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## #6 | Shaped by semantics

Cambridge Analytica is the latest example for how individual beings are flattened down to semantic categories. Semantics are worth a million dollar! But what do these categories actually convey about our identities? It's the relation between semantic features, a set of information that seems to be so interesting to the dark powers. How to handle this mess of big data?

"Spektrum der Wissenschaft" for example wrote about the method of "word embedding" for investigating semantic relations between words ("[Kulturwandel zeigt sich im Sprachgebrauch](#)" or go directly to the PNAS publication "[Word embeddings quantify 100 years of gender and ethnic stereotypes](#)"). By using vectors in a multidimensional space, American scientists calculated the distances between words and found out, it started in the 1960ies that the word "intelligent" was connected almost equally to the word "woman" as to the word "man", whereas before it was connected to "man" only. While the vectors indicate that intelligence now is evenly distributed, we still do have a prominence issue in gender, as **Katja Jasinskaja** observed. We do find more male nouns in subject position than female nouns. As the subject position is a particular prominent syntactic position, one could argue that male nouns are semantically more prominent than female nouns - which as others have pointed out might just be a reflection of culture, and not of semantics. Whatever the effect is, it might become much more complex with Facebook's choice between sixty types of sex/gender nowadays... In addition to that, I noticed one of the linguistic vector study's authors, James Zou, is affiliated researcher in the [Chan Zuckerberg Biohub](#). Wait, does that mean Zuckerberg's non-profit healthcare research funding is investigating methods to improve analysing (Facebook) data, creating even more tailored Cambridge Analytica services? Semantics expertise has two sides, for (saus)ure.

Let's enjoy the sunshine! For those searching for great ice cream I recommend [Dolce & Gelato](#) (thanks to **Aria Adli**!). We're happy to see all of you at the CCLS assembly where we start into this summer term together. **Frieda Berg**

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## Invitation to celebrate CRC's worldwide map

Monday, April 16th | 2 p.m. | CCLS general  
assembly in the Spitzboden

After the CCLS assembly, we want to **inaugurate our queen size world map** and invite all of you to join for coffee, cake, and a quiz show in the first floor, starting at about 2.45 p.m.



**Job offer:** Project Z is looking for a student assistant working 9 hours per week. Find the [advertisement here](#) (PDF; in German only). If you know somebody with prominence spirit, please get in touch with a.wasiri@uni-koeln.de (New mailing address!)

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## Introducing Diana Dimitrova

Since 1st of April, **Diana Dimitrova** works as Professoral Substitute for the CRC Prominence in Language. The position comprises teaching and research in German, Phonetics, English, Romance, Slavic and General Linguistics.

Diana's research is closely linked to the CRC. For example, she investigates how speakers produce prominent utterances, how listeners process prominent information and what role their cognitive capacities play in this. Diana also researches the role of attention in the processing of prominent information.

In the midst of her preparations for the current term, Diana found the time to answer our questions.

**1) What is your secret to successful teaching?** *It won't be a secret anymore if I share it here :) For me the students' needs and personal and professional development are central. I believe that teaching linguistics should go hand in hand with improving additional interpersonal skills, for example team-work, leadership, and communication.*

**2) What are the benefits of having an interdisciplinary approach towards language?** *You may think of it like viewing an object in 2D vs. in 3D. An interdisciplinary*

*approach allows you to go beyond viewing language in its linguistic environment and to see its interactions with other non-linguistic phenomena, such as attention, gesture, emotions or social abilities. I strongly believe that we need to combine insights from fields like linguistics, psychology, philosophy and neuroscience to get a richer and a more real, 3D-like understanding of language.*

**3) What do you like about Cologne?** *Cologne is a wonderful green, multicultural and very dynamic city with so many cultural events and outdoor activities! I like the green parks, the small beaches and lakes, the Rhine river, and the huge variety of concerts and theatres. I felt in love with it long time ago, and I am happy to be back here!*

We are, too! Welcome to the CRC.

Diana Dimitrova

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# REDEFREIHEIT

Eine Veranstaltung des Center for Language, Information and Philosophy

POLITISCH KORREKT

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

DEMOKRATIE

DAS INTERNET

MENSCHENRECHT

CONTROVERSY

MIT: CLAUDIA ROTH | ANATOL STEFANOWITSCH | JOANNA WILLIAMS | VERA LISAKOWSKI | PETER SINGER | BERND LADWIG

## Freie Räume

Wieso ist Redefreiheit so wichtig? Und wodurch wird sie bedroht?

Das von **Klaus von Heusinger**, **Thomas Grundmann** und **Sven Bernecker** geleitete CLIP (Center for Language, Information, and Philosophy) geht dem zeitlosen und zugleich brandaktuellen Thema in sechs Vorlesungen nach.

Den Anfang macht die Bundestags-Vizepräsidentin **Claudia Roth** von den Grünen. Absoluter Tipp und Pflichttermin! :-)

([In meinen Google Kalender eintragen](#))

11. April 2018, **Claudia Roth**: „Reden ist Silber, Freiheit ist Gold: Redefreiheit als Grundfeste unserer Demokratie“, Aula 2 (Hauptgebäude), 18 bis 19.30 Uhr ([Infos](#))



13. Juni 2018, **Vera Lisakowski**: „!!!!111!!!!einsel!! - Das Internet, die Redefreiheit und ihre Verteidiger“, Hörsaal 18 (Hauptgebäude), 18 bis 19.30 Uhr ([Infos](#))



9. Mai 2018, **Anatol Stefanowitsch**: „Politisch korrekte Sprache: (k)ein Problem für die Meinungsfreiheit“, Hörsaal 18 (Hauptgebäude), 18 bis 19.30 Uhr ([Infos](#))

20. Juni 2018, **Peter Singer**: „Philosophy, Controversy, and Freedom of Speech“, Aula 1 (Hauptgebäude), 19.30 bis 21 Uhr ([Infos](#))

Talk given in English!

30. Mai 2018, **Joanna Williams**: „Identity politics in the university: conflicting demands on academic freedom“, Hörsaal 18 (Hauptgebäude), 18 bis 19.30 Uhr ([Infos](#))

Talk given in English!

4. Juli 2018, **Bernd Ladwig**: „Die Redefreiheit als Menschenrecht“, Hörsaal 18 (Hauptgebäude), 18 bis 19.30 Uhr ([Infos](#))



Alle Infos zum CLIP: [clip.uni-koeln.de](http://clip.uni-koeln.de)

# CLARIN Knowledge-Centre for linguistic diversity and language documentation (CKLD)

New virtual distributed centre: The Institute for Linguistics/ General Linguistics of the University of Cologne, headed by **Nikolaus P. Himmelmann**, is part of the "CLARIN Knowledge-Centre for linguistic diversity and language documentation (CKLD)" together with

[Data Center for the Humanities](#), Hamburg University and [School of Oriental and African Studies](#) (SOAS) London. This new Centre and offers expertise on data and data-related methods, technology and background information on language resources and tools to researchers – including students and native speakers.

"We support researchers from the early planning phase to the realization of language documentation and other fieldwork based research projects as well as typological research. We also provide information and assistance relating to fieldwork and data-related methodological aspects and in particular

relating to equipment, digital tools, methods, where to find data and information, whom to contact for specialist information on particular regions or language families", explains Nikolaus P. Himmelmann.

[Find here a great collection of materials.](#)

[Visit the CKLD website.](#)

CLARIN stands for Common Language Resources and Technology Infrastructure which is a European Research Infrastructure Consortium.



## Events at Meister-E

Thursday, April 12th | 4 p.m. | Seminar room righthand (IfL) | "Obligatorification in Syntax", talk by CRC Principal Investigator **Uta Reinöhl** and **T. Mark Ellison** (Australian National University)

Thursday, April 19th | 4 p.m. | Seminar room righthand (IfL) | "Avestisch als Sprache der zoroastrischen Liturgie: Perspektiven einer textkritischen Edition der Ahunavaitī Gāthā", talk by **Benedikt Peschl** (SOAS London)

Friday, April 20th | 10 a.m. | Seminar room lefthand (IfL) | "Die Reflexe der -aya-Präsentien im Sogdischen", talk by **Benedikt Peschl** (SOAS London)

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Do you know their Twitter account [@asw\\_koeln](#) already?

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On upcoming Saturday, April 14th, more than thousand people from the Rhineland region are expected to march from Domplatte (starting there at 11 o'clock) through the shopping street towards Rudolfplatz. We would be very glad to have a big **Prominence in Language group** joining the march. We'll meet at the Domplatte. Some of you who want to create signboards with great positive messages can meet on Friday lunch time in the Ö office and create it together. As speakers you can hear a real astronaut (**Reinhold Ewald**) and a real philosopher (**Thomas Grundmann**), and many more! Team activity!!

# MARCH FOR SCIENCE KÖLN 14. APRIL 2018



For more information visit their website [marchforscience.de/rheinland](http://marchforscience.de/rheinland)

Upcoming: CCLS Lecture Series 2018 (see <http://ccls.phil-fak.uni-koeln.de/32754.html>)

23. April 2018 | 14 bis 15:30 Uhr | S11 | "The Anti-Doppel Bias in Cognition, Behaviour and Language Change", Vortrag von **T. Mark Ellison** (Canberra)

7. Mai 2018 | 14 bis 15:30 Uhr | S11 | "tba", Vortrag von **Ulrike Mosel** (Bremen)

14. Mai 2018 | 14 bis 15:30 Uhr | S11 | "Promotionsbetreuung- Wechselseitige Erwartungen an das Betreuungsverhältnis", Vortrag von **Nadine Chmura** (Bonn)

28. Mai 2018 | 14 bis 15:30 Uhr | S11 | "Numeral classifiers and prominence— definiteness and indefiniteness in East and mainland Southeast Asian languages", Vortrag von **Walter Bisang** (Mainz)

In Kooperation mit dem SFB Prominence in Language

**Did we miss something?** What's on your agenda? Send us your news, interesting opportunities and/or thoughts. Get in touch with project Ö: [f.berg@uni-koeln.de](mailto:f.berg@uni-koeln.de).

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