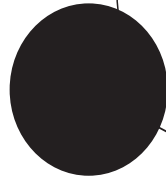
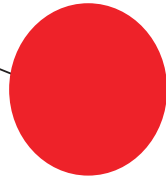


# PALMYR X

Logic and the Use of Language



Paris - Amsterdam  
Logic Meetings of Young Researchers

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Book of Abstracts

URL: <http://www.illc.uva.nl/PALMYR/>

## About PALMYR:

Both Paris and Amsterdam host a lively group of young researchers working at the interface of logic, language, and theories of rationality. PALMYR brings them together.

PALMYR is a series of yearly meetings taking place alternatively in Amsterdam and Paris. At each PALMYR meeting, visitors give talks about their current research interests, each presentation being commented by a fellow researcher from the host town.

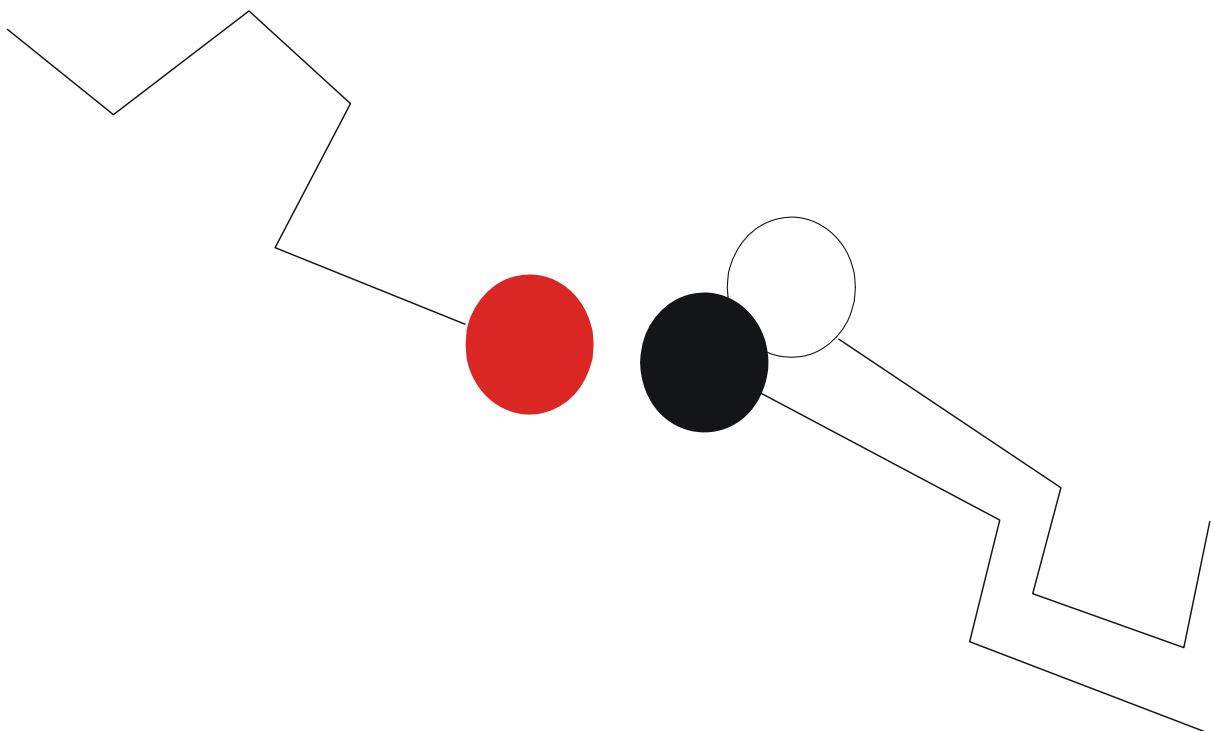
## Organising committee:

Alexandra Arapinis (IHPST, Paris)

Inés Crespo (ILLC, Amsterdam)

Isidora Stojanovic (IJN, Paris)

Lucian Zagan (ILLC, Amsterdam)



## **KEYNOTE SPEAKER:**

### **Truthmaker Semantics**

Kit Fine (NYU, New York)

I show how a certain version of situation semantics is able to solve a number of problems in linguistics and philosophical logic.

## **PARTICIPANTS:**

### **Truth and Natural Language**

Theodora Achourioti (ILLC, Amsterdam)

This paper discusses the behavior of the truth predicate in communication; in particular, the rules and principles that seem to be in place for language users to either produce or decode sentences that contain the truth predicate. Analysing truth in communication is a programme introduced by Michael Sheard as 'the transactional approach to truth' (Sheard, 2008). In what follows, this programme is undertaken with an eye kept on its philosophical assumptions and implications.

Following Sheard, I will be considering the three presently most prominent classical axiomatic untyped theories of truth as candidate truth theories for capturing the behavior of the truth predicate in communication: KF, VF and FS (Halbach, 2011). These are mathematical theories that take PA as the basis to which the truth axioms (and rules of inference in the case of FS) are added. PA is a convenient choice of a base theory, mainly because it has the resources needed in order to talk about its own syntax, which is what is needed for the addition of a truth predicate. Assuming that the natural language has such resources, one can take the truth theories to stand for a truth mechanism that competent speakers have at their disposal for producing and decoding messages involving truth.

The first part of the talk is devoted to discussing philosophical issues concerning the enterprise just outlined. Axiomatic approaches to truth have been particularly attractive to philosophers with deflationist inclinations (Halbach & Horsten, 2005). An interesting question is whether deflationism can provide guidance in the present context. The second part is devoted to a more detailed discussion of truth in communication with reference to particular examples and attempts of modeling those. A pertinent question in the literature on axiomatic theories of truth concerns the criteria for comparing and choosing one theory over the other (Horsten, forthcoming). It is interesting that communication can furnish a choice between theories of truth.

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Dimitracopoulos L. Newelski (Ed.), *Logic colloquium 2005*. Cambridge University Press.

## Certainty in Pain and Taste

Inés Crespo (ILLC, Amsterdam)

We relate taste judgments with avowals, insofar as the latter qualify as certainties in the sense of Wittgenstein's *On Certainty*. We deploy features of certainties to scrutinise the role of subjectivity in the semantics of taste expressions. We conclude that disagreements about taste are better explained when taste judgments are analysed as certainties, showing that subjectivity is far less crucial than generally thought.

# The German *irgendein* and its various readings

Angelika Port and Maria Aloni (ILLC, Amsterdam)

In this talk we will present the results of a diachronic and synchronic corpus study on the German Epistemic Indefinite (EI) *irgendein* and provide an account for its distribution. EI are indefinites which exhibit the specific unknown function on Haspelmath's implicational map (1997), but do not exhibit the specific known function.

In the first part we will present the results of the diachronic research. *Irgend*-indefinites developed from a particle *iergen* in Middle High German (1050-1350) with the locative meaning *anywhere* to a modifier of the determiner *ein* 'one' and the pronoun *etwas* 'something' in Early New High German (1350-1650). During this process we observe that the particle *iergen* loses its original locative meaning and acquires a more general meaning. This made it possible for *iergen* to combine with the determiner *ein*, with pronouns (e.g. *etwas* 'something' or *jemand* 'somebody') and finally with bare interrogatives (e.g. *wo* 'where', *wer* 'who' etc.), eventually covering all the major ontological categories like person, thing, place, time and manner. The diachronic corpus study further showed that *irgend*-indefinites started their life as Negative Polarity Items (NPI) (cf. Jäger 2007). The specific-unknown and the free choice functions were acquired later, which is in agreement with the predictions of Haspelmath's implicational map.

In the second part we will present the main results of the synchronic corpus study. We have identified four main functions for *irgend*-indefinites in present day German. In specific contexts (sp) and under epistemic modals (epi) *irgend*-indefinites give rise to an ignorance effect (spMV- and epiMV-functions), whereas under deontic and other modals they give rise to a free choice effect (deoFC). Finally, under downward entailing operators they receive a plain existential interpretation (NPI).

To account for the spMV and epiMV functions we will analyse *irgendein* as an EI in the framework of Dynamic Semantics with Conceptual Covers (cf. Aloni 2001, ch.3). In Dynamic Semantics with Conceptual Covers, specific indefinites introduce as discourse referents elements of a contextually determined conceptual cover. A conceptual cover CC is a set of concepts such that in each world, every individual instantiates exactly one concept in CC. On our proposal, EIs signal an obligatory shift to a non-rigid cover. Whenever this shift is not trivial, the use of the indefinite will imply that the speaker does not know who the referent of the indefinite is. The ignorance effect will obtain in specific uses and under epistemic modals (interpreted à la Veltman) as a result of a lexically encoded felicity condition. In this framework, shifts of conceptual covers are trivial under negation and deontic modals. To account for the deoFC and the NPI functions we will assume that *irgendein* allows for domain widening as well (Kadmon & Landman 1993), contrary to other EIs like Italian *un qualche* (Zamparelli 2007).

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## Why is Language Vague?

Robert van Rooij (ILLC, Amsterdam)

Vagueness is a pervasive feature of natural languages that is challenging semantic theories and theories of language evolution alike. We focus here on the latter, addressing the challenge of how to account for the emergence of vague meanings in signaling game models of language evolution. We suggest that vagueness is a natural property of meaning that evolves when *boundedly rational* agents repeatedly engage in cooperative signaling.

**Keywords:** vagueness, signaling games, language evolution, bounded rationality, fictitious play, categorization, quantal response equilibrium.

# **Substantive Assumptions and the Use of Language in Interaction**

Olivier Roy (LMU, München)  
Joint work with Eric Pacuit (TiLPS, Tilburg)

This talk is about substantive assumption in models of interaction situations (games). I will start by introducing the very notion of substantive assumption, and then explain why it is important for epistemology and for the foundation of game theory. I will then formalize this notion, and show that, under natural syntactic constraints, there exist models where no substantive assumptions are being made.



## Conditionals between Syntax and Semantics

Katrin Schulz (ILLC, Amsterdam)

The goal of this talk is to develop a compositional semantics for English conditional sentences. The proposal will differ from other approaches in that it takes syntactic considerations as a starting point. More in particular, the proposal elaborates on an idea from Bhatt & Pancheva (2006): the antecedent of a conditional is a free relative for possible worlds. We will build on a syntactic and semantic analysis of realis free relatives proposed by Grosu & Landman (1998). As formal system the proposal uses the dynamic semantics of Brasoveanu (2008). The resulting overall semantics for conditionals comes very close to what has been proposed by Schlenker (2004), Ebert et al. (2008) and others: the antecedent of a conditional is interpreted as a definite description, introducing a hypothetical context. The consequent of the conditional is taken to make a simple statement about this hypothetical context. Most importantly, this means that this approach does not need a hidden universal modal quantifier in the consequent.

# Vagueness, Bivalence, and What Is Said

Lucian Zagan (ILLC, Amsterdam)

There is the idea that bivalence might fail with regard to utterances containing vague terms. Trying to defend bivalence and Tarskian principles about truth, Timothy Williamson gets to a quite implausible view not only on vagueness, but particularly on content determination. I will oppose Williamson, and particularly the uniformity assumption in his argument, using some considerations concerning linguistic underdeterminacy. Furthermore, I will explore the idea that content determination is rather local. That gives us more space in assessing the significance of bivalence and truth schemas, and it seems to reflect better our use of language. Also, it makes place for an understanding of borderline cases independently of semantic value.

**Keywords:** vagueness, bivalence, linguistic content, underdeterminacy, borderline cases.

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## Reasoning with Generics and Induction

Liyang Zhang (IML, Beijing & ILLC, Amsterdam)

Based on some results on reasoning with generics, this paper tries to clarify the relation between generic reasoning and inductive reasoning. For reasoning with generics, we first give a logic for getting intermediate conclusions; second, we introduce the priority order on the subsets of a premise set to eliminate contradictions or incompatibilities generated by intermediate conclusions, and then we get the final conclusion.

There are different priority rules on subsets of a premise set corresponding to three kinds of generic reasoning: the reasoning that yields factual sentences (from generic ones), the reasoning getting generic sentences mainly by deduction, and the reasoning getting generic sentences mainly by induction. If we view the three kinds of reasoning as a whole, we will find that it can capture inductive reasoning. After reviewing scholars' study on induction (what they focus on, and the way they interpret inductive reasoning), we conclude that generic reasoning is a more natural way to interpret induction than the popular interpretation based on probability.

**Keywords:** generics, non-monotonic reasoning, priority order, induction.