergence, persistence, and change of linguistic structure
- the prediction that highly conventional constructions are “represented” and processed differently by members of the speech community and remain subject to variation and change
the idea that linguistic entrenchment is described fruitfully in terms of varying degrees of routinization and schematization of different types of associations

References

Chang, Yu-Chun, Charlene L. Lee & Hans-Jörg Schmid (accepted). Your Chinese is different from mine? Conventionalization of constructions as indicated by mismatch negativity. Poster to be presented in Error Signals from the Brain - 7th Mismatch Negativity Conference (MMN 2015), University of Leipzig, Leipzig, Germany.


Iconicity, a resemblance between properties of linguistic form (both in spoken and signed languages) and meaning, has traditionally been considered to be a marginal, irrelevant phenomenon for our understanding of language processing, development, and evolution. Rather, the arbitrary and symbolic nature of language has long been taken as a design feature of the human linguistic system. In the talk, I will propose an alternative framework in which iconicity in face-to-face communication (spoken and signed) is a powerful vehicle for bridging between language and human sensori-motor experience, and, as such, iconicity provides a key to understanding language development, processing and evolution. In development, iconicity might play a critical role in supporting referentiality (learning to map linguistic labels to objects, events etc. in the world), which is core to vocabulary development. In language processing, iconicity could provide a mechanism for grounding language in our sensory and motor systems, which is core to meaningful communication. Finally, in evolution iconicity might have played a key role in the development of displaced reference, a core property of our linguistic system.