

Annual report 2016 of ACLC research group: Crosslinguistic Semantics

Coordinator: Maria Aloni

Web pages :

- [Institutional Discourse](#)
- [Institutional Discourse](#)

Current external funding:

- NWO-Vidi project. Inquisitiveness below and beyond the sentence boundary. Floris Roelofsen, 2015-2020
- ERC Starting grant. Quantification and Modality in the Realm of Questions, Floris Roelofsen, 2016-2021
- 2015-2016 KNAW Visiting Professor grant for Donka Farkas (Floris Roelofsen and Martin Stokhof)
- 2016-2017 KNAW Visiting Professor grant for Sabine Iatridou (Floris Roelofsen and Kees Hengeveld)

Participants in 2016:

- dr. M.D. Aloni (ILLC) senior researcher, coordinator
- dr. I.C. van Alphen (ACLC), senior researcher
- dr. P.J.E. Dekker (ILLC), senior researcher
- dr. R.M. Genis (ACLC), senior researcher
- prof. dr. J.A.G. Groenendijk (ILLC), senior researcher (emeritus)
- prof. dr. P.C. Hengeveld (ACLC), senior researcher
- dr. L. Hogeweg (ACLC), senior researcher
- A. Port (ILLC), PhD candidate
- dr. R. Risselada (ACLC), senior researcher
- dr. F. Roelofsen (ILLC), senior researcher
- dr. T. Yarbay Duman (ACLC), senior researcher
- dr. H. Zeevat (ILLC), senior researcher

Description of the research group:

In their search for the universal features and the range of variation in languages around the world linguists have paid most attention to phonological, morphological and syntactic properties. Much less attention has been paid to semantic and pragmatic features. To fill this gap, researchers from ACLC and ILLC have joined forces, addressing the questions involved in two different ways:

- I. the documentation of cross-linguistic semantic variation through typological research;
- II. the modelling of semantic variation in explicit formalizations.

This work is carried out in the context of several research projects, including:

- [Indefinites and beyond](#): evolutionary pragmatics and typological semantics.
- [Inquisitive Semantics](#).
- Discourse particles and lexical semantics across languages (L. Hogeweg and H. Zeevat)

Research highlights in 2016:

Most members of the cross-linguistic semantics group are also members of other ILLC/ACLCL research groups and the information about their research highlights is already summarized in other group reports. Here we only mention some of our results:

- Donka Farkas and Floris Roelofsen developed a theory of the interpretation of canonical declarative and interrogative sentences as well as several kinds non-canonical, 'hybrid' sentence types such as declarative questions (You got a haircut?) and tag questions (You got a haircut, didn't you?), proposing a principled division of labor between compositional semantics and post-compositional conventions of use.
- Sabine Iatridou, Kees Hengeveld, and Floris Roelofsen investigated the distribution and interpretation of question words used as indefinites across languages (with a specific focus on Russian, Mandarin, Greek, and Dutch).
- The Indefinites and beyond group (Maria Aloni and Angelika Port) investigated and compared the historical development of Free Choice Items (FCIs) across languages and one of the results is that the Dutch free choice indefinite is much closer to the Spanish FCI than to the German one.
- Maria Aloni developed a novel theory of the interpretation of disjunction in modal statements whose predictions with respect to the licensing of narrow scope and wide scope free choice inferences has been experimentally confirmed.
- Lotte Hogeweg organized a workshop together with Henk Zeevat and Geertje van Bergen about discourse particles at ESSLLI 2016. At this international workshop several researchers discussed their work on particles from various languages, showing that discourse particles from both related and unrelated languages have similar functions.

Valorisation

- Floris Roelofsen had a radio interview at BNR about polarity particles (yes/no) crosslinguistically: <https://www.bnr.nl/player/archief/20150623063915180>
- Lotte Hogeweg published an article on the emergence of discourse particles in VakTaal (a non-scientific journal for Neerlandici)

- Aloni and Dekker edited the Cambridge Handbook of Formal Semantics, published in the summer 2016
- <http://www.cambridge.org/us/academic/subjects/languages-linguistics/semantics-and-pragmatics/cambridge-handbook-formal-semantics>

The XLSX group also organized the following seminar in 2016:

- Tuesday 22 March 2016:
 - Matthias Passer (AACL): The Semanticity of Nominal Classification Devices: Introducing a Quantificational Account