TWIST conferentie Taalwetenschap
2011

Wanneer: 13 mei 2011
Waar: Lipsius, Cleveringaplaats 1
Kosten: €5,- inclusief lunch

Op vrijdag 13 mei 2011 zal TWIST, de studievereniging voor Vergelijkende Indo-Europese Taalwetenschap, Algemene Taalwetenschap en Talen en Culturen van Afrika voor de vijfde keer op rij de TWIST conferentie organiseren. U bent van harte uitgenodigd om onze conferentie bij te wonen.

We zijn ervan overtuigd dat dit een interessante dag zal zijn voor iedereen die geïnteresseerd is in taalkunde. Er zullen lezingen zijn van gastprekers, studenten en promovendi. Tussen de lezingen door en tijdens de pauzes zullen er volop mogelijkheden zijn om medestudenten, promovendi en academici te ontmoeten. Kortom, eenieder die zich bezig houdt met algemene, vergelijkende of historische taalkunde mag de TWIST conferentie Taalwetenschap 2011 niet missen! Hieronder kunt u een voorlopig programma van de conferentie vinden, inclusief korte samenvattingen van de lezingen plus biografieën van de sprekers.

Om in te schrijven, kunt u een e-mail sturen naar studieverenigingtwist@gmail.com.

We hopen u te mogen verwelkomen op onze conferentie!
TWIST-conference of Linguistics
2011

When: 13th of May 2011
Where: Lipsius, Cleveringaplaats 1
How much: €5,- including lunch

On Friday, May the 13th 2011, TWIST, the Leiden study association for Comparative Indo-European Linguistics, General Linguistics and Languages and Cultures of Africa, will organize its fifth student’s conference for linguistics. You are all very welcome to attend our conference.

We are confident that this will be an interesting day for anybody with a heart for linguistics. There will be lectures from guest speakers, students and postgraduates. Between lectures and during the breaks one has ample opportunity to meet and converse with fellow students, researchers and academic lecturers. To sum it up, the TWIST-conference for Linguistics 2011 will be a notable event a young researcher in the field of linguistics should not miss! Below, you can find a preliminary program for the day, including some short descriptions of the talks and biographies of the speakers.

You can register by sending an e-mail to studieverenigingtwist@gmail.com.

We hope to welcome you at our conference!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>09.30-10.00</td>
<td>Lipsius/hall</td>
<td>Registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.00-10.15</td>
<td>Lipsius/011</td>
<td>Opening by prof. dr. M.P.G.M. (Maarten) Mous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.15-11.00</td>
<td>Lipsius/011</td>
<td>Plenary lecture by Dr. V.A.S. (Victoria) Nyst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>West African Sign Languages</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.00-11.35</td>
<td>Lipsius/011</td>
<td>Renée Middelburg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Morphological priming survives a language switch: evidence for</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>language-specific selection</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lipsius/028</td>
<td>Amanda A. Delgado-Galvan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Description of Basic Word Order in Yokot’an</em> (chontal de Tabasco),*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Spoken in the Tapotzingo Settlement, Nacajuca Tabasco.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.35-11.50</td>
<td>Lipsius/hall</td>
<td>Short coffee break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.50-12.25</td>
<td>Lipsius/011</td>
<td>Clelia LaMonica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Measuring American speakers’ perception of UK varieties of English</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lipsius/028</td>
<td>Sahar Bahrami-Khorshid &amp; prof. dr. A. (Arie) Verhagen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Mapping Semantic Spaces:</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>A Cognitive Account of šod-æn ‘to become’ in Persian</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>12.25-13.00</td>
<td>Lipsius/011</td>
<td>Kiriaki Dimopoulou</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Pragmatics Skills in preschool age children</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lipsius/028</td>
<td>Kaori Furukawa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Motivation of Vowel Epenthesis</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.00-13.45</td>
<td>Lipsius/hall</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.45-14.20</td>
<td>Lipsius/011</td>
<td>Borana Lushaj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Constraints on middle constructions in Albanian</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lipsius/148</td>
<td>Loes van Andel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‘Words and deeds: about verbs that represent actions and verbs that do*</td>
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<tr>
<td>14.20-14.55</td>
<td>Lipsius/011</td>
<td>Peter Alexander Kerkhof</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Carolingian words of Sin? A linguistic look into Early Medieval</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>classifications of homosexual behaviour</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lipsius/148</td>
<td>Monique Bisschop, Margo Zwitserlood &amp; Dr. C.C. (Claartje) Levelt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Phonological development in children with cleft palate</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.55-15.10</td>
<td>Lipsius/hall</td>
<td>Short coffee break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.10-16.00</td>
<td>Lipsius/011</td>
<td>Plenary lecture by prof. dr. ir. J. (John) Nerbonne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Language in space and language in time</em></td>
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Morphological priming survives a language switch: evidence for language-specific selection

Renée Middelburg, Saskia Lensink, R.G. (Rinus) Verdonschot M.Sc., prof. dr. N.O. (Niels) Schiller

For the majority of the world’s population, multilingualism is a completely normal, often necessary fact of life (Edwards, 1994). Therefore, studying the representations of multiple languages in the multilingual brain and their interactions are vital to our understanding of human language. A striking fact is that multilinguals, in the majority of cases, are successful in keeping their two or more languages apart (e.g. avoiding intrusions from the language not-in-use). A question, still under debate, is how this is accomplished.

Basically, two models have emerged to account for this phenomenon. The first one called the language non-specific selection model assumes that during language production, bilinguals actively inhibit activation of the non-target language, in order to avoid intrusion from the non-target language (Green, 1986; Abutalebi & Green, 2007). In contrast, according to the language specific selection model, there is no need for any inhibition of the non-target language, i.e. bilinguals are assumed to be capable of only considering the lexicon of the target language (Costa et al., 1999).

In a long-lag morphological priming experiment, Dutch-English bilinguals were asked to name pictures and read aloud words. A design using non-switch blocks, consisting solely of Dutch stimuli, and switch-blocks, consisting of Dutch primes and targets with English intervening trials, was administered. Target picture naming was constantly facilitated by morphologically related primes for both the non-switch and switch-blocks. These results suggest that the activated, non-target language is not inhibited when the target language is used. Instead, its activation levels stay high, which would explain the observed priming effects. These results may provide further support for the language specific selection model.

References


Biography

My name is Renee Middelburg. I am 22 years old and I was born in Rotterdam. I am in my third year of the Bachelor Algemene Taalwetenschap at the University of Leiden. I hope to finish my Bachelor in June and start with the Master Cognitive Neuroscience at the Radboud University at the beginning of September. My main fields of interest in Linguistics are psycho- and neurolinguistics.
Description of Basic Word Order in Yokot’an (chontal de Tabasco), Spoken in the Tapotzingo Settlement, Nacajuca Tabasco.

Amanda A. Delgado-Galvan
National School of Anthropology and History (ENAH).
a.a.delgado.galvan@umail.leidenuniv.nl

This research is a typological synchronic description of basic word order (henceforth BWO) in Yokot’an (chontal de Tabasco) a Mayan language spoken in the Southeast of Mexico. My research lies on the classification of four groups of Mayan BWO (England 1991): VSO, VOS, VOS/VSO and SVO. In the literature Yokot’an has been described to have VOS basic word order (Knowles 1984, Osorio 2005). In this work I demonstrated that Yokot’an belongs to the group of Mayan languages that has a VOS/VSO basic word order.

In order to obtain the BWO in this language I made three tests to 10 native speakers between 23 and 80 years old from the community of Tapotzingo. The first test consists on answers to the question käxkuné? ‘What happens?’. This test is based on the idea that sentences with unmarked order are answers typically considered fortunate by the speakers. The second test consists on the translation into Spanish of several sentences in Yokot’an. This test shows which is the BWO and whether definiteness and animacy play an important role in the speaker’s selection of the structure. The third test is to take into account the frequency of word order in oral texts. The word order with most frequency is considered as the BWO. I focus only on those transitive sentences which appear in a declarative and affirmative context and displaying both arguments as full NPs. The occurrence frequency of each word order is assessed for this selection of sentences. The results of all three tests clearly shows that Yokot’an is a verb initial language, that the basic word order is VSO/VOS triggered by definiteness and animacy features. Moreover, when the post-verbal NP is definite both orders apparently have free alternation.

REFERENCES


KNOWLES, SUSAN. 1984. A Descriptive Grammar of Chontal Maya (San Carlos dialect): Tulane University: University Microfilms International.

Biography
Amanda Delgado was born in Mexico City on August 2 1979. She graduated from the National School of Anthropology and History in 2009 with a degree in Linguistics. For several years, Amanda worked as a linguist for the Mexican governement and international organization on indigenous education and political linguistics of Mexican indigenous languages. Since 2003 she has been doing field work in the Southeast of Mexico making linguistic research on Yokot’an a language of the Mayan family. She is now a student member of the Linguistics (Research) Master: Structure and Variation in the Languages of the World in Leiden University.
Measuring American speakers’ perception of UK varieties of English

Clelia LaMonica (clamo1sr@gmail.com)
ResMA Linguistics program, Leiden University

This study investigates the perceptual and phonetic distance between Standard American English and various UK English dialects, with the aim of uncovering how well American speakers understand other accents of English and what role phonetic distance plays. This is done using the Levenshtein dialect distance method, which has previously been used to measure phonetic distance between both Dutch and Norwegian dialects (see Gooskens, Heeringa & Gooskens, Gooskens et al. 2003, 2011).

At least 10 accents of English will be compared, including those of Wales, Northern Ireland, and Scotland. The judgments of at least 10 Standard American English speakers, who have limited experience with UK varieties of English, will be taken with respect to intelligibility. For this study, neither gender nor age are taken into account as a variable for perceptibility, though there is some evidence that female speakers are more intelligible than males (Bradlow et al. 1996).

For each dialect a phonetic transcription is made of the speech, which is then compared to a Standard American pronunciation. The differences between the phonemes are counted, yielding a Levenshtein distance for each dialect from Standard American. The perceptual score of American speakers based on their understanding of each dialect is then compared with the Levenshtein distance to illustrate the correspondence between phonetic distance and perceptual distance.

Sources
Mapping Semantic Spaces:
A Cognitive Account of šod-æn ‘to become’ in Persian

Sahar Bahrami-Khorshid
PhD Candidate of General Linguistics, Tarbiat Modares University, Iran
Visiting Student at Leiden University, The Netherlands

Arie Verhagen
Leiden University

This paper attempts to explore the semantic space of šod-æn ‘to become’ in Persian in order to address some basic features of linguistic cognition (e.g. analyzability, compositionality and productivity). One of the highly-frequent verbs in Persian is šod æn which with regard to its different functions at the level of sentence can be considered as the most active verb in this language. Although my ultimate concern is that kind of šod-æn used as the verbal element of passive constructions in Persian, the other versions will permit me to locate it in a broader context. According to a diachronic viewpoint, the same verbal form, šodæn, with four distinctive functions (as a main verb, as a copula, as a light verb, and as a modal) verb plays an important role in Persian verbal system. The passive construction in Persian is considered as a Complex Predicate in which šod-æn as a light verb combines with different linguistic categories such as noun, adjective and past participle (X in general).

Its semantic space indicates that various types of constructions including šod-æn form a network of meanings, in which the verbal element šod-æn is meaningful, in contrast to previous studies of the passive construction which considered it as a purely syntactic element carrying no meaning. Therefore, passive in Persian is viewed as analyzable in which šod-æn is not a random occurrence but rather an extension of its other uses. This provides evidence for the claim that the passive has its own central meaning that contributes to the overall grammatical structure of a language; therefore, the relatedness of the uses of šod-æn provides further evidence for the claim in Cognitive Grammar that the passive is part of a larger network of related syntactic constructions and not derive from the active.
Pragmatics Skills in preschool age children
Kiriaki Dimopoulou

Background: It is well known, that Pragmatic Skills at the pre-school years play a very important role in the child’s further academic and social development. On the other hand communication and pragmatic difficulties very often are presented as a core symptom in children with developmental disorders.

Aims: The aim of the present study was to assess the pragmatic skills of typically developing Greek children four to five years old. There are no standardized tests for pragmatic skills in Greek, that is why we chose to use the test of the “Pragmatics Profile of Everyday Communication Skills in Pre-school Children” of Hazel Dewart and Susie Summers (1995 version) for our research.

This test gives us the opportunity of using it as a means of evaluation and measurement of the pragmatic skills of typically developing children of preschool age, so that we can get the complete picture of these children’s communication, and be able in the future to use it in screening evaluations of children with pragmatic deficits.

Methods & Procedures: After translation and relevant adjustments of the test, we administered it, in the form of a questionnaire, to 59 parents who had children at the appropriate age.

Through the use of descriptive statistics (distribution and analysis of percentages) the differences between the two sexes (boys-girls) that took place in our research were examined, and the four categories in which the test is separated were related to each other: A. Communicative Functions, B. Response to Communication, C) Interaction and Conservation, D) Contextual Variation.

Outcomes & Results: Results showed that girls generally and specifically in each category of the test scored higher than boys and appeared to use more mature communication skills.

Conclusion: Another goal of the present study was to make a qualitative comparison between the results of our study and those of other similar studies which have used atypical children, such as children in the spectrum of autism, deaf children, children with Specific Language Impairment etc. Results showed little differences between typically and non-typically developed children. That considered to be predictable among some basic aspects of communication because of the global characteristics of the children’s need of expressing communication. The ultimate goal was to track down the communication ‘behaviors’ of these children and wherever possible, to come up with general conclusions on their pragmatic skills having as an initiating point the relevance theory (Sperber and Wilson, 1995).

Keywords: pragmatics, pragmatic skills, communication, children, pragmatics profile
Motivation of Vowel Epenthesis
Kaori Furukawa

In synchronic alternation of Japanese verb, elision is observed when consonant-final verb root, g or k is combined with either past or gerundive suffix preceding an epenthetic vowel i. While final consonant is preserved in the root, hanas- “speak”, g and k undergo process of the elision in modern Japanese. In classical Japanese, these verb roots surfaced in gerundive and past forms as seen in (1).

\begin{equation}
\text{(1) diachronic change and synchronic alternation}
\end{equation}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb root</th>
<th>gerundive/past</th>
<th>gerundive/past</th>
<th>present</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kak</td>
<td>kak-i-te/-ta</td>
<td>ka-i-te/-ta</td>
<td>kak-u</td>
<td>write</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oyog</td>
<td>oyog-i-te/-ta</td>
<td>oyo-i-de/-da</td>
<td>oyo-u</td>
<td>swim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hanas</td>
<td>hanaf'-i-te/-ta</td>
<td>hanaf'-i-te/-ta</td>
<td>hanas-u</td>
<td>speak</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In this paper I argue that in modern Japanese, presence of the epenthetic vowel, i in gerundive or past suffix in the velar consonant verb root is accounted for by a preservation of the number of root moras.

It is widely accepted that in Japanese i attached in the verb root is an epenthetic vowel, which avoids violation of the high-ranked constraints, CODA-COND and *COMPLEX (Itô and Mester 2000, Lombardi 1998, Matsui 1998, Tsujimura 1996). Historically, elision of k before a high vowel was common at a morpheme boundary (Martin 1987), and even synchronically velar elision is observed in various non-standard dialects of Japanese (e.g., haya + ku → hayau → hayo: ‘quickly’). In order to motivate deletion of the velar consonant, I posit a markedness constraint, VELAR ELISION, which prohibits a velar consonant from surfacing preceding a high vowel. I claim that after the velar elision took place, epenthetic vowel i plays a part in satisfying minimum syllable structure; Japanese verb root minimally consists of a foot. To formalize this requirement, I posit MAX(µ), which preserves the number of underlying moras to the output.

In sum, the present study shows that epenthetic vowel i plays a role in satisfying Japanese coda structure as well as minimum size requirement of the verb root. The relevant tableaux are shown as follows:

Classical Japanese /kak+/+te/ (“write” + gerundive)→[kak-i-te] (i serves as an epenthetic vowel)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/kak-te/</th>
<th>*COMPLEX</th>
<th>CODA-COND</th>
<th>FAITH</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☞ a. kakite</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>DEP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. kakite</td>
<td>*!(kt)</td>
<td>* (k\sigma [l] )</td>
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</table>

Modern Japanese /kak/+te/ (“write” + gerundive)→[kai-te] (i serves as

<table>
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<tr>
<th>/kak-te/</th>
<th>VELAR ELISION</th>
<th>MAX ((\mu))</th>
<th>DEP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☞ a. kai[σ]+te</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. ka[σ]te</td>
<td></td>
<td>*!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. kakite</td>
<td>*!(k)</td>
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References
Constraints on middle constructions in Albanian

Borana Lushaj
MA Linguistics
Radboud University, Nijmegen

The operations involving the middle formation cross-linguistically are a subject of disagreement among researchers. The present paper proposes a constraint-based treatment of this problem, which can be a step forward in understanding what factors are at play in the middle formation and how they interact across languages. The focus of discussion is the difference in the available interpretations of otherwise identical non-active constructions in Albanian:

(1) Molla ha-e-t
   Apple-DEF eat-IPFV.PST-3SG
   a. The apple is edible
   b. The apple is eaten
   c. Apples are edible

(2) Shtëpia ndërto-he-t
   House-DEF build-IPFV.PST-3SG
   a. The house is buildable
   b. The house is built
   c. Houses are built

We firstly establish the middle character of the above constructions, i.e., non-eventive constructions that denote a property of the grammatical subjects, based on Ackema & Schoorlemmer (1994, 2005), Condoravdi (1989), Fagan (1992) and Lekakou (2002, 2005). Subsequently, we distinguish two interpretations for the morphologically definite grammatical subject, where only one of them is specific, while the other one is generic. We employ an OT semantic analysis focusing on definiteness of grammatical subject and the Individual Level Predicate (Carlson, 1972) properties of middles to account for the different interpretations, in the spirit of Zwart (1997). We attribute the difference in the interpretation of the above constructions to the interaction between the individual temporal properties of the verbs and the generic character of the grammatical subject. The OT semantic analysis shows that genericity of the subject overrides temporal boundaries and induces generic interpretations while the ILPassignment properties of imperfective morphology conflict with the inner aspect of predicates.

Biography
Borana Lushaj is an Albanian student of linguistics, currently working on her MA Thesis on the middle construction in Albanian based on a 1200000 word corpus compiled for this purpose. She has a B.A. in English language and literature from the University of Tirana as well as an M.St in General Linguistics and Comparative Philology from the University of Oxford. Before coming to the Netherlands she has worked for civil society projects and as a freelance translator and interpreter in her home country.
‘Words and deeds: about verbs that represent actions and verbs that do not.’

Loes van Andel (ResMA Comparatieve Nederlands, UvA)
Universiteit Leiden/Universiteit van Amsterdam

Following research in stylistics by Leech and Short in English and Anbeek and Verhagen in Dutch literature, I have considered stylistics as ‘the study of the relation between linguistic form and literary function’. My investigation of the specific verb use in a literary corpus of Dutch novels, shows that a quantitative linguistic method can support the subjective interpretations made by literary critics.

I have used a verb categorisation method based on Halliday’s theory of transitivity to group verbs according to their meaning and the process in the world they represent. A comparative corpus analysis of the number of verbs in the different categories made it possible to establish differences in the way events in the novel are presented by verbs: the differences in use between verbs denoting mental processes and verbs denoting actions turned out to be especially important. The comparative method also made it possible to link the linguistic data to the literary interpretation of the Dutch novels.

One example of the way a literary phenomenon is constructed linguistically is the way a character can be formed by a specific choice of verbs. The results of my analysis show on the one hand that the main character Beck in Arnon Grunberg’s novel De Asielzoeker (The Asylum seeker) – a character who claims to have ‘stepped out of life’, no longer participating in it but only observing it – is significantly often described by verbs designating specific mental processes. On the other hand the novel contains significantly less verbs designating actions, when compared to the number of action verbs in the other corpus novels. These results show how the interpretation of a specific part of a novel, usually studied by strictly literary scholars, can be made stronger by using quantitative data analysis of linguistic phenomena.

The use of this particular method has also given rise to some problems that have to be taken into account when practising this quantitative analysis of linguistics in literature. This study has made clear that even when categories are made so that verbs can be counted, the need for a qualitative interpretation of the numbers found in the corpus texts always remains.

References


Biography
Loes van Andel is an MA student in Comparative Dutch Studies at the University of Amsterdam. In 2009 she received two BA degrees, in both Dutch and French Culture and Literature. Her MA programma has its focus on comparative linguistics and comparative literature, and Loes is primarily interested in combining literary and linguistic research. She did exactly that when she recently participated in a research project at Leiden University called ‘Stylistics of Dutch’. She hopes to receive her MA degree this summer.
Historians of Carolingian culture consider themselves fairly well informed when it comes to Carolingian attitudes towards sexuality and deviant sexual behaviour. The Carolingian court during the reign of Charlemagne and his son Louis the Pious (from roughly 768 to 834 AD) was very concerned with the religious implications of political theory and formulated intricate theories as to how religious purity would uphold the wellbeing of the Frankish kingdom. That’s why we nowadays possess a reasonable amount of information about what Carolingian scholars considered to be pure and wholesome behaviour and what (especially sexual) behaviour was considered sinful and would therefore lead to the detriment of the nation.

However, we should keep in mind that most of these sources are theological or legislative in nature and mostly pertain to the circles of clerics and noblemen. Another difficulty is that most of these sources choose to be as vague as possible as to not titillate others to the same sins. A term as *sodomia* which looks quite straightforward is actually highly opaque referring to all kinds of sexual behaviour which was considered sinful, whether it be sodomy, adultery or bestiality. Therefore it is dangerous to extrapolate from these sources the secular view on individuals who indulged in homosexual behaviour. Luckily, where the historian is fettered to his sources who mainly inform us about elites and scholarly discourse, the linguist is often allowed a peak into historical everyday life. A linguistic interpretation of parts of vernacular literature and vernacular glosses in Carolingian manuscripts shows a different and more nuanced picture of early medieval attitudes towards homosexual behaviour.

In the Carolingian redactions of late antique christian writers such as Aurelius Prudentius Clemens we find the words *catamitus, puer* and the classical deity *Attis* glossed with *wīdīlo, diocho* and *gislaffo*, all terms denoting homosexual behaviour which after etymological analysis seem to have a neutral meaning. I have tried to integrate the cultural implications of these rarely considered vernacular words into the image of homosexual behaviour and bisexual attitudes that we can gleam from penitentials, barbarian laws, vernacular confessions, early medieval literary evidence, the comparative germanic picture and Carolingian religious teaching. This evidence seems to contradict the *communis opinio* amongst most historians of Carolingian culture, that sodomy and homosexuality was strongly combatted by the church and the elites. It rather confirms the views propagated by John Boswell in his work *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality*, namely that homosexual behaviour was an accepted part of Carolingian secular culture, although conditioned by sexual stereotypes of gender and age. An early medieval mentality towards homosexual behaviour that runs parallel to those in ancient Greece and Classical Rome seems very likely.
Phonological development in children with cleft palate
Monique Bisschop MSc & Margo Zwitserlood MSc (& dr. Claartje Levelt)

Kinderen met schisis hebben tijdens de eerste levensjaren veel taal- en spraakproblemen, zoals nasaliteit en een kleine woordenschat. Ons pilot-onderzoek bestaat uit twee deelstudies die de oorzaak trachten te vinden voor de soms langdurige taal- en spraakproblemen. Hierbij focussen wij op een onderliggend fonologisch probleem.

In studie I onderzoeken we een mogelijk defect in het fonologisch geheugen bij deze kinderen door woordenschat scores te correleren met een non-woord repetitie taak. De onderzoeksgrond bestond uit 13 kinderen met schisis tussen 24 en 28 maanden. Deze kinderen zijn vergeleken met een controlegroep van 14 kinderen van dezelfde leeftijd zonder schisis. In studie II onderzoeken we een mogelijke perceptiestoornis in de fonologische representaties. Dit doen wij met behulp van een minimale paren test en een benoemtaak bij kinderen tussen 4 en 7 jaar. De resultaten uit studie I tonen aan dat het fonologisch geheugen bij kinderen met schisis intact is. De resultaten van studie II wijzen echter op een perceptiestoornis. Dit duidt op fonologische representaties die verkeerd opgeslagen zijn in het lexicon. Wellicht wordt dit veroorzaakt door een hardnekkige foutieve uitspraak. Met deze studies proberen we meer inzicht te krijgen in de onderliggende oorzaken van taal- en spraakproblemen bij kinderen met schisis, zodat de diagnostiek en de logopedische behandelingen hierop aangepast kunnen worden.

Monique Bisschop

Margo Zwitserlood
Language in space and language in time

John Nerbonne
University of Groningen

This talk will suggest how insights and techniques from dialect geography might be useful in historical linguistics. Dialect geography studies the distributions of linguistic variation of different sorts and different levels of granularity. Traditional studies emphasized the study of individual features, dialectometry has emphasized aggregate differences (Goebl 1984, Nerbonne 2009), and more recent work has sought to clarify the link between the two (Wieling and Nerbonne, 2011). Edit-distance and (closely related) alignment algorithms have been workhorses within quantitative dialectology, and it is worth pausing to ask whether they might play a similarly productive role within historical linguistics. The talk will close with a presentation of collaborative work with Jelena Prokić (LMU München) in which alignments are used to extract sound correspondences automatically.


Biography
John Nerbonne studied Linguistics and Computer Science at the Ohio State University and then worked in industry for eight years (Hewlett Packard Labs and the German Artificial Intelligence Center) before becoming professor of Computational Linguistics and chair of Humanities Computing (alfa-informatica) in Groningen in 1993. He’s worked on a range of theoretical and applied topics in computational linguistics, including grammar development, semantics, natural language interfaces, computer-assisted language learning, language acquisition simulations and detecting syntactic differences in corpora. Most relevant to the lecture at the TWIST conference is Nerbonne’s work on computational tools for analyzing pronunciation differences, where he has contributed a number of techniques and refinements to dialectology.