



Semantic Shifts

Fréjus - Destremau
12-23 Sept. 2022

Semantic Shifts: From lexicon to grammar. Diachronic and typological perspectives

Workshops, Methods & Tools 4

Title: Semantic maps in synchrony and diachrony: Theory and practice

Thanasis Georgakopoulos (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki)

Semantic maps have emerged as a powerful, theory-neutral, methodological tool for representing meaning connections cross-linguistically. Initially focusing on representing meaning relations of grammatical morphemes (e.g. Anderson, 1982, Haspelmath, 1997, Croft, 2001), the model has extended to capture connections in the lexical domain (e.g. Francois, 2008) and quite recently an attempt has also been made to combine semantic maps with construction grammar (e.g. Koptjevskaja-Tamm, *forthcoming*). In their early years, semantics maps were mainly hand-crafted, but eventually efficient algorithms were developed that can automatically generate the maps directly from linguistic data (e.g. Croft & Poole, 2008; Regier et al. 2013). Notably, semantic maps can integrate information about directionality of change on the basis of diachronic data (e.g. reconstructions, attested evolutionary paths, etc.) by drawing an arrow on the line connecting two meanings or functions (e.g. van der Auwera & Plungian, 1998; Narrog, 2010).

In the context of this course, I will give an overview of the semantic map model, explain its theoretical premises, present its advantages and disadvantages, highlight the role the method can play in representing diachronic change and discuss the open questions in this field of research. I will also provide a detailed methodology for plotting (lexical) diachronic semantic maps, showing how one can combine a quantitative approach to large-scale synchronic polysemy data with a qualitative evaluation of diachronic material (see Georgakopoulos & Polis, 2021). The course will be both theory- and practice-based. The theory will be applied on data from a sample of languages and, on completion of the course, the participants will be able to construct semantic maps (synchronic and diachronic) manually as well as automatically.

Selected references (* essential readings)

- Anderson, L. B. (1982). The ‘perfect’ as a universal and as a language-particular category. In P. J. Hopper (Ed.), *Tense-aspect: Between semantics & pragmatics, typological studies in language* (pp. 227–264). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins. <https://doi.org/10.1075/tsl.1.16and>
- van der Auwera, J., & Plungian, A. V. (1998). Modality’s semantic map. *Linguistic Typology*, 2(1), 79–124. <https://doi.org/10.1515/lity.1998.2.1.79>.

- Croft, W. (2001). *Radical construction grammar. Syntactic theory in typological perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- *Croft, W., & Poole, K. T. (2008). Inferring universals from grammatical variation: Multidimensional scaling for typological analysis. *Theoretical Linguistics*, 34(1), 1–37.
<https://doi.org/10.1515/thli.2008.001>
- *François, A. (2008). Semantic maps and the typology of colexification: Intertwining polysemous networks across languages. In M. Vanhove (Ed.), *From polysemy to semantic change. Towards a typology of lexical semantic associations* (pp. 163–215). John Benjamins: Amsterdam/Philadelphia.
- *Georgakopoulos, T., & Polis, S. (2018). The semantic map model: State of the art and future avenues for linguistic research. *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 12(2), 1–33.
- *Georgakopoulos, T., & Polis, S. (2021). Lexical diachronic Semantic maps. Mapping the evolution of time-related lexemes. *Journal of Historical Linguistics*. Online first article.
<https://doi.org/10.1075/jhl.19018.geo>.
- Haspelmath, M. (1997). *Indefinite pronouns*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- *Haspelmath, M. (2003). The geometry of grammatical meaning: Semantic maps and cross-linguistic comparison. In M. Tomasello (Ed.), *The new psychology of language* (Vol. 2) (pp. 211–243). New York: Erlbaum.
- Koptjevskaja-Tamm, M. (to appear-2022). Semantic maps and Temperature: capturing the lexicon-grammar interface across languages. In T. Georgakopoulos & S. Polis (Eds.), *The future of mapping: new avenues for semantic maps research*. Special issue in *Zeitschrift für Sprachwissenschaft*.
- *Narrog, H. (2010). A diachronic dimension in maps of case functions. *Linguistic Discovery*, 8(1), 233–254. <https://doi.org/10.1349/ps1.1537-0852.a.352>
- *Regier, T., Khetarpal, N., & Majid, A. (2013). Inferring semantic maps. *Linguistic Typology*, 17(1), 89–105. <https://doi.org/10.1515/lity-2013-0003>