



# SPOTLIGHTS ON LINGUISTIC REPRESENTATIONS

International  
Workshop

30 September & 1 October

Research Center Deutscher Sprachatlas in Marburg,  
Pilgrimstein 16, Marburg, Germany

The aim of the workshop is to give an overview over the diversity of theoretical and methodological approaches to linguistic representations and to enable critical discussions of individual approaches during three specialized thematic sections: Language and Environment, Cognition and Grammar, and Brain and Speech.

## What will the two days look like?

Adele Goldberg will open the workshop with a Keynote speech. Both days will be dedicated to two thematic sections, with each section featuring two to three spotlight lectures/talks. As our workshop focuses on active discussion, spotlights are limited to 15 minutes, followed by 10 minutes of Q&A.

In the subsequent collaborative sessions, participants are invited to explore possible approaches to questions posed in the spotlights. At the end of both days, some time will also be allocated for discussion in plenary sessions, allowing all participants to share concluding thoughts and to address open questions. We will conclude the workshop with a panel discussion that is aimed at synthesizing the insights gained from the spotlights and the collaborative work.

# General framework

Assuming linguistic representations as an explanation for the specifically human ability to speak was prominently represented in the Chomsky paradigm (Chomsky 1957, 1967, 2005), following the assumption of mental representations within the computational theory of the mind. However, in the course of turning away from Chomsky's generativism towards a more functional theory of language, there has also been a change in the understanding of (linguistic) representations. Following Langacker (1987, 1991, 1999) and Lakoff (1987), we now also consider representations in relation to concepts and schemata. However, this theoretical expansion has also led to a kind of Babylonian confusion of terminology since the definition of the term representation is not only no longer assignable to any one paradigm, but has also become semantically diverse and, in consequence, somewhat vague. While Chomsky takes the view that representations are largely innate and can merely be activated by linguistic input, in the functional approach, they are regarded as the results of acquisition processes. This connection between stability and dynamics is the starting point of our work. We ask ourselves the following questions:

Why and how do linguistic representations remain stable despite changes in the environment (referring to variation in linguistic input itself, as well as changing conditions of the world surrounding us), but prove to be flexible enough to allow alterations across a single conversation, a lifespan or several generations?

From this question several more specific questions arise, which will be examined in three thematic sections with regard to the subject areas of Language and Environment, Cognition and Grammar, and Brain and Speech:

- How do the dynamics of linguistic representations take shape at the micro (e.g. in individual speakers) and macro levels (e.g. within groups of language users) and what are the conditions for the associated synchronous flexibility (e.g. usage variance) in specific situations?
- Which anthropological conditions exist for the construction and access to linguistic representations?
- How can the interactions between the mental representations of individual speakers and the shared language knowledge of a linguistic community be best described?
- How can different methodological approaches (theoretical as well as empirical) contribute to a better understanding of the tension between diachronic dynamics and change, on the one hand, and synchronic (relative) stability and flexibility on the other?

# Schedule

Throughout the duration of the workshop, the foyer will feature a display of selected poster showcasing works from the Research Training Group, providing an opportunity for a more informal exchange. Furthermore, all participants are cordially invited to join us for dinner on Monday evening as well as for a warming-up on Sunday.

## Sunday (September 29, 2024)

18:30 Warming-Up (Market, address: Markt 1, 35037 Marburg)

## Monday (September 30, 2024)

09:00–09:15 Welcome: Mathias Scharinger & Christina Kauschke

09:15–09:30 Introduction: Organisation Committee

09:30–10:30 Keynote: Adele Goldberg (Princeton, USA)  
Linguistic representations: Memory and generalizations

10:30–13:00 **Section: Language and Environment**

10:30–11:00 Spotlight 1: Christoph Purschke (Luxembourg, LUX)  
Making sense of the wor(l)d. Life-linguistic notes on the concept of 'representation'

11:00–11:30 Coffee break

11:30–12:00 Spotlight 2: Philipp Striedl (Zurich, CH)  
Representing social groups and landscapes with language

12:00–13:00 Collaborative session (groups)

13:00–14:00 Lunch break

14:00–16:45 **Section: Cognition and Grammar I**

14:00–14:30 Spotlight 1: Stefan Hartmann (Dusseldorf, GER)  
Construction Grammar(s) represent! The role of representations in constructionist approaches

14:30–15:00 Spotlight 2: Adele Goldberg (Princeton, USA)  
LLMs as a model for human language representations

15:00–15:30 Coffee break

15:30–16:30 Collaborative session (groups)

16:30–16:45 Concluding thoughts (plenary)

18:30 Dinner  
Weinlädele, address: Schloßtreppe 1, 35037 Marburg

## Tuesday (October 1, 2024)

09:00–12:00 **Section: Cognition and Grammar II**

09:00–09:30 Spotlight 1: Elena Smirnova (Neuchâtel, CH)  
Diachronic Construction Grammar: The dynamics of constructional networks and the cognitive processes behind them

09:30–10:00 Spotlight 2: Stefan Rabanus (Verona, IT)  
The morphological-minimum principle in the history of German

10:00–10:30 Spotlight 3: Yvonne Portele (Frankfurt, GER)  
Representing "accessibility" in language production

10:30–11:00 Coffee break

11:00–12:00 Collaborative session (groups)

12:00–13:00 Lunch break

13:00–16:00 **Section: Brain and Speech**

13:00–13:30 Spotlight 1: Laura Schiffel (Munich, GER)  
Investigating word production errors in aphasia with large language models and intracortical microelectrode recordings

13:30–14:00 Spotlight 2: Dr. Lars Meyer (Leipzig, GER)  
Title: To be announced

14:00–14:30 Spotlight 3: Sonja Kotz (Maastricht, NL)  
Perspectives on rhythm and time in audition: From tones to speech

14:30–15:00 Coffee break

15:00–16:00 Collaborative session (groups)

16:00–16:15 Concluding thoughts (plenary)

16:15–17:15 **Panel discussion: Brain, Cognition and Environment: What now?**  
Mathias Scharinger (host), Simon Kasper, Sonja Kotz, Elena Smirnova

During the breaks you will find further information about the RTG in the foyer.  
Posters will be on display there for you.