

PREFACE

This issue of *Linguistica Brunensia* was conceived with the idea to explore the meaning and use of various expressions in natural language from the formal perspective. The presented papers investigate primarily topics in semantics but also in syntax/semantics interface as well as pragmatics. Empirically, they cover linguistic phenomena in Germanic, Romance, and Slavic languages.

Regine Eckardt and **Qi Yu** explore the semantics of interrogatives and propose that the German particle *bloss* ‘just, only’ is a marker of extreme ignorance questions. They argue that *bloss* questions are not synonymous to *wh-in-heaven* questions though both types indicate ignorance and are similar in pragmatic content. The analysis is based on the idea that *bloss* signals that the speaker has dismissed answers to a given question that they initially considered likely.

Valerie Wurm studies expressions of knowledge in language and argues that certain attitude verbs are not only sensitive to belief worlds but also to alternatives thereof. The evidence comes from the properties of the modifier *genau* ‘exactly’ modifying verbs such as *wissen* ‘know’ in declarative embedding environments. This modifier is typically associated with expressing precision and it conveys that the relevant attitude holds to a specifically high degree.

Muriel Assmann contributes to the study of linguistic mechanisms related to information structure by discussing ordering effects of contrastive topics and foci in Brazilian Portuguese. She demonstrates that the distribution thereof strikingly resembles the pattern observed for Dutch. The core of the proposal is to interpret a contrastive topic as a focus-marked phrase in a specific syntactic configuration, specifically a focus-marked phrase that undergoes raising.

Finally, **Iveta Šafratová** investigates how natural language encodes the ontological kind/object distinction by analyzing the properties of prenominal and postnominal adjectives in Czech. Her main claim is that both types of adjectives can indicate that the whole noun phrase refers to a kind though they differ with respect to the nature of the kind they designate. While postnominal adjectives refer to natural kinds, prenominal adjectives can only indicate kinds established artificially.



To conclude, we would like to thank the authors for their contributions as well as the two anonymous reviewers of each article for their efforts and help. We hope that the readers will find the papers interesting and inspiring.

Marcin Wałgiel and Markéta Ziková
(guest editors)



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