

GLOW 2013 Workshop I

April 2

BIOLINGUISTICS

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Invited speakers: Robert Berwick, MIT
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Submission of abstracts: <https://www.easychair.org/conferences/?conf=glow36>

This workshop addresses fundamental questions on the properties of the Language Faculty from a biolinguistic perspective, with a particular attention on how this perspective contributes to further understanding of linguistic phenomena with large empirical coverage.

The study of the relation between humans' biology and the Language Faculty is central in Biolinguistics (Lenneberg 1967; Chomsky 1983, 2005; Jenkins 2000, 2004; Gallistel, 2009; Di Sciullo et al 2010; Berwick and Chomsky 2011; Di Sciullo and Boeckx 2011). While theoretical hypotheses about this relation emerged in the generative enterprise since its beginnings, recent developments directly address the issue in terms of the properties of the 'language organ'. Different hypotheses about the properties of the generative procedure giving rise to the discrete infinity of language are still under discussion, and their connection with biology is open to important cross-disciplinary work (Hauser, Chomsky and Fitch 2002; Piattelli-Palmarini and Uriagereka 2008; Larson 2011; Lasnik 2011, 2012; *Arsenijević* and Hinzen 2012). Advances have been made in human-animal studies to differentiate human language from animal communication (Jarvis 2004; Fitch and Hauser 2004; Friederici 2009; Fitch 2010). Contributions from neuroscience also point to the exclusive properties of the human brain for language (Moro 2010; Friederici et al. 2011; Patel 2008, 2012). Studies of genetically based language impairments also contribute to the understanding of the properties of the language organ (Ross and Bever 2004; Bishop et al. 2005; Hancock and Bever 2012; Patel et al. 2008; Wexler 2003). This workshop invites contributions showing how the theoretical and experimental works on the biological basis of language shed light on core linguistic phenomena.

The relation between language variation and biology is another important area of research in biolinguistics, as variation is a constant in the observable biological world, as it is in language variation and historical evolution (Cavalli-Sforza and Feldman 1981; Lewontin 2000). Theoretical approaches to language variation stemming from works on population genetics, and syntactic approaches to language phylogeny opened new horizons for the study of language variation, and more broadly for language development, including its development in the child (Bever 1981; Longobardi and Guardiano 2011; Niyogi 2006, Niyogi and Berwick 2009; Di Sciullo 2011, 2012, Biberauer, Holmberg and Roberts 2012). Recent works on the poverty of the stimulus bring additional arguments to the biological nature of language, and they address central issues related to deterministic/probabilistic theories of language learning and language variation (*Berwick et al 2011*; Yang 2002, 2008, 2011). Other works address the question of why parameters emerge and why resetting of parameters occurs, and consider the role of external, environmental factors in language variation and change. This workshop invites contributions with large empirical coverage that address fundamental questions on language development and language variation and their technical instantiations as feature-valuing, symmetry-breaking, functional flexibility, as a distinctive instance of variation and development in the natural world.

The relation between Language as a computational procedure and principles reducing complexity has been part of the research agenda in the generative enterprise since the 1950's. Framed within biolinguistics, the principles of efficient computation are natural laws affecting the properties of the operations and the derivations of the (Narrow) Language Faculty (Chomsky 2005, 2011). They apply to Merge (No Tampering Condition), as well as to the derivational procedure (minimal search,

phases, Agree), to SM (Pronounce the Minimum, Chomsky 2011), and CI (Reference Set, Reinhart 2006; Local Economy, Fox 1999) interfaces. They reduce the specific properties of the Language Faculty, while they affect all aspects of the generative procedure. Several questions arise regarding the properties of the so-called ‘third factor’ in language development, including the following: How do the principles of efficient computation address classical computational notions of complexity, such as Kolmogorov’s 1965 definition, as well as novel notions of complexity? How are they related to natural laws? What is their relation with the Strong Minimalist Thesis? This workshop invites contributions with large empirical coverage that address fundamental questions on principles of efficient computation in the study of the biology of language.

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Submission Guidelines

Submission procedure: All abstracts (including abstracts for the workshops) must be submitted online through *EasyChair*:

<https://www.easychair.org/conferences/?conf=glow36>

The abstract deadline is **November 15, 23:59 CET**.

Notifications of acceptance/rejection will be sent out on January 20.

Format: Abstracts (for oral presentations and posters) must not exceed two A4 pages in length. This includes data and references. Submissions must be consistent with the following format:

- 2.5 cm (1 inch) margins on all four sides. On A4 paper, these margins produce a 160mm x 247mm text box. Submitters whose computers are set up for other paper sizes should adjust their margins accordingly to produce a text box of this size. This is especially important for the legibility of the Spring Newsletter.
- Font size no smaller than 12pt, with single line spacing; no more than 50 lines of text per page, including examples. Times New Roman.
- Examples must be integrated throughout the text of the abstract, rather than collected at the end.
- Nothing in the abstract, the title, or the name of the document should identify the author(s).
- At most two submissions per author, at most one of which can be single-authored. The same abstract may **not** be submitted to both the Colloquium and a workshop.

- Only submissions in **.pdf** format will be accepted.

Additional note: Named abstracts and the Spring Newsletter

If your paper is accepted for presentation at GLOW 36, you will be asked to submit a non-anonymous version of your abstract for publication in the GLOW Spring Newsletter.

In case any problems arise, please contact the organizers (glow36@nordlund.lu.se) and the Newsletter Editor (richards@em.uni-frankfurt.de).

It is particularly important for publication purposes that all non-standard (nonopen source) fonts in the named version of accepted abstracts be either properly embedded into the PDF file or else avoided altogether.