

Call for papers

BCGL 13: The syntax and semantics of clausal complementation

The Center for Research in Syntax, Semantics, and Phonology (CRISSP) of KU Leuven invites abstracts for the 13th edition of the Brussels Conference on Generative Linguistics (BCGL 13), to be held on 17-18 December 2020. The conference will take place in Brussels if permitted by local COVID 19-regulations, and online if not. The theme of BCGL 13 is "The syntax and semantics of clausal complementation".

Finite clausal embeddings like *that she left* in (1) have received distinct analyses with respect to their syntactic category:

(1) Mary regretted that she left.

Embedded clauses as CPs: this is the standard view according to which the TP of the embedded clause is merged directly with the complementizer forming a CP. It finds support in observations going back to Emonds (1970) and Stowell (1981) (among others) showing that unlike nominals, clausal embeddings:

- a) undergo the effects of 'extraposition' (in English and other Germanic languages as well as in non-Germanic languages such as Greek),
- b) cannot surface after prepositions e.g. in English or Greek,
- c) exhibit subject-object asymmetries: embedded clauses in some languages (e.g. Greek) cannot function as subjects (Roussou 1994), whereas in Germanic languages such as Dutch or English, subject clauses have been argued to be Topics (Koster 1978).

Embedded clauses as CPs/nominals: under one alternative view, embedded clauses are never CPs. Instead, they are nominal formations, e.g. relative clauses, in which case the complementizer functions as a relative pronoun (Kayne 2014). Alternatively, the complementizer is a noun or a determiner, whose function it is to license clauses as arguments (Manzini and Savoia 2003).

A variant of this view suggests that clauses form CPs by default, but that they may be turned into NPs/DPs via merger of (i) a silent noun after factive verbs (Kiparsky and Kiparsky 1971) or in coordination or ellipsis contexts (Bruening and Al Khalaf 2020), (ii) a D after certain classes of verbs (Kastner 2015), or (iii) a pronoun, *it*, in passivization, topicalization (Rosenbaum 1967), or in clausal prolepsis as in (2):

(2) Mary regretted it that she left.

The different analyses of clausal complementation discussed above typically also differ in their assumptions about (i) whether selection involves c- or s-selection (or both), (ii) whether the complementizer is selected by the verb or not, (iii) the function of complementizers and the way in which clauses combine with them, and (iv) the syntactic position of clauses and whether or not that position is derived via movement (and if so, what movement steps are involved).

The conference welcomes contributions addressing issues and open questions arising from this previous research:

1. How are finite clausal embeddings (in plain cases and/or in clausal prolepsis) formed and how do they combine with the verb?
 - (a) Are they merged as TPs first, in which case the complementizer is introduced in the matrix clause (cf. Kayne 2005, Angelopoulos 2019)? Can TPs function as arguments?
 - (b) Are they always merged as CPs, and if so, can they (i) undergo structure reduction e.g. Pesetsky (2019)'s Exfoliation, or (ii) combine with a nominalizer?
 - (c) In clausal prolepsis, does the pronoun form an underlying constituent with the clause? Is it merged as a predicate (Moro 1997) or an argument, and if so, is the clause merged separately as an adjunct (Bennis 1986) or a predicate (Longenbaugh 2019)?
2. How does selection work in clausal complementation: does it involve c-selection, s-selection, or a combination of both? What are the locality restrictions on selection?
 - (a) How is complementizer selection possible in cases where clauses are embedded under a noun, or in clausal prolepsis where a proform occupies the argument position?
 - (b) What kind of proforms, e.g. expletive or not, can be used in clausal prolepsis and could this choice be reduced to selection (see Postal and Pullum 1988)?
3. To what extent can a uniform analysis of embedded clauses as nominal formations account for the overall distributional properties of embedded clauses?
4. What is responsible for the distribution of embedded clauses: rightward or leftward movement? In both cases the question arises what motivates these movement steps: (a) Stowell (1981)'s Case Resistance Principle, (b) a high merger of a complementizer attracting its surface complement (Kayne 2005, Angelopoulos 2019), or (c) rules of semantic composition together with the semantic make up of clauses (Moulton 2015)?
5. What role does finiteness play in the distribution of clauses and clausal prolepsis?

Invited speakers

- Keir Moulton (University of Toronto)
- David Pesetsky (MIT)
- Anna Roussou (University of Patras)

Organizing committee

- Nikos Angelopoulos (KU Leuven–CRISSP)
- Jeroen van Craenenbroeck (KU Leuven–CRISSP)
- Krisztina Szécsényi (Eötvös Loránd University)
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- Edoardo Cavirani (KU Leuven–CRISSP)
- Cora Cavirani-Pots (KU Leuven–CRISSP)
- Anne Breitbarth (Ghent University)

Abstract guidelines

Abstracts should not exceed two pages, including data, references, and diagrams. Abstracts should be typed in at least 11-point font, with one-inch margins (letter-size; 8½ by 11 inch or A4) and a maximum of 50 lines of text per page. Abstracts must be anonymous and submissions are limited to 2 per author, at most one of which is single-authored. Only electronic submissions will be accepted. Please submit your abstract using the EasyChair link for BCGL 13: <https://easychair.org/my/conference?conf=bcg113#>

Important dates

- First call for papers: June 2, 2020
- Second call for papers: August 16, 2020
- Abstract submission deadline: September 15, 2020
- Notification of acceptance: late October, 2020
- Conference: December 17-18, 2020

Conference webpage

<https://www.crissp.be/bcgl-13-the-syntax-and-semantics-of-clausal-complementation/>

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