The building blocks and mortar of word meaning
We are concerned with the relationship between sub-lexical and supralexical composition of meaning. They examine the similarity between word-internal structure and phrase structure and the type of information that contributes to the building blocks of words and phrases. The empirical domain of investigation is the ambiguity related to word formation processes in both the nominal and verbal domain.

We have been pursuing the idea that compositional analyses of meaning for particular linguistic constructions presuppose a syntax which determines the order and the types of the composition steps. Over the past few years we have developed a model that combines syntactic principles from Minimalist Syntax and Distributive Morphology with Discourse Representation Structure and insights from lexical semantics.

The aims of this workshop are as follows. First, we aim to investigate how our theoretical model fares in the context of understudied phenomena such as compounds based on derived nominals, non-culminating construals, and understudied argument alternations such as psych predications and the direct/oblique object alternation in French.

Second, we aim to extend our model in line with a recent trend in event semantics which views high verbal functional heads, or theta heads, as points in the derivation where clause-level binding dependencies such as reflexivity, body-part middles, or "possessor raising" dependencies originate (Kratzer 2009, Hole 2012). In those novel approaches, theta-information enters the derivation together with a need for variable binding. Like this, theta heads emerge as morphemes which combine a function as building blocks of meaning with a cohesive mortar-like function as triggers of variable binding.

Third, we aim to evaluate our empirical predictions by means of distributional models. Modeling of word meaning from a data-driven perspective requires representations of the components of word meaning that are computationally manageable and accessible. Simple string representations generally fail to capture important theoretical distinctions, leading to not only misleading characterizations of words but poor performance of systems for natural language processing. We intend to investigate how insights from linguistic theory can be incorporated into distributional models of word meaning, focusing initially on German particle verbs.

Invited speakers:

Malka Rappaport Hovav
Manner and result – ontological or relational categories?

The classification of roots as manner or result has figured in many recent accounts of the construction of verb meaning. There are two opposing approaches to the understanding of these notions. One takes roots to have an inherent ontological categorization which determines the positions in which the roots can be integrated into a structural encoding of event structure. This position assigns a specific semantic characterization to the notions of manner and result. Since, however, many verbal roots appear in more than one syntactic configuration, often indicating conflicting categorizations of the roots as manner or result, some approaches take what can be termed a relational approach to these notions. On this approach, roots do not come with an inherent ontological categorization and can be freely
associated with event structure positions; they are interpreted as manner or result accordingly.
This talk will consider the evidence for both approaches and argue that there is room for both kinds of understandings of the nature of manner and result. I consider specific examples of roots which seem to have conflicting categorizations and provide an account which includes both an inherent categorization of roots and a certain amount of flexibility in the integration of roots into event structures.

**Louise McNally**

**Event individuation and direct vs. indirect expression of participants**

Dowty 1989 hypothesized that verbs and nouns differ in that the former have an ordered-argument semantics, while the latter do not: Any participants expressed along with nouns (e.g. "destruction of the evidence") are in fact adjuncts. Grimm & McNally 2013 argued that Dowty was right about nouns, but questioned that verbs should be any different. In this talk, developing ongoing work with Grimm on event-denoting "-ing" nominals, I suggest that Dowty was in fact also basically right about verbs. However, I reformulate his hypothesis in different terms: I take the alternation between directly- and indirectly-expressed participants in English (e.g. "destroying evidence" vs. "the destroying of evidence"); for now I limited my claims to themes) as a grammatical reflection of distinct strategies for individuating events under description. I then take direct expression of participants as a diagnostic for an ordered argument semantics. Finally, I suggest that direct expression of participants is associated with a fundamentally different semantic composition process than is the combination of the verb with an indirectly expressed participant, as I will illustrate using a mixed DRT/distributional semantics approach that I am currently developing with Gemma Boleda. This distinct treatment of directly- vs. indirectly-expressed participants turns out to embody another old hypothesis of Dowty's concerning the nature of the argument/adjunct distinction (Dowty 2003). Though I do not specifically adopt Distributed Morphology, it will become evident that the overall view of the syntax/semantic interface is similarly "exo-skeletal" in nature.

**Christopher Piñón**

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