

ERC Advanced Grant 2019
Part B1: Synopsis, CV, track record
Subjective Language: Its means and ends
(SUBLIME)

- Kjell Johan Sæbø
- University of Oslo
- 60 months

The SUBLIME project will investigate subjective language, the language about good and bad, right and wrong, beautiful and ugly, and countless variations on these themes – the language we use for sharing and imposing evaluations and opinions. We use subjective language when we praise or criticize, or tweet about somebody’s conduct on some occasion that it’s a dying shame, or when we comment that that’s ridiculous nonsense and the outcry goes too far.

Complementing objective language, subjective language forms a core part of communication, but one that has suffered comparative neglect in linguistics and its surrounding disciplines; as yet, methods and models for mapping and assessing subjective language are mostly missing.

The SUBLIME project sets out to redress this omission. Building on pioneering work by the PI, he and his team will

- ◊ develop and apply diagnostics for identifying and classifying, across languages, a wide variety of means of conveying subjective content,
- ◊ build semantic models which differentiate between objective and subjective content and between different forces and flavors of subjective content, and attune pragmatic models to what is done with subjective language, and
- ◊ contribute to uncovering how subjective language practices in public domains convey and influence our attitudes and dispositions.

These objectives are challenging but nonetheless within reach because of recent developments in formal semantics and because the PI and his team will be able to cross-pollinate methods and models that have not previously been brought together or brought to bear on subjectivity.

The project will leave distinctive imprints on semantics and pragmatics, but as importantly, it has potential for a positive impact on public discourse about language; still more widely, owing to the many faces and interfaces of subjectivity, it will offer new perspectives for text and discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, language technology, and philosophy of language.

Section a: Extended Synopsis of the scientific proposal

Languages are tools for requesting and supplying information and for (mis)representing the world. But they are also instruments for soliciting and sharing emotions, preferences and points of view, and they provide dedicated resources for that: Subjective language.

Thus generally and loosely stated, this is not a new insight. But in theoretical linguistics, and particularly in formal semantics and pragmatics, where more specific and precise knowledge would need to originate, a systematic bias towards objective language has left a significant gap in our understanding of what subjective language is and how it works. This gap is all the more serious as recent developments in adjacent disciplines – language technology, discourse analysis, media studies – strongly suggest that subjective language is gaining in importance in public life.

The present project is designed to redress that imbalance, advancing our grasp of subjectivity in language and our ability to recognize its forms and determine its functions.

1 Subjective language: illustration and delimitation

Subjective language is the language we use to communicate our emotions, opinions and evaluations: about good and bad, right and wrong, and countless variations on these concepts; with words whose semantic values depend on *our* values, not just on states of affairs but also on states of mind.

For illustration, contrast the statement (1) with the statement (2):

- (1) This was the largest audience to ever witness an inauguration ...
- (2) Kennedy's short sentences and simple words make his inaugural the best in history.

The size of an inauguration crowd is a matter of objective fact. It may be difficult to measure it – to give the accurate count, or to produce reliable evidence that one crowd is bigger than another – but everyone will agree that it is possible in principle. Concerning the quality of speeches, however, one can always find two persons who disagree but neither of whom is wrong.

Concepts of subjectivity play important roles in fields other than linguistics, most prominently, philosophy, psychology, and sociology. The notion of subjectivity at issue in linguistics and in this project, though not unrelated, is distinct, inasmuch as its focus is on how phenomena that depend on a subject's perspective are communicated through the medium of language.

2 Subjective language: a short state of the art

Subjective language is a stepchild in the study of linguistic meaning. Semantic theory and method are geared to objective language, and the insight that subjective language plays a distinctive role is only some fifteen years old. The main reason for this is that formal semantics, the dominant theory of linguistic meaning, owes its basic tools to logic, where sentence meaning is standardly modeled with truth conditions. For objective meaning, this makes good sense: there is a truth of the matter, and this truth can in principle be established by examining the world. Thus the truth value of (1) could be found by counting 45 crowds since 1789. Subjective meaning is a less good fit: if it makes sense to talk of true or false, telling one from the other is more of a discretionary matter, depending not only on the world but also on someone's outlook on it. Thus (2) above cannot be evaluated by measuring sentences and classifying words – its value depends on a subjective evaluation.

Discussion of how best to model this dependency began in earnest in the early 2000s, with the work by Kölbel (2004), MacFarlane (2005) and Lasersohn (2005). To be sure, a distinction had long been made between objective and subjective content, in particular regarding moral judgments, from Thomas Aquinas (*Summa Theologiae*) to Gibbard (1990). But integrating subjective content into the paradigm of formal semantics is a project of the present millennium, and it has generated a rich line of research with many innovations, like the theory formulated by Coppock (2018).

Still, this line of research is hampered by three severe limitations.

First, there is far from a consensus on how best to model the special dependency that subjective content is evidently subject to, and there is no concord on what expressions have subjective content or on whether the same dependency is in play in every case. Since Lasersohn (2005) formulated a ‘relativist’ semantics where words like *tasty* depend on a judge supplementing the time and world indices of evaluation, many scholars have proposed stating the same idea in different terms (Bouchard 2012, Bylinina 2017, among others), or argued for substituting a ‘contextualist’ theory (Pearson 2013, Silk 2016, among numerous others). Other proposals defend so-called ‘expressivism’ (Huvenes 2014) or define subjectivity as a pragmatic phenomenon (Kennedy and Willer 2016, *i.a.*). Some of the mentioned theorists take a narrow view of what expressions carry subjective meaning, concentrating on taste predicates; some take a wider view, whereas yet others, like Kennedy (2013), distinguish between narrow and wide concepts of subjectivity, or, like Vardomskaya (2018), argue that subjectivity is a context sensitive phenomenon in which diverse parts of language can share.

The state of the semantic study of subjectivity is thus rather immature, and it is a leading idea in the project that this is largely due to the second and third of the three mentioned limitations.

The second limitation concerns the empirical base of the field: the inventory of ways to express subjective content has not been properly explored. Most studies have focused on select adjectives, while in fact, it is clear that nouns, as in (3), and verbs are parts of the picture.

(3) Quite honestly, your opinions on Brexit are a nonsense.

Besides, once we look beyond formal semantics to less theoretically oriented neighbor disciplines – see below – various bodies of work suggest that the scope of subjectivity resources is even wider, spanning more levels of a language than its lexicon. Evaluations and opinions are evidently not only conveyed through words but also through constructions, discourse markers, intonation, and more. Connectedly, the diagnostics that can be used to tell whether an expression has subjective content have not yet been investigated on the scale called for in pioneering work by Sæbø (2009).

The third limitation on the study of subjectivity in formal semantics is its isolation from other lines of research which, while more descriptively oriented or more oriented towards applications, are essentially about the same object: Subjective language. In the following fields, subjective language is a focus of interest primarily in virtue of the functions it can have:

- Corpus linguistics and functional linguistics (see, e.g., Hunston and Sinclair 2000),
- critical discourse analysis and sociolinguistics (see, e.g., Englebretson 2007, White 2015),
- computational linguistics, specifically ‘sentiment analysis’ (see, e.g., Deng and Wiebe 2016).

These strands of research have passed ‘under the radar’ of the formal semantic study of subjectivity, and the other ways around. In consequence, knowledge about the pragmatics of subjective language, concerning the uses it is put to, is fragmented and less comprehensive and precise than it could be.

3 Subjective language: three reasons to care

The questions left by existing research provide strong motivation for studying subjective language in breadth and depth. There are three overarching lacunae of knowledge which call for action:

- ◊ The lacuna of the means of subjective language: we do not know the range of its sources, or how to distinguish subjectivity from objectivity or among different kinds of subjectivity.
- ◊ The lacuna of the essence of subjective language: as yet, no consensus has formed on what a good theory of the semantics and pragmatics of subjective language looks like.
- ◊ The lacuna of the ends of subjective language: we lack accurate knowledge about how speakers and writers use it to convey their values and to shape those of hearers and readers.

Filling these gaps will bring clear gains to the theory of natural language meaning and to applied branches of linguistics such as discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, and language technology, and in addition, it will lay the groundwork for a better informed public discourse about linguistic practices.

4 Subjective language: objectives

The three knowledge lacunae provide the project with structure: it will have one research area on the ‘means’ side and another on the ‘ends’ side, mediated by a third, theoretical area at the centre. These three areas will, in turn, be subdivided into three to four sub-areas, as depicted in Figure 1.

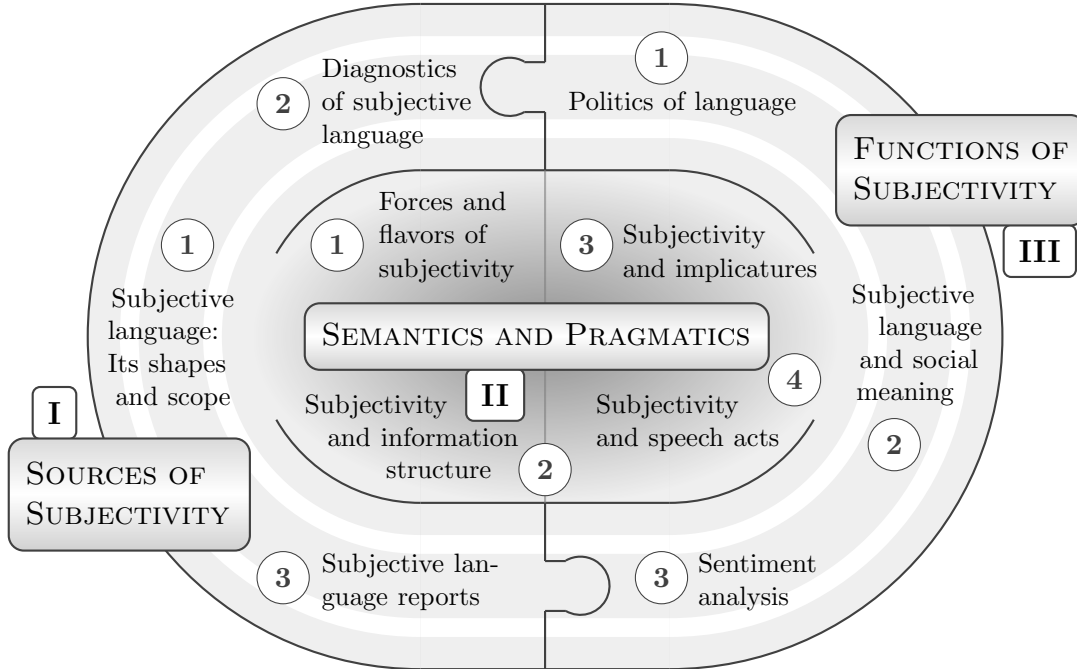


Figure 1: The areas and sub-areas of research and their interconnections

With reference to the Lasswellian communication model – ‘Who says what, how, to whom, with what effect’ (Lasswell et al. 1952), area I is concerned with the *how* and the form side of the *what*, area II is concerned with the content side of *what* and with the intentional side of *with what effect*, and area III is concerned with the *who*, the *to whom* and, particularly, with the *with what effect*.

The two areas left and right, I and III, constitute the novelty of the project and justify its title; so far, projects and workshops on subjective language (such as the University of Chicago Neubauer Collegium for Culture and Society project *Subjectivity in Language and Thought* 2014-2017 or the special session on subjectivity at *Semantics and Philosophy in Europe 11*, Warsaw, September 2019) are focused on its content, or essence, and the means and ends of it have not been foregrounded.

In area I, the overarching aim is to chart the landscape of the ‘built-in emoticons of language’ and to show that across languages, a variety of previously understudied indicators can help identify a wide and varied family of sources for subjective content. Between clear, ‘black’ cases of objective language and clear, ‘white’ cases of subjective language lies a vast terrain which is ‘gray’ according to our present state of knowledge. The central hypothesis is that most of this can be painted white; if this can be supported, we will not just know how to recognize subjectivity when we see or hear it, we will also have a better idea how different it is and a better reason to scrutinize its functions.

Area II is committed to theory-building on the basis of novel evidence flowing from area I and to reappraisals of received models of meaning – meaning that is encoded, meaning that is inferred, and ‘meaning in action’ – in the light of subjective language. Two key hypotheses are (i) that different forces and flavors of subjectivity can be told apart with formal tools and (ii) that utterances where a subjective content is at issue motivate a ‘dense’ rather than a ‘discrete’ typology of speech acts. If this can be supported, we will have a solid basis for distinguishing among the notions of taste, evaluation, and opinion, and a realistic model for the actual functions of subjective language.

In area III, the focus is set on these functions to uncover what works how in political discourse (see [Beaver and Stanley t.a.](#)), what senders transmit what views to what receivers (see [Burnett 2017](#)) and what lessons can be learned across the boundaries between sentiment analysis and areas I and II in the project (see [Benamara, Taboada and Mathieu 2017](#)). One central hypothesis here is that subjective language use holds a privileged role in the shaping of attitudes through public discourse. If this finds support in evidence and analysis, it will give us a new handle on the question of what political effects can be expected to arise from what sorts of text.

Once these desiderata are realized, the study of linguistic meaning will be in an improved state, both in itself, in relation to neighboring fields and in terms of public outreach and broader impact. On the one hand, the theory will be more balanced, with less of a bias towards objective language, and new and more favorable perspectives will open for the relevant branches of applied linguistics. On the other hand, and as importantly, the theory will be better equipped to inform public debate about what language reveals and how language forms attitudes, because these issues evolve around language which is predominantly subjective, where linguistics has traditionally had little to offer.

5 Subjective language: made-to-measure methods

Four approaches are suitable for achieving the research objectives identified in the preceding section. These are, enumerated and supplied with color codes for ease of reference:

- 1 Fact finding based on text corpus analysis
- 2 Fact finding based on experiment and elicitation
- 3 Theory building based on found facts
- 4 Theory cross-pollination

The first and second methods are essential for providing empirical input to the project from outside, while the third and fourth utilize the interconnections between the ten sub-areas in the project and their differing objectives to ensure a flow of fact and theory inside it. Those sub-areas that are predominantly descriptive lend themselves well to the first or the second method, and in fact:

- ★ Questions concerning `sources` of subjectivity (on the left in Figure 1) will primarily be researched with corpus methodology, applying sophisticated search and analysis tools to mono- and multilingual corpora,
- ★ Questions concerning `functions` of subjectivity (on the right in Figure 1) are more likely to be subject to elicitation methodology, using tasks combining processing and production.

The theoretical area, in the middle in Figure 1, is clearly well adapted to the third approach, but it will be supplemented by the second in the sub-area on speech acts.

The fourth approach constitutes the most innovative move. Here, different lines of research into subjective language from different angles are to be brought together to mutually inform each other. Supplementing the second, experimental methodology, this approach will be important in area III – Functions of subjectivity. Overall, this is where the risk is greatest in the project – but also where the gain, in laying bare how subjectivity in language reflects and affects our views, is most evident.

6 Subjective language: people and plan

The tasks that consist in reaching the objectives set out in section 4 with the methods described above will be performed by a team where the members have clearly defined, yet interlocking roles. Beside the principal investigator, who will be devoting 60% of his time to the project throughout its 5-year duration, six scholars will be engaged full-time for periods ranging from 3 to 4.5 years: One researcher (4.5 years), two postdocs (4 years and 3 years) and three PhD students (3 years each).

The postdoctoral and doctoral fellows, mentored and supervised by the PI, will be working within and across sub-areas which abut and sometimes intersect with each other, and the researcher to be engaged for four and a half years will also be sharing responsibility for its overall progress.

Somewhat more specifically, the three PhDs will be assigned with individual projects in area I (*Non-lexical expression of subjective content* and *Diagnostics of subjectivity across languages*) and in area III (*Sentiment analysis in light of semantic theory*); one postdoc will assume responsibility for core objectives concerning the pragmatics of subjective language (area II), while the other will be charged with addressing key questions in regard to its social and its political dimensions (area III). Beside acting as day-to-day coordinator in the project, the senior researcher will engage with issues in area I and area II, and the PI will devote his efforts to collaboration, supervision and mentorship in and across all the three areas, alongside his project management responsibilities.

The senior researcher position is intended to be filled by Alexandra Spalek, who earned her doctorate at the Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona, in 2014 and has since held a postdoc at the University of Oslo. She is ideally suited for the role because (i) she specializes in lexical semantics, (ii) she has extensive experience in corpus exploration and in language technology, (iii) she is fully fluent in Spanish, German and Polish, and (iv) she has rare teambuilding skills.

The two postdoc and three PhD positions are to be filled through international searches where familiarity with corpus or experimental methodology or language technology form key criteria.

Figure 3 lays out the research schedule. The work in the 10 (3+4+3) sub-areas (see Figure 1), ordered vertically, is plotted along the 20 quarters of the 5-year runtime horizontally, according to the four methodologies represented by the color codes provided in section 5. Each colored bar thus represents a specific research task; one colored grid square corresponds to appr. $\frac{1}{4}$ person-year.

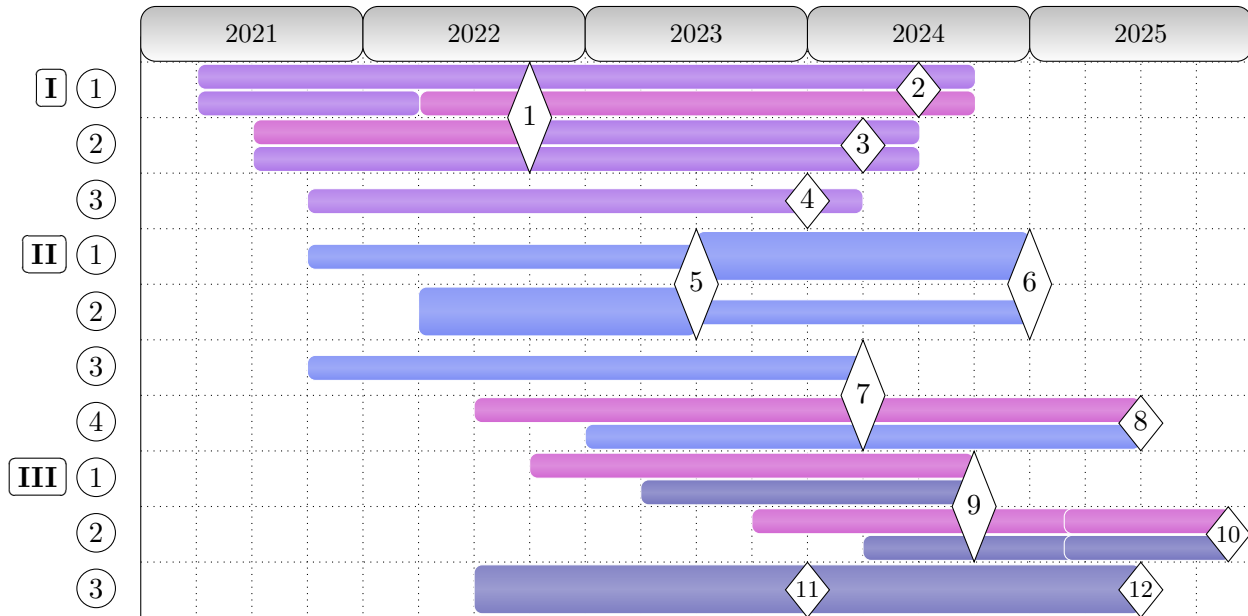


Figure 3: The sub-areas of research laid out as time-phased tasks with milestones

As an example, the 3 years from July 2022 through June 2025 will see work in area II, sub-area 4 (Subjectivity and speech acts), largely by the four-year postdoc, using experimental methodology. The numbered diamonds represent milestones – key intermediate objectives and control points in the form of (i) deliverables; reports on which to base abstracts for submission to key conferences or manuscripts for submission to journals, such submissions themselves, or materials for dissemination to wider audiences, (ii) PhD midway assessments and completed dissertations, and (iii) workshops where the progress of the project and the quality and quantity of its output can be assessed.

References

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- White, Peter R. R. (2015) Appraisal Theory, in Karen Tracy, Cornelia Ilie and Todd Sandel (eds.), *The International Encyclopedia of Language and Social Interaction*, Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell.

Section b: Curriculum vitae

PERSONAL INFORMATION

- Family name, first name: Sæbø, Kjell Johan
- ORCID iD: 0000-0002-8312-3123
- Date of birth: May 14, 1956
- Nationality: Norwegian
- Web site: www.hf.uio.no/ilos/personer/vit/kjelljs/index.html

EDUCATION

- 1977 Candidatus magisterii, Universitetet i Oslo (English, German, mathematics)
- 1978 Candidatus philologiae, Universitetet i Oslo (German language)
- 1986 Doctor philosophiae, Universitetet i Oslo
Thesis on the semantics of *anankastic conditionals*

CURRENT POSITIONS

- 1996 – Professor of German linguistics, Universitetet i Oslo
- 2016 – Adjunct Professor of linguistics (10%), The Arctic University of Norway

PREVIOUS POSITIONS

- 1989–95 Associate professor of German linguistics, Universitetet i Oslo
- 1987–88 Wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter, Universität Tübingen, West Germany
- 1984 Wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter, Universität Konstanz, West Germany

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

- 2014 – Fellow, The Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters (DNVA)
- 2013 Fellow under the Wigeland Endowment, University of Chicago
- 2010–11 Fellow, The Centre for Advanced Study (CAS) at DNVA
- 1988–89 Postdoctoral fellow under the Program for Digital Humanities, the Research Council of Norway

SUPERVISION

- 1998 – 1 dr.philos. candidate, 4 dr.art. candidates, 2 ph.d. candidates, 1 postdoc fellow, 1 ongoing ph.d. candidate, 4 MA candidates, at the University of Oslo

TEACHING ACTIVITIES

- 2016 – Advanced courses in semantics and pragmatics, Arctic University of Norway
- 2013 Courses at undergraduate and graduate levels in semantics and pragmatics, Department of Linguistics, University of Chicago
- 1994 – Courses at ph.d. level on linguistic theory and methodology, thesis writing, and theories of knowledge, Faculty of Humanities, University of Oslo
- 1989 – Courses at introductory and advanced levels in German and linguistics (syntax, semantics, computational linguistics and more), including cross-disciplinary courses in corpus and statistical methodology

ORGANIZATION OF SCIENTIFIC MEETINGS

- 2007 Organizer of Sinn und Bedeutung (SuB) 12, the 12th annual conference of the Gesellschaft für Semantik (Society of Semantics), Oslo, September 2007
- 1999 Co-organizer of the National Summer School in Dialectology and Sociolinguistics, Oslo, June 1999

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1997–99 Co-ordinator of the doctoral program in languages and linguistics at the
+ 2001 Faculty of Humanities, University of Oslo
- 1997–99 Member of the Research Committee of the Faculty of Humanities,
+ 2001 University of Oslo
- 1981–83 Member of the Education Committee of the Faculty of Humanities,
University of Oslo

REVIEWING ACTIVITIES AND COMMISSIONS OF TRUST

- 2019 – Editor, Semantics and Pragmatics (with Louise McNally)
- 2013–19 Associate Editor, Semantics and Pragmatics
- 2013 – Leibniz-Zentrum für Allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft (General Linguistics), Berlin:
Member of Scientific Advisory Board
- 2019 Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Institut für Deutsche Sprache und Linguistik:
External member of search committee for junior professorship
- 2008 – Served on doctoral and habilitation committees in Nijmegen (the Netherlands),
Paris, and Barcelona
- 2008–09 Served on the program committee of the 2009 European Summer School in Logic,
Language and Information (ESSLI) in Bordeaux
- 1996 – Reviewer for Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft and other research councils,
for Brill and other publishers, Linguistics and Philosophy and other journals,
for the Amsterdam Colloquium, Sinn und Bedeutung and other conferences
- 1989–91 Member of the steering committee for the Program for Digital Humanities,
the Research Council of Norway

MEMBERSHIPS IN SCIENTIFIC SOCIETIES

- 2016 – Member of the Linguistic Society of America (LSA)

MAJOR COLLABORATIONS

- 2018 – Mentor at the Zukunftskolleg of the University of Constance, Germany
- 2015 Collaborator in the project Subjectivity in Language and Thought,
University of Chicago
- 2010–11 Collaborator in the project Meaning and Understanding across Languages at
the Centre for Advanced Study, Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters,
partners from Amsterdam, Göttingen, Paris, Stuttgart, Tübingen
- 1998–00 Collaborator in the NOS-H project Comparative semantics for Nordic languages
(NORDSEM), partners in Copenhagen, Gothenburg
- 1992–94 Collaborator in the ÉSPRIT project Dynamic interpretation of natural language
(DYANA II), partners in Amsterdam, Edinburgh, Stuttgart, Tübingen, Utrecht
- 1990–91 Collaborator in the ÉSPRIT project Dialogue and Discourse (DANDI),
partners in Copenhagen, Liège, Lugano

Appendix: Funding ID

There are currently no ongoing funded projects, nor any submitted grant proposals, in which the PI is involved.

Section c: Ten-year track record

TEN PUBLICATIONS IN LEADING JOURNALS OR CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS OF THE LAST DECADE

- ◇ To *finish* in German and Scandinavian: Telicity and incrementality (with Alexandra Spalek), *Journal of Semantics* 36(2) (2019), 349–375. doi.org/10.1093/jos/ffz003
- ◇ The explicative genitive and close apposition, *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* online first (2018). doi.org/10.1007/s11049-018-9421-4
- ◇ How questions and the manner-method distinction, *Synthese* 193(10) (2016), 3169–3194. doi.org/10.1007/s11229-015-0924-9
- ◇ Lessons from descriptive indexicals, *Mind* 124 (2015), 1111–1161. doi.org/10.1093/mind/fzv031
- ◇ Reports of Specific Indefinites, *Journal of Semantics* 30(3) (2013), 267–314. doi.org/10.1093/jos/ffs015
- ◇ A, the, another: A game of same and different (with Atle Grønn), *Journal of Logic, Language and Information* 21(1) (2012), 75–95. doi.org/10.1007/s10849-011-9148-7
- ◇ Appositives in modal contexts. In Ingo Reich, Eva Horsch and Dennis Pauly (eds.), *Sinn und Bedeutung 15. Proceedings*. Saarbrücken: Saarland University Press 2011, 79–100.
- ◇ On the semantics of “embedded exclamatives”, *Studia Linguistica* 64(1) (2010), 116–140. doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9582.2010.01165.x
- ◇ Judgment ascriptions, *Linguistics and Philosophy* 32(4) (2009), 327–352. doi.org/10.1007/s10988-009-9063-4
- ◇ Possession and pertinence: the meaning of *have*, *Natural Language Semantics* 17(4) (2009), 369–397. doi.org/10.1007/s11050-009-9047-5

INVITED PRESENTATIONS TO INTERNATIONALLY ESTABLISHED CONFERENCES OF THE LAST DECADE

- ★ *By*: A vindication of the Anscombe thesis. *Cognitive Structures 2018: Linguistic, Philosophical, and Psychological Perspectives*. Düsseldorf, September 2018.
- ★ Lessons from descriptive indexicals. *Semantics and Philosophy in Europe 6*. St. Petersburg, June 2013.
- ★ Appositives in modal contexts. *Sinn und Bedeutung 15*. Saarbrücken, September 2010.

ORGANIZATION OF INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES

The PI organized the 12th annual conference of the Gesellschaft für Semantik (Society of Semantics), Sinn und Bedeutung (SuB) 12, in Oslo, September 20–22, 2007.

What would usually be meant by a statement that somebody organized a conference is that he or she chaired the organization committee and coordinated the work. But this case was different: When Oslo was elected to host the conference, interest and expertise in semantics were still scarce, in Oslo as in linguistics departments throughout Scandinavia, and in consequence, practically sole responsibility for matters major and minor fell to the person of the PI.

As a result of this effort and efforts described below, however, the University of Oslo is today a centre of semantic scholarship in the European context and globally. The PI’s pivotal role in this process was underscored when, introducing his plenary lecture at the 15th Sinn und Bedeutung conference in 2010, the chair described him as having resurrected semantics in Scandinavia.

MAJOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE EARLY CAREERS OF EXCELLENT RESEARCHERS

For seven years in the 1990s and early 2000s, the PI coordinated the doctoral education program in languages and linguistics at the University of Oslo, from 1994 through 1996 in a four-member team, from 1997 through 1999 and again in 2001 as the person in sole charge. The contributions he made in this role gave important impulses to the later careers of many doctoral students.

In the 1990s, postgraduate education was barely institutionalized, and linguistics and language studies were fragmented and compartmentalized. One major move was to create common grounds across department boundaries, another was to introduce the postgraduates to recent developments across disciplines and sub-disciplines such as phonology, lexicography, pragmatics, dialectology and sociolinguistics, context theory, topic and focus structure, philology, case and thematic role theory. Among the excellent researchers to have benefited substantially from this are Dag T. T. Haug, now Professor of classics and linguistics at the University of Oslo, and Torggrim Solstad, now researcher at the Leibniz-Zentrum für Allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft (Centre of General Linguistics) in Berlin.

As a supervisor, the PI has laid essential groundwork for numerous academic careers:*

- ◊ Atle Grønn, dr.art. 2004, became Professor of Russian linguistics at UiO in 2014;
- ◊ Ruth Vatvedt Fjeld, dr.philos. 1998, became Professor of lexicography at UiO in 2008;
- ◊ Bergljot Behrens, dr.art. 1998, became Professor of translation studies at UiO in 2017;
- ◊ Ingebjørg Tonne, dr.art. 2001, became Professor of 2nd language acquisition at UiO in 2015;
- ◊ Eirik Welo, dr.art. 2008, served as Vice Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, UiO, 2015–2018.

Besides, three of four master's students supervised by the PI went on to win doctoral grants.†

More recently (2014–2018), the PI has been the leading figure in a research program which has recruited two PhD students and two postdoc fellows from abroad (Great Britain, Italy, Spain) and provided them with optimal conditions, in terms of supervision, mentorship and collaboration, for progress and development as researchers. The SynSem (Syntax and Semantics) program has been an interdisciplinary effort, based at the University of Oslo's Faculty of Humanities but reaching out to the university's Faculty of Sciences and bridging theoretical and computational linguistics, and within the Faculty of Humanities, the effort has spanned three departments and brought together linguists with expertise in Germanic, Romance, and Slavic languages, as well as Latin and Greek, and with differing theoretical orientations. It is a fair prediction that this environment will prove to have been highly beneficial for the careers of the junior researchers on the team.

Independently, the PI has recently played key roles in promoting the careers of four researchers who are now in their consolidating phases, acting as evaluator and/or informal supervisor/mentor:

- ◊ Toni Bassaganyas Bars (Spain), who defended his PhD thesis at Universitat Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona in 2018, came to Oslo for 3 months in 2016 to work under the PI's supervision;
- ◊ when Berit Gehrke (Germany) was conferred the *habilitation à diriger des recherches* (HDR) at the Université Paris Diderot in 2017, the PI was one of two external *pré-rapporteurs*, and he has engaged with different parts of her work both before and after;
- ◊ Sven Lauer (Germany), a postdoctoral fellow at the Zukunftskolleg, Universität Konstanz, invited the PI as a mentor for two weeks in 2018 and again in 2019, to exchange ideas and to enable his PhD students to consult with him on their projects;
- ◊ Doris Penka (Germany), also a postdoctoral fellow at the Zukunftskolleg in Constance, has had multiple extended discussions with the PI on her habilitation work.

* UiO = University of Oslo

† These are distinct from any of the scholars listed above.