

Report – CIPL Travel Grant SLE 2024

Thanks to the support of the CIPL travel grant, I had the opportunity to attend the 57th Annual Meeting of the *Societas Linguistica Europaea* at the University of Helsinki from August 21st to 24th 2024. Being able to attend the conference this year was crucial for the advancement of my doctoral thesis, as the SLE hosted a workshop on semantic transparency, a key concept for my thesis research. The event provided an excellent platform for engaging with the latest developments in this area and gave me the opportunity to present a substantial part of my thesis results to a wider audience. Additionally, I had the opportunity to present a collaboration project with my colleague Pamela Goryczka on the topic of overabundance, which received the 2nd place prize for best conference presentation by PhD students. This report highlights the key insights gained from the conference, the feedback received during my presentation, and the professional growth opportunities that emerged from this experience.

The conference presentations offered a wealth of knowledge on semantic transparency, and three key insights stood out:

a) Role of Semantic Transparency in Language Processing and Morphological Complexity.

Semantic transparency plays a crucial role in how quickly and effectively speakers process language, however, as the talks illustrated it is difficult to disentangle effects of semantic transparency from other factors, and the relationship between semantic transparency and morphological complexity is not always direct. The talks in the session highlighted that the way semantic transparency was defined and conceptualized had a clear impact on the interplays observed.

b) Influence on Language Change and Cross-Linguistic Variability

Semantic transparency significantly influences language change, especially in the formation of new lexical items. Several of the talks tackled the long-held belief that transparent words and compounds are more likely to be productive and are thus aiding in the creation and retention of new words, providing evidence that this assumption is much less empirically robust than assumed. Additionally, the talks provided evidence that transparency operates differently across languages, reflecting various levels of morphological complexity and cognitive strategies.

c) Computational Challenges and Cognitive Implications

The conference highlighted the challenges in modeling semantic transparency within computational systems, such as large language models (LLMs) and semantic vector models. While these models can capture some aspects of transparency, they often struggle with nuanced linguistic phenomena, particularly across different languages. The cognitive implications of transparency were also discussed, with transparent forms leading to faster and more accurate language processing.

In addition to attending various talks, I had the opportunity to present my research on the impact of semantic transparency in cross-linguistic language processing. The presentation was well-received, and I received valuable feedback that has been instrumental in refining my work:

- The audience appreciated the clarity and depth of my analysis, leading to engaging discussions and interest in potential collaborations.
- Suggestions included exploring additional cross-linguistic data and considering alternative methodologies, providing new directions for my research.
- Presenting my research opened doors for networking with other researchers, leading to potential collaborations in future projects.

Attending the conference and presenting my work offered several significant opportunities for growth. The insights gained deepened my understanding of semantic transparency, especially in relation to morphological complexity and language change. Further, the feedback I received during my presentation has provided clear directions for refining my research and exploring new avenues of inquiry. Finally, the conference facilitated connections with leading researchers and opened up possibilities for future collaborations.

Overall, participating in the SLE conference was an enriching experience that significantly contributed to my professional development. The insights gained and feedback received have broadened my understanding of semantic transparency and provided valuable guidance for my future research. The event offered a rich platform for learning, networking, and exploring new opportunities for growth in the field of linguistics. I am very happy that the CIPL provided me with the financial support to allow for my participation in this enlightening event.



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SOCIETAS LINGUISTICA EUROPAEA

57th ANNUAL MEETING

held at the University of Helsinki (Finland) from 21 to 24
August 2024

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT

Irene Fally
(University of Vienna)

participated in the SLE 2024 conference presenting the
following paper:

Irene Fally
Semantic Transparency Across Languages – Comparing French
and Italian

Bert Cornillie
SLE Secretary

Anna Kisiel
SLE Conference Manager