

Introduction

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Anyone who has ever visited the Grammatical Models Group at Tilburg University will first and foremost remember the heated discussions, which are mainly about linguistics, and which occur everywhere – in the corridor, in the rooms of staff members, in the mensa during lunch, in the weekly stafseminar, after the stafseminar in some pub, either on campus or very close to it, in the trains going to and coming from Tilburg West.

These discussions might be the clearest expression of the lively and open intellectual atmosphere in the department. Every member of the group has a strong personal interest in the field, and his own independent view on virtually every aspect of generative grammar. Junior members are encouraged to formulate their personal take on new developments and challenged to work as independent researchers from the start. Whoever is seriously interested in the field, is guaranteed to be taken seriously. There was only one topic in which the dominant persons in the group did not and do not allow for dissident opinions – but this concerns the importance of football, a topic which in our assessment is unrelated to linguistics. (We are aware of the fact that even that may be seen as a dissident view by some.)

Another prominent feature is that students and guest researchers seem to be selected not just on the basis of the quality of their work, but also because of the way they would fit into the group. These two properties – respect for other people's thinking on the one hand and personal involvement on the other – are the fundamental aspects of every discussion, and the basic ingredients of the atmosphere.

Originally, Grammaticamodellen was intended to be a group of people working on completely different formalisms such as functional grammar, categorial grammar and GB. Right now, the research programme seems to be somewhat more focussed. Yet all researchers in the group are familiar a number of alternative frameworks; and orthodoxy is next to absent in people's attitude to new ideas, either within or outside of the mainstream. Furthermore, research has never been purely theoretical but always been based on and concerned with empirical facts as well. We could mention projects such as Eurogram, the Eurotype Clitics Projects, SynCom and the MGD as outstanding examples of this.

The group has always been relatively small – and always been involved in a relatively large number of activities. For many years, it has hosted the secretariat of GLOW, as well as hosting the GLOW Conference in 1998. It has also been organising a large number workshops and conferences on a variety of topics (such as LF, Rightward Movement, Derivational Residue, Genetics of Language).

Promovendi have defended theses on the syntax of Bantu, Inuit, Dutch and other Germanic and

other IndoEuropean languages, on Hungarian, on parsing, on acquisition – and some of them even on phonology!

The range of topics taught in the undergraduate programme of the Faculty of Arts at Tilburg University seems even more impressive. Grammatical Models members have taught on the origin of language, code switching, Brabant Dutch dialects, parsing, computer programming, Russian language proficiency, and the history of linguistics, among many, many other things.

This electronic Festschrift reflects this openmindedness by including articles on a number of different topics in syntax and phonology worked out in a number of different frameworks.

We have chosen an optimistic title. Originally, the idea was that the introduction to this book would be very sad, but now things look much better. Some people have left or taken early retirement, but other people have moved from a temporary to a permanent position (and vice versa). Also, new graduate students are coming to the department, so it seems that Grammaticamodellen will continue to be the place to go back to and enjoy the heated discussions the group is well-known for. The papers on this website represent work in progress; the papers have been edited only very lightly. They are still open for discussion.

As editors we wish dedicate this website to Riny Huybregts and Craig Thiersch. They are outstanding examples of the kind of people who have built the Grammatical Models group. They also are the two first people in the history of the group to take early retirement — we would say *too* early, if it would not be clear, that the only thing they are retiring from is the bureaucratic stuff. Certainly not the discussions.