
AG 4: Indefiniteness Crosslinguistically (Kurz-AG)

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Crosslinguistically, an NP may be marked as indefinite by different means. In addition to the prototypical indefiniteness markers, e.g. the indefinite article in languages such as English or German, there are markers like *some* and indefinite *this* in English or *irgendein* and *so'n* in German. It is a matter of debate what facets of indefiniteness such markers express in comparison to the indefinite article. A more complete picture of the exact function of indefiniteness markers can be reached by taking into account languages like Moroccan Arabic and Uzbek, which employ two distinct indefinite articles, or languages like Russian, in which indefiniteness is grammaticalized in the complex system of indefinite pronouns. In his influential typological study, Haspelmath (1997) determines different functions indefinite pronouns may display in different languages. Since this seminal work that was restricted to indefinite pronouns, there have been important steps towards an understanding of the semantic and pragmatic properties of different indefiniteness markers in general. Detailed studies were carried out by e.g. Farkas (2002) and Ionin (2006) for English; Tovená & Jayez (2006) for French; Ebert, Ebert & Hinterwimmer (to appear) and Cieschinger & Ebert (2009) for German; Geist & Onea (2007) for Russian, and von Heusinger & Klein (2008) for Uzbek. Such fine-grained analyses of indefiniteness markers in particular languages now provide a basis for crosslinguistic comparison with the aim to determine universal types and crosslinguistically applicable concepts of indefiniteness. We welcome submissions in which the following issues are addressed:

- comparative studies on the linguistic coding of indefiniteness;
- systems of indefinite pronouns: semantic fine grained distinctions and pragmatic functions;
- interrelations of indefiniteness with other phenomena like specificity, information structure, aspect, and modality;
- the diachronic rise of indefinite articles and the degrees of grammaticalization of indefiniteness markers in different languages;

The workshop is of interest for researchers working in the domain of semantics, pragmatics, typology, and grammaticalization. We are looking forward to applications focusing on theoretical (e.g. defining the category of indefiniteness and its types) as well as empirical issues (e.g. corpus-based studies, questionnaires).