

Ad hoc categories and their linguistic construction. Typology, diachrony and use

Workshop proposal for the 49th SLE meeting,
Naples, August 31 – September 3, 2016

Call for papers *(apologies for multiple posting)*

Convenors:

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Introduction and aims

A large bulk of psycholinguistic research (Barsalou 1983, Smith & Samuelson 1997, among many others) has shown that the traditional view of categories as fundamentally stable objects is untenable in various respects. Categories, instead, as Croft & Cruse (2004: 92) put it, “are inherently variable, and created on-line as and when needed”.

Languages have overt strategies that make the online construction of categories “visible” and explicitly allow the hearer to identify some relevant exemplars as the starting point for an abstraction process leading to the on-line construction of a contextually relevant category.

These strategies include things as diverse as:

- (i) so-called list constructions or general extenders (e.g. Engl. “central Iowa and stuff” as a strategy to construct on-line the ad-hoc category “RURAL AREAS OF THE USA”),
- (ii) associative or similitive plural constructions (cf. (1) see Moravcsik 2003), by which speakers may extend the reference of a given noun to include some individual or entities typically associated with the referent of that noun,
- (iii) derivational collective morphology (cf. (2)), which can be used productively to create new lexical labels for ad hoc categories,
- (iv) so-called representative (Haspelmath 2007) or non-exhaustive connectives (cf.(3)), i.e. connectives that specifically encode that the two (or more) items that they connect are just members of a category including other similar elements,
- (v) reduplication (cf. (4)), which in some may be used with such a function, etc.

The on-line construction of categories is thus much more pervasive in grammar than one might assume, involving such diverse grammatical domains as number and plurality, lexical derivation, connectives and more transparent constructions such as general extenders. All these construction types share a common function but differ as to the way the category is abstracted away from the given exemplars.

This workshop aims to provide a unified approach to these constructions and to their common abstracting function, by gathering together studies that explicitly deal with the strategies that languages use to construct ad hoc categories on-line. We welcome cross-linguistic studies, taking into account more than one language, as well as studies dealing with the diachrony of these constructions and with their patterning in discourse and interaction, based on corpus data.

- cross-linguistic studies on constructions used to build ad hoc categories
- diachronic studies
- corpus-based research on the referential continuity of the exemplars and the category
- analyses of the discourse relevance and discourse phenomenology of ad hoc categories
- the cooperation of speaker and hearer in the construction of ad hoc categories in interaction

- psycholinguistic evidence for how these constructions are processed and the ad hoc categories construed
- semantics and pragmatics of exemplification
- ...

Abstracts

We invite short abstracts of 300 words, excluding references and examples. Abstracts should be in an editable format (e.g. .doc or .docx; no pdf will be considered). Abstracts should be sent *to the two workshop organizers*:

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The workshop will be part of the 49th annual meeting of the SLE in Naples, August 31 – September 3, 2016. Presentations will be maximally 20 minutes, allowing 10 minutes for discussion and room changes.

Important dates

The deadline for the submission of the short abstract is **November 10, 2015**.

Note that if your abstract has been included in the workshop and the workshop has been accepted, you will also have to prepare a full abstract and submit it to be reviewed by the SLE scientific committee. The deadline for the submission of full abstracts is **January 15, 2016**.

References

- Barsalou, L. W. (1983) “Ad hoc categories” *Memory and Cognition* 11/3, 211-227.
- Corbett, G. (2000) *Number*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Croft, W. & A. D. Cruse. 2004. *Cognitive Linguistics*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Haspelmath M. (2007). Coordination. In: T. Shopen (ed.), *Language typology and syntactic description*, vol. II: *Complex constructions*, 1-51, Cambridge: CUP.
- Moravcsik, E. (2003). “A semantic analysis of associative plurals”, *Studies in Language* 27/3: 469-503.
- Smith, L. B. & L. K. Samuelson. 1997. Perceiving and remembering: category stability, variability and development. In: K. Lamberts & D. Shanks (eds.). *Knowledge, concepts and categories*, 161–95. Hove: Psychology Press.