

Word use and meaning: the morphology/pragmatics interface

August 12–14, 2020, University of Oslo

Invited instructors

Professor Hagit Borer FBA, Queen Mary University of London

Professor Robyn Carston, University College London

Professor Georges Rey, University of Maryland

Organizers

Dr. Nicholas Allott, UiO

Professor Terje Lohndal, NTNU & UiT

Dr. Ingrid Lossius Falkum, UiO

Description

Word meaning is one of the least well-understood areas of language. Uses of lexical words express concepts, but there is considerable evidence from intuitions and experimental data that the meanings stored in the mental lexicon are much more schematic: in particular, they are neutral between the different senses of polysemous words. Anti-lexicalist views in morphology typically also postulate thin semantics: e.g. in Borer's well-known framework, roots have no meaning at all. In recent publications Carston has argued that such roots provide the right foundation for theories of lexical pragmatics.

Assuming only general competence in linguistics, this course will bring students up to date with these developments in morphology, experimental and theoretical pragmatics and show them how the convergences described above are being explored in current work.

The following issues will be discussed:

- Anti-lexicalist morphology
- 'Wrong format' accounts of word meaning
- The relationship between the linguistic features of lexical items and polysemy

The course will consist of altogether 7 lectures. Allott and Lohndal, representing pragmatics and morphology, respectively, will outline what the core issues are across the disciplines that the course covers. Such an introduction has been immensely helpful to the students in previous summer institutes that they have contributed to organizing, and it seems equally helpful to have such an introduction for this course too. In addition, Falkum, whose work is at the center of the topic for this course, will be giving a lecture. Furthermore, three external lecturers will be contributing lectures: Borer, Carston and Rey. Borer and Carston are world-leading experts on these topics. Rey is a renowned philosopher of mind and cognitive science. He has argued that linguistic theory indicates that we need to distinguish between what combinations of lexical items are allowed by the language faculty and questions of the truth and conceivability of the semantic structures thus constructed. He has worked extensively on related issues in a forthcoming monograph on Chomskyan linguistics, and it would be most beneficial for the students to have him present during the entire course.

Preliminary schedule:

Time	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
10-12	Nicholas Allott & Terje Lohndal	Hagit Borer	Robyn Carston
12-13	Lunch		
13-15	Robyn Carston	Georges Rey	Hagit Borer
1530-1700		Ingrid Falkum	

There will be a course dinner on Day 2.

The course will also be open for MA students even though they can not take it for credit.

Requirements for 5ECTS

- Do readings before and during the course as assigned by the instructors.
- Attend all lectures
- Submit one research question in writing to the instructor after each lecture.
- Write a 2000-word paper on a chosen topic following the course