



small languages big ideas

the smaller Germanic languages from a
theoretical, general and comparative perspective

Zürich, 4-5 April 2019

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

Context

Zürich offers a broad spectrum of Germanic philologies. Apart from English and German, Dutch and Scandinavian studies are each offered as individual study tracks, and, furthermore, Frisian, Luxembourgish, Afrikaans, and Germanic dialects and contact languages are part of the Comparative Germanic Linguistics study track.

What is the intrinsic value of these smaller languages and varieties, and their respective linguistics for the general and comparative linguistics field? In this congress, we will introduce several linguistic disciplines as seen from different smaller Germanic languages and exchange knowledge as well as opinions on the value of the study of these languages to linguistic theory.

The motivation stems from the fact that these well-established but sometimes lesser known philologies of smaller Germanic languages and dialects promise as much theoretical insight as those of bigger languages (such as English) or smaller, exotic languages (Pacific, Native American, etc.) that have not the same in-depth descriptive tradition as 'local' Germanic languages. This may not be a contested opinion necessarily, but it is however a good idea that well described and data-rich linguistic systems such as these are brought back into the focus of general linguistics and linguistic theory.

Six plenary talks will be held by experts on different Germanic languages who will focus on one or more languages, but who are also skilled in the study of several other overlapping philologies, hence stimulating discussion rather than parallel one-way knowledge transfer. Further talks will be held by junior researchers in the Germanic linguistics fields (mostly doctoral candidates and early post-docs) in parallel open call sessions on the second day. See the (preliminary) programme attached.

We want to encourage all concerned junior researchers from Switzerland and abroad to send in their abstract! See details below.



Content of the open call sessions

We expect **20-minute presentations** from junior researchers that discuss research in one or more smaller Germanic language(s), regional language(s), contact language(s) or dialect(s) from a general or comparative perspective, linking it to linguistic theory, be it from a synchronous or diachronous perspective.

Abstract

Send in your abstract (maximum of **2000 characters**, including spaces and interpunction) as a PDF document via the registration form on our congress website:

http://www.ds.uzh.ch/de/tagungen/small_languages_big_ideas.

The deadline for sending in your abstracts is **February 15th, 2019**. You can also register to attend the congress without presenting your own research.

Selection procedure

The criteria for selecting the presentations for the open call sessions are:

- fit to the theme,
- addition to a broad scope of different Germanic varieties discussed,
- gender balance.

You will be notified whether your presentation has been accepted by **February 22th, 2019**.

Registering

If you don't plan to send in an abstract, you can of course still attend as a member of the audience.

The deadline for registering as an attendee is **March 1st, 2019**.

Further practical information

The congress organisation does not offer any reimbursement of expenses for travel or hotels. However, the congress is free of charge to encourage as many people as possible to attend, including those who will not be active participants. We do offer a luncheon and conference dinner on the second day to all active participants, as well as a reception ('Apéro riche') as a change to mingle on the first day to all participants, active or not. It is therefore important to register (both active participants and other attendees), to ensure comestibles and seating facilities.

Partners

Funding by the *UZH Graduate Campus* via a *GRC Short Grant* and by the *Swiss National Science Foundation* is gratefully acknowledged.

Kind regards and see you in Zürich!

The organising committee,

Dr. Chris De Wulf – Prof. Dr. Elvira Glaser – Jonas Keller, MA – Dr. des. Kevin Müller



PRELIMINARY PROGRAMME

Location: RAA-G-01, Rämistrasse 59, 8001 Zürich

Thursday, April 4th, 2019

- 13:30 Arrival and coffee
- 14:00 Welcome word, opening
- 14:15 *Loss of inflection in North Germanic adjectives – or is it?*
(Hans-Olav Enger – University of Oslo, in cooperation with Helen Sims-Williams)
- 15:00 *Luxembourgish (full title to be decided)*
(Antje Dammel – Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster)
- 15:45 Coffee break
- 16:15 *The complementizer system of Modern West Frisian*
(Jarich Hoekstra – Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel)
- 17:00 *Pennsylvania Dutch in the 21st Century*
(Mark Loudon – University of Wisconsin-Madison)
- 17:45 Preliminary final words of the day
- 18:15 Reception

Friday, April 5th, 2019

- 08:30 Arrival with coffee
- 09:00 Welcome word
- 09:15 *The loss of grammatical gender in Afrikaans - simplification in action*
(Wannie Carstens – North-West University Potchefstroom)
- 10:00 *How does regional identity politics inform the use of small languages?*
(Leonie Cornips – Maastricht University & Meertens Instituut Amsterdam)
- 10:45 Coffee break
- 11:15 *Parallel open call sessions part 1*
- 12:15 Lunch break
- 14:00 *Parallel open call sessions part 2*
- 15:45 Coffee break
- 16:15 Round table discussion
- 17:30 Conclusions and closing words
- 18:00 Dinner with active participants