

The evolution of lexical meaning: methods and models to observe how words change

The talk will focus on how lexical meaning changes over time. An important part of the presentation will deal with the quantification and observation of polysemy and colexification and in which way these can be indicative of meaning change of lexemes (François 2008). Semantic change is a problem child in comparative linguistics and etymology: word meanings are typically connected to historical and cultural changes in the past, and therefore difficult to reconstruct. There are different attempts to quantify this process, among others through colexification databases such as CLICS (Rzymiski et al. 2020). A core point in the presentation will be the problems connected to a use of quantitative data for reconstructing meaning by means of colexification and a phylogenetic comparative model (Carling et al. 2023). Further, a possibility to connect derived colexification data with databases will be opened and discussed.

Carling, Gerd, Sandra Cronhamn, Olof Lundgren, Victor Bogren Svensson, and Johan Frid. 2023.

"The evolution of lexical semantics: dynamics, directionality, and drift." *Frontiers in Communication* 8. doi: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2023.1126249>.

François, Alexandre 2008. "Semantic maps and the typology of colexification. Intertwining polysemous networks across languages." In *From Polysemy to Semantic change: Towards a Typology of Lexical Semantic Associations.*, edited by Martine Vanhove, 163-215. Amsterdam: Benjamins.

Rzymiski, Christoph, Tiago Tresoldi, Simon J. Greenhill, Mei-Shin Wu, Nathanael E. Schweikhard, Maria Koptjevskaja-Tamm, Volker Gast, Timotheus A. Bodt, Abbie Hantgan, Gereon A. Kaiping, Sophie Chang, Yunfan Lai, Natalia Morozova, Heini Arjava, Nataliia Hübler, Ezequiel Koile, Steve Pepper, Mariann Proos, Briana Van Epps, Ingrid Blanco, Carolin Hundt, Sergei Monakhov, Kristina Pianykh, Sallona Ramesh, Russell D. Gray, Robert Forkel, and Johann-Mattis List. 2020. "The Database of Cross-Linguistic Colexifications, reproducible analysis of cross-linguistic polysemies." *Scientific Data* 7 (1):13. doi: 10.1038/s41597-019-0341-x.