International workshop on

Building categories in interaction:
multidisciplinary approaches to categorization

University of Bologna
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Convenors:
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1. Background: categorization theories

In the second half of the 20th century several path-breaking studies in cognitive sciences radically changed our view of categories and categorization. In particular, Eleanor Rosch's seminal works on cognitive psychology (1973, 1975) provided a crucial contribution to a theory of categories with the introduction of key notions such as *prototype* and *basic level.* This revolution also provided the main tenets of the cognitive-functional approach in linguistics, based on the notion that language is embodied and integrated within other human cognitive abilities (Langacker 1987; Lakoff 1987). Several studies in this field have shown how language reflects the way speakers of different languages categorize reality in a culture-specific way. Some examples are the well-known studies on color typology (Berlin and Kay 1969) or spatial frames of reference (Levinson 2003).

More recently, works by Barsalou (Barsalou 1983, 1991, 2003, 2010) have introduced an important divide between *natural* (or common) categories on the one hand and *ad hoc* categories on the other. The first roughly correspond to traditional categories, i.e. context independent intuitions, while the latter respond to the need to categorize reality under particular contextual circumstances and for a specific purpose. *Ad hoc* categories are thus involved in the creation of reference to situation-specific objects such as "things I need for a one-month vacation to Alaska" or "magazines you can find in a men's barber shop".

The existing literature on categorization, however, seems to consider linguistic phenomena to the extent that language *reflects* categorization and provides strategies (mainly lexical ones) to *name* categories. According to Croft and Cruse (2004), each time we refer to some concept through a given word, we actively and cooperatively construe the reference of that word by tailoring it up for the particular context. Also, within Relevance Theory lexical semantics has been analyzed in terms of its adaptability to context: according to Wilson and Carston (2007), words are used as hints towards *ad hoc concepts,* that is, narrowed or broadened interpretations of the lexical semantics, based on context relevance.

2. Our focus: the construction and communication of categories in linguistic interaction

Is *naming* the only way in which language works as a categorization tool? The great amount of spoken data nowadays available allows us to check the received theories on categorization against real data on language interaction. In other words, we are now in the position to ask ourselves how categories are referred to by speakers *interacting in conversation*, and even more crucially to what extent **categories are shared, negotiated, co-constructed by speakers.**

The naming of categories may indeed be the aim of an interaction, not necessarily a starting point. What we observe in spoken data is that the use of a lexical category label (i.e. a word, or a short phrase), though adapted to context, is frequently not enough, and speakers recur to exemplification, reformulation, and further strategies to check for the hearer's cooperation towards categorization. Let us consider example 1)

> 1) *It was some sort of chessboard, you know, not a real chessboard, more like a large decorated dish, a shield, something like that. A round chessboard-like object.*

In 1) we can see the speaker employing a lexical label to refer to a given object ('chessboard'), preceded by some approximation ('some sort of'). Yet, she feels that this label may not be enough to guide the hearer toward the identification of the correct reference. Therefore, she continues defining the borders of the category by *negating* what is outside the category itself ('not a real chessboard'). After delimiting the borders, the Speaker goes establishing a similarity comparison with an open list of examples ('more like a large decorated dish, a shield, something like that'), which are contextually relevant for the abstractive process. She then reformulates the category through a new label, creatively recurring to a word-formation strategy ('round chessboard-like object').

Linguistic interaction allows us to observe both
i)   **competing strategies for category *naming***: simple words, established and nonce complex words (compounds, derivatives), multiword expressions, phrases;
ii)   **strategies that guide speakers through a top-down and bottom-up *process of category co-construction*, that is, a shared complex activity of formulation, reformulation, exemplification, negotiation, abstraction and reference**, expressed by: list constructions, general extenders, exemplifiers, similative constructions, negative periphrases, reduplication, reformulation, etc.

Moreover, data on linguistic interaction offer a privileged vantage point on the actual role played by context in determining the speaker's choice of a specific *naming strategy* (e.g. a compound, cf. Schlücker & Hüning 2009) as opposed to a more *procedural strategy* (e.g. a list of examples), and in guiding the hearer's interpretation.

Great cross-linguistic variation is attested in both *naming* and *procedural* categorization strategies (see Mauri 2017, Mauri and Sansò, in preparation). For instance, associative and similative plurals (Daniel and Moravcsik 2013) or echo reduplications (Montaut 2009) are in some languages the default strategy to convey an abstractive, exemplar-driven categorization process of the type 'X and similar things'. Given their morphological status,

we would expect them to be used as *naming* strategies, but their exemplar-driven semantics leans more towards a *procedural use.* Moreover, little or no attention has been paid to the actual use of these and other similar strategies in speakers' interactions.

3. Aim of the workshop and call for papers

This workshop is organized within the LEAdhoC project, based at the University of Bologna (www.leadhoc.org).

In this workshop, we aim to broaden our understanding of language as a tool for categorization in linguistic interaction, by investigating how language-specific grammatical resources are exploited in conversation to name and create locally meaningful categories, with special attention to how this process is rooted in the realtime dimension (see the discussion of temporality in Auer 2009; Günthner and Deppermann 2015; Du Bois 2014; Hopper 2011 *inter al.*).

Since, categorization is thought of as a dynamic process in which participants are actively involved, we aim at understanding what linguistic and possibly multi-modal resources are exploited and what are the pragmatic and conversational effects obtained. In this view, the divide between fully grammatical(ized) strategies encoding reference to a category and more fluid discursive strategies is ideal rather than factual, since grammar is regarded as the outcome of entrenchment of discursive patterns (cf. Auer and Pfänder 2011).

We aim to look at data coming from different languages, examined from complementary perspectives, integrating cognitive and discourse studies, typology and conversational analysis. We further aim to compare linguistic evidence with experimental evidence, obtained in psychological and psycholinguistic research, to verify the psychological reality of the mechanisms observed in language.

We therefore invite contributions focusing on how speakers in interaction name categories, co-construe them, interpret and negotiate their meaning according to context. We accept contributions adopting different perspectives (linguistic typology, historical linguistics, psycholinguistics, cognitive linguistics, conversation analysis, …). Empirical works will receive special attention, but also more theory-oriented contributions will be regarded as eligible.

Here is a non-exhaustive list of relevant linguistic phenomena:

- The use of associative and similative plurals in linguistic interaction
- Word formation (compounding, derivation) as strategies to name context-dependent categories
- Reformulation and exemplification strategies
- Reduplication and echo-constructions
- Lexical search and approximation
- List constructions
- The competition between the above-mentioned strategies

A non-exhaustive list of possible topics includes:

- The cognitive and pragmatic functions of the above-mentioned constructions
- The role of shared context and shared knowledge in building categories in discourse
- Emerging (co-)constructions for building categories in discourse
- Dialogic syntax and resonance
- *On line* processing and its role in building reference to categories
- Differences (and similarities) in the processing of different strategies (e.g. listing vs. naming)
- Experimental evidence for how categories are elaborated and construed by speakers
- Cross-linguistic and diachronic variation concerning the above-mentioned strategies
- …

Important dates
Abstracts should be submitted to workshop.categorization@gmail.com by the **10th1st of June 2017.** Notification of acceptance will be given by the **30th June 2017**.

Abstracts should be anonymous and contain between 400 and 500 words (exclusive of references). They should state research questions, approach, method, data and (expected) results.

For any information please contact workshop.categorization@gmail.com.

Plenary speakers

Lawrence Barsalou (University of Glasgow)
title to be announced

William Croft (University of New Mexico)
"Linguistic categories as exemplar lineages"

John Du Bois (University of Santa Barbara)
"Engaging Categories: Interactional Dynamics of the Stance-Built Object"

Scientific committee

Giorgio Francesco Arcodia (Università Milano Bicocca), Mira Ariel (Tel Aviv University), Peter Auer (Universität Freiburg), Alessandra Barotto (Università di Pavia), Sonia Cristofaro (Università di Pavia), Norbert Dittmar (Freie Universität Berlin), Ilaria Fiorentini (Università di Bologna), Anna Giacalone Ramat (Università di Pavia), Eugenio Goria (Università di Bologna), Ekkehard Koenig (Freie Universitaet Berlin), Elisabetta Magni (Università di Bologna), Francesca Masini (Università di Bologna), Caterina Mauri (Università di Bologna), Wiltrud Mihatsch (Universität Tübingen), Elisa Roma (Università

di Pavia), Andrea Sansò (Università dell'Insubria), Johan van der Auwera (Universiteit Antwerpen).

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