BCGL 17
Categories & categorization

The Center for Research in Syntax, Semantics, and Phonology (CRISSP) of KU Leuven invites abstracts for the 17th edition of the Brussels Conference on Generative Linguistics (BCGL 17), to be held on 12–13 December 2024. The conference will take place in Brussels and the theme of BCGL 17 is *Categories & categorization*.

At an intuitive level, lexical categories like noun, verb, or adjective seem like they should belong to the very core of any theory of natural language. As is well-known, however, this naive conception has been a lively topic of debate—and dispute—since the early days of generative grammar: lexical categories have been argued to be derived notions that need to be further decomposed into smaller primitives (see Chomsky 1970 and the ensuing tradition), the boundaries between the various categories have been argued to be 'fuzzy', not sharp (see Ross 1972, 1974), not all categories are thought to be created equal (see e.g. Borer 2013:371–378), with some possibly derived from others (see e.g. Amritavalli and Jayaseelan 2003, Kayne 2008). Meanwhile, in the typological literature, the very universality of categories like 'noun' or 'verb' is frequently called into question (Bloomfield 1933, Evans and Levinson 2008, Rijkhoff and van Lier 2013, Haspelmath 2020). Needless to say, these issues multiply as soon as we also include 'less canonical' word classes such as adverbs or prepositions into the discussion, or when we consider diachronic developments related to word classes—like the development of adjectives and adpositions from verbs or nouns—and the 'intermediate' positions these developments can halt or pause at (Corver and van Riemsdijk 2013, Song 2019, Cavirani-Pots 2020).

Closely related to these topics is the matter of the lexical-functional divide. If lexical categories are split up into categorizing heads and lexical roots, then the role of categorization is taken over by formal features and functional projections. This raises the question of whether we should make a distinction between those functional heads that are specialized for categorization (cf. 'little *x*'-heads in Distributed Morphology (Halle and Marantz 1993) or C-functors in Borer (2013)) and 'regular' ones. And what role is left for the purely lexical—conceptual and/or phonological—material? Are there categoryless, syntactically inactive roots present in the syntactic derivation (Harley 2014, Borer 2013) or not (Ramchand 2008, Starke 2009, Aronoff 2013)? Are (some) derivational affixes roots (De Belder 2011, Lowenstamm 2014, Creemers et al. 2018)?

BCGL17 welcomes presentations that address these and related topics. They include, but are not limited to, questions such as the following:

- Are categories primitives of the grammar? If so, what are these primitives? If not, how should they be decomposed? What categorial features are there? Which categories or features—if any—are universal?

- What is the relation between (the functional sequence dominating) the different lexical categories? Are they independent, or do they (partly or wholly) overlap? What, if anything, distinguishes the lexical and functional lexicon in formal and/or featural terms?

- Do categorial heads exist? If so, how many types and how many flavours need to be distinguished? What is the status of derivational morphology? And what is the status of morphological conversion or zero-derivation: does it show that some categories contain others? If so, how?

- Do roots exist? If so, are they acategorial or do they bear category information?

Invited speakers

- Luke Adamson (Leibniz-Zentrum Allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft)

- Laura Grestenberger (Austrian Academy of Sciences)

- Bartosz Wiland (Adam Mickiewicz University)

Abstract guidelines

Abstracts should not exceed two pages, including data, references, and diagrams. Abstracts should be typed in at least 11-point font, with one-inch margins (letter-size; 8.5 by 11 inch or A4) and a maximum of 50 lines of text per page. Abstracts must be anonymous and submissions are limited to max. 2 per author, at most one of which is single-authored. Only electronic submissions will be accepted. Please submit your abstract using the EasyChair link for BCGL 17: `https://easychair.org/conferences/?conf=bcgl17`

Important dates

- First call for papers: 21 May 2024

- Second call for papers: 5 July 2024

- Abstract submission deadline: 15 August 2024

- Notification of acceptance: 30 September 2024

- Conference: 12–13 December 2024

Conference website

`https://www.crissp.be/bcgl-17-categories-categorization/`

Organising committee

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