

EXTRAVAGANCE AND CREATIVITY THROUGH THE EMPIRICAL LENS

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Creative and “extravagant” uses of language have drawn considerable attention in recent cognitive-linguistic work. Both theoretical approaches to delineating the concepts in question (Bergs 2019, Hoffmann 2018, 2024, *forthc.*) and empirical attempts at making them operationalizable using quantitative methods (e.g., Petré 2017, De Wit et al. 2020, Ungerer & Hartmann 2020, Baumann & Mühlenbernd 2022, Kempf & Hartmann 2022, Neels et al. 2023, Hartmann & Ungerer 2024, Morin *forthc.*) are currently flourishing. Following Sampson (2016), Bergs (2019) has influentially distinguished “F(ixed)-creativity”, i.e., the rule-bound extension of a pattern, from “E(xtending)-creativity”, i.e., innovative uses of language that go beyond the current language system in some way. The concept of extravagance (Haspelmath 1999) in turn offers an explanation for why language users are E-creative in the first place: In order to be socially successful, they follow the maxim “talk in such a way that you are noticed” (Keller 1994). Constructions that have been discussed as examples of “extravagant” language use include reduplication patterns like *fixer-upper* (Lensch 2022) and *shm*-reduplication (*Brexit*, *shmexit*, Hartmann & Ungerer *forthc.*) or “snowclones” like [X *BE the new* Y], as in *ICLC17 is the new ICLC16* (Hartmann & Ungerer 2024).

Despite this surge in research on linguistic creativity, many important questions remain. First, even though various authors have tried to offer operationalizable definitions, it is not entirely clear what exactly the concepts of (E-)creativity and extravagance encompass and how they relate to similar concepts such as expressivity (Gutzmann 2019), evaluativeness (e.g., Grandi & Körtvélyessy 2015, Battfeld et al. 2018), and salience (e.g., Schmid 2007, Schmid & Günther 2016, Boswijk & Colern 2020). Second, attempts to empirically operationalize such concepts are often in danger of circularity, as they tend to rely on the presence of other, similarly “extravagant” patterns in the vicinity of the target construction (e.g., the co-presence of emphatic markers, Petré 2017; other “extravagant” expressions in the context, Kempf & Hartmann 2022) or on crowdsourced but ultimately intuitive judgments (Ungerer & Hartmann 2020). Third, it remains to be discussed how notions like E- and F-creativity as well as extravagance relate to the concept of productivity (e.g., Barðdal 2008, Goldberg 2019).

This theme session aims to address these open questions by asking how we can assess creativity, extravagance, and related notions with the help of empirical case studies, and how such empirical studies can in turn inform our theoretical understanding of these concepts. Featuring a geographically diverse group of speakers and a broad range of topics and object languages, our

workshop brings together theoretical, corpus-based and experimental accounts of what sets “E-creative” uses of language apart from merely “F-creative” ones.

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