

European Science Foundation
Standing Committee for the Humanities (SCH)

ESF SCH EXPLORATORY WORKSHOP

EUROPEAN DIALECT SYNTAX



University of Padova, Italy
11-13 September 2003

Convened by:
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Local Organiser: Cecilia Poletto

CNR Istituto di Scienze e Tecnologie della Cognizione
University of Padova



The European Science Foundation (ESF) acts as a catalyst for the development of science by bringing together leading scientists and funding agencies to debate, plan and implement pan-European scientific and science policy initiatives.

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European Science Foundation - Humanities (SCH) Exploratory Workshop:

European Dialect Syntax

Padova, Italy, 11-13 September 2003

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Major Objective of the workshop:

Organising a coordinated European research initiative for the study of the morphology and syntax of regional dialects and spoken (largely non-standard) varieties of European languages, in general.

Background :

Up to the 1990s the study of dialect syntax has played only a marginal role in traditional dialectology. The primary concern of dialectologists was and, largely, still is the study of phonological variation (accents) and of lexical variation. It is largely for these purposes only that data were systematically collected in those dialect surveys (often 50 or more years old) that still represent the major data source for traditional dialectologists in Europe. This neglect of syntax has also led to a mutual disregard of dialectology, on the one hand, and modern developments in the study of grammar and grammatical variation as well as linguistic theory, on the other hand.



This situation is beginning to change dramatically. Recently, it is in five European countries that, completely independently of each other (!), projects on the study of the morphology and syntax of dialects were established which all receive major national funding:

- **Syntactic Atlas of Northern Italy** (1992-2002).
Participating institutions: CNR, University of Padua
- **A Syntactic Atlas of the Dutch Dialects** (January 2000 until December 2003).
Participating institutions: Meertens Instituut (Amsterdam), universities of Amsterdam, Leiden, Antwerp, Gent
- **English Dialect Syntax from a Typological Perspective** (March 2000 until April 2005). Participating institution: University of Freiburg
- **Swiss German Dialect Syntax** (January 2000 until December 2002).
Participating institution: University of Zurich
- **The Morphosyntactic Typology of Romani Dialects: Database Enhancement Project** (February 2001 until December 2003), participating institutions: University of Manchester (project base), University of Thessaloniki, University of Vienna;
Cooperation partners: Ruhr-University Bochum (Germany), University of Sofia, University of Aarhus (Denmark)

It is the four first-mentioned projects that are spearheading the European research initiative that forms the major objective of the ESF Exploratory Workshop in Padova. The members of these projects are convinced that a coordinated research initiative on a European scale is clearly called for. We are looking at an extremely promising field of linguistic research which will, among other things, give a boost to a specific European identity of European linguistics, not only due to the fact that dialects of European languages are investigated, but also due to the more than realistic possibility that, as a result of the coordinated European research efforts, significant input will be provided for the further development of modern linguistic theorizing.

Expected benefits of the workshop

- (a) a major contribution to the preservation of European cultural heritage due to the collection of data (in an, ideally, comparable format) which will be made electronically accessible;
- (b) establishing a computerized database on European dialect syntax in a standardized format (including sound files with a standard reading passage and stretches of natural discourse data);
- (c) working towards a Syntactic Atlas of the Dialects of Europe based on a selection of syntactic phenomena;
- (d) a major contribution to the study of the "real" linguistic landscape of Europe, "real" in the sense that this workshop and the resulting research network or programme will look at the spoken varieties of European languages, thus complementing the ESF Research Programme EUROTYP ("Typology of European Languages", 1990-94) whose focus was clearly on the written standard varieties;



- (e) Dialects and spoken varieties of a language, in general, often differ quite markedly from the relevant written standard variety. The study of spoken varieties on a European scale is bound to yield new insights for areal typology, both on a small scale (e.g. areal distribution of individual syntactic variables, regionally restricted convergence areas in Europe) and on a much larger scale. On this larger scale, the detailed study of spoken vernaculars will put to test, for example, the idea of a European Sprachbund (still best known under Whorf's label Standard Average European) which, most recently, the EUROTYP programme has strongly substantiated. The question is, though, to what extent this only holds for the written standard varieties of the European languages;
- (f) As part of exploring the "real" linguistic landscape of Europe it will also be interesting to see what can be said about processes of language change affecting European dialect syntax: In which domains can we observe, for example, a development towards the standard varieties? Which former regionally restricted syntactic features seem to be spreading and on their way towards becoming part of a new spoken standard? Which areas of dialect syntax seem to be largely resistant to language change?
- (g) cross-fertilization of traditional research on dialect syntax in dialectology and sociolinguistics, on the one hand, and the study of dialect syntax (or: microparametric syntax) within recent syntactic theory and language typology, on the other hand; this cross-fertilization will concern both methodology and theory (development);
- (h) the theoretically informed study of dialect syntax is bound to be an important testing ground for the relevant theoretical frameworks, be it generative syntactic theory or language typology (especially functional typology), and to feed back into them. Thus from the study of dialect syntax there will be both a significant benefit for language description and linguistic theorizing;
- (i) a boost for postgraduate research in linguistics on a national and European scale.



PRELIMINARY PROGRAMME

Thursday 11th September 2003

Official opening and welcome

- 09:00 • **Ekkehard König** (ESF Standing Committee for the Humanities)
 • **Alberto Mioni** (Head of Department Linguistics, University of Padua)
 • **Emanuela Magno** (for the ISTC-CNR)
- 09:20 **Welcome / Aims of the workshop**
 Cecilia Poletto & Bernd Kortmann

Reports on the state of the art of current dialect syntax projects (including methodology)

- 09:30 **Syntactic Atlas of the Dutch Dialects: The Netherlands**
 Sjef Barbiers & Hans Bennis
- 10:15 **Syntactic Atlas of the Dutch Dialects: Belgium**
 Magda Devos & Johan van der Auwera
- 11:00 *Coffee Break*
- 11:30 **Swiss German Dialect Syntax**
 Elvira Glaser & Guido Seiler
- 12:15 **English Dialect Syntax from a Typological Perspective**
 Bernd Kortmann & Lieselotte Anderwald
- 13:00 *Lunch*
- 14:30 **Syntactic Atlas of Northern Italian Dialects**
 Cecilia Poletto
- 15:00 **The ASIS database: its structure and research perspectives**
 Nicoletta Penello
- 15:15 **The CORDIAL-SIN Project on Portuguese Dialect Syntax**
 Ernestina Carrilho
- 16:00 *Coffee Break*
- 16:30 **The Morphosyntactic Database of Romani Dialects: Methodology
and selected findings**
 Yaron Matras
- 17:15-19:00 **Round table discussion cum laboratory session on methodology
and research tools**



Friday 12th September 2003

Morning lecture

09:00 **The Prenominal Origin of Relative Clauses**
Guglielmo Cinque

Setting up dialect syntax projects in other European countries involved

10:15 **Plans for a Scandinavian dialect syntax project**
Christer Platzack & Øystein Vangsnes

11:00 *Coffee Break*

11:30 **The Catalan dialect syntax project**
Gemma Rigau

Sociolinguistic aspects of syntactic variation

12:00 **Contact-induced varieties, syntactic variation and methodology**
Leonie Cornips

12:30 **Dialect syntax as spoken language: some implications for the analysis of sociolinguistic variation**
Jenny Cheshire

13:00 *Lunch*

Selected topics of dialect morphosyntax

14:30 **Selected topics of dialect morphosyntax: Interrogative strategies in the Northern Italian domain**
Nicola Munaro

15:00 **Variation in agreement phenomena**
Joao Costa

15:30 **Inflected complementizers in Continental West Germanic dialects**
Helmut Weiß

16:00 *Coffee Break*

16:30 **Clitic zu in Bavarian and Alemannic infinitives**
Josef Bayer

17:00 **Word order of modal constructions in Middle Bavarian dialects**
Hans-Werner Eroms

17:30 **Genitive variation in English dialects**
Juhani Klemola

19:30 *Conference Dinner*



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Saturday 13th September 2003

09:00 **Perspectives for the study of dialect syntax in Europe**
Bernd Kortmann

09:45 **Business meeting to organise further cooperation**

11:00 *Coffee Break*

13:00 *End of workshop / Lunch*



European Science Foundation

ESF Standing Committee for the Humanities (SCH)

The main tasks of the **ESF Standing Committee for the Humanities (SCH)** are:

- to encourage interdisciplinary work through the independent evaluation of collaborative research proposals emanating from the scholarly community;
- to identify priority research areas and to play an integrative and co-ordinating role by creating links between research communities which in the Humanities are often small and fragmented.
- to contribute to the development of the ESF science policy agenda and to provide expert advice on science policy actions at the European level in the field of its responsibilities.

The Committee is well aware that the ESF is the only European Agency where the Humanities have a place next to the other sciences and where European projects are reviewed, developed and subsequently operated.

The Committee considers it all the more important to be heard as the voice of the Human Sciences in Europe and to continue pleading for a more prominent place for the Humanities in the European landscape.

Exploratory workshops are viewed by ESF Standing Committees as a useful instrument for identifying emerging fields requiring action at a European level. Exploratory Workshops are aimed at helping European research teams to exchange knowledge, establish new links and to explore the possibilities of developing future collaborative actions. Further information at <http://www.esf.org/workshops>.

One outcome of an ESF Exploratory Workshop may be that participants decide to submit a proposal for an ESF scientific **Programme, Network** or **Euroconference**, possibly to be financed by, and coordinated through, the European Science Foundation. If this is the case, it is expected that participants of the workshop follow the relevant procedures.

In the case of **Programmes** (“à la carte” or [EUROCORES](#)), a draft proposal should be submitted to the SCH Secretariat for advice, to then subsequently undergo further external refereeing. If successful in obtaining SCH's scientific recommendation, the proposal will be submitted to ESF Member Organisations for funding on a voluntary basis. More details are available at <http://www.esf.org/sch>.

In the case of a **Network** the proposal is submitted to the ESF Network Secretariat. The results of the refereeing process and SCH's scientific recommendations are provided to the Network Group. This is the body that decides whether or not to recommend a proposal for launching. More details are available at <http://www.esf.org/networks>.

In the case of **Euroconferences**, the proposal is submitted to the ESF Euresco Secretariat. A Committee (assisted by Advisory Panels) takes full responsibility for the selection of conference subjects and chairmen. More details are available at <http://www.esf.org/euresco>.



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