

INTRODUCTION

Upon realizing that Kjell Johan Sæbø was to turn 50 in May 2006, we immediately saw an opportunity to give something back to our dear friend, colleague and mentor. Of course, we could have waited another ten or twenty years, but we wanted to demonstrate through this *Festschrift* that there is an active community of formal linguistics at the University of Oslo today, and that Kjell Johan is the leading figure of this community. Kjell Johan has done a lot to promote our shared conception of linguistics, and this *Festschrift* accords him the recognition he deserves – now, in 2006, and not in 2026.

Since Kjell Johan is only halfway through his biography and bibliography, we keep the introduction short and let the *Festschrift* speak for itself. We believe the articles collected here reflect both a sampling of the interests of Kjell Johan and the great respect he enjoys at the University of Oslo and among his fellow world-class semanticists. But above all, the *Festschrift* is an act of deep friendship.

Necessity

The present volume contains several stories of close personal relations and shared research interests. More than 20 years ago, as a young research assistant of Arnim von Stechow in Konstanz, Kjell Johan worked on his doctoral dissertation on necessity and modality. 15 years after the completion of his thesis, Kjell Johan reopened the topic in the 2001 *Festschrift* for Arnim von Stechow by celebrating his former supervisor with the article *Necessary Conditions in a Natural Language*. And now, following a growing interest in “what you have to do if you want to go to Harlem”, von Stechow – in collaboration with his two current research assistants Sveta Krasikova and Doris Penka – makes his reply to Kjell Johan in *Anankastic Conditionals Again*.

A somewhat shorter story of shared interests in modality is told by another good friend and outstanding semanticist, Ede Zimmermann. Inspired by a 2005-paper by Kjell Johan and a personal email exchange, Zimmermann presents his ideas on *Knowledge and Desire, from a German Perspective*.

Optimality

Kjell Johan has an amazing ability to always explore new fields of research. Several of the contributors are inspired by Kjell Johan’s most recent work from a very productive last couple of years. His neighbour at the department of German and closest colleague for 25 years, Cathrine Fabricius-Hansen, congratulates Kjell Johan (*We Congratulate - by ...*) with a comment on his forthcoming paper “The Structure of Criterion Predicates”, in which he

introduces a new approach to *by*-locutions in event semantics. They wrote their first article together in 1983 and are still collaborating on various topics.

In the last decade, Kjell Johan has broadened his fields of interest to include formal pragmatics, most recently within the fast-growing framework of Optimality Theory. The founders of the new OT-based approach to formal pragmatics – Reinhard Blutner (*Embedded Implicatures and Optimality Theoretic Pragmatics*) and Henk Zeevat (*Strategies for Specifying Relations*) both contribute new material at the heart of Kjell Johan's current research interests.

Seminal

This brings us to Kjell Johan's role in creating an active community for formal linguistics at the University of Oslo. Together with Jan Tore Lønning (*Language Technology and the Science of Linguistics*), Kjell Johan was the organizer of the circle *Semantikkseminaret* for many years. This informal meeting place for formal semantics was founded by Jan Erik Fenstad (*Grammar, Geometry and Brain*), the former dean of the Faculty of Mathematics. Fenstad played an important role in creating an interest in these issues at our university at the time when Kjell Johan was a young student of languages and mathematics.

Last year, Kjell Johan created a new circle for formal linguistics, *Seminar i teoretisk lingvistikk*, where he is certainly the most active participant, regularly presenting new ideas at the cutting edge of current research. The profile of *Seminar i teoretisk lingvistikk* is somewhat broader than *Semantikkseminaret* and comprises both semantics and syntax. One of the more syntactically oriented participants, Janne Bondi Johannessen (*Just Any Pronoun Anywhere? Pronouns and "New" Demonstratives in Norwegian*), represents this milieu in the present volume.

Kjell Johan has also played an important role in the more empirically oriented SPRIK project (*Languages in contrast*), a project which brings together qualitative and quantitative methods, as in Wiebke Ramm's contribution (*Dispensing with Subordination in Translation - Consequences on Discourse Structure*).

Supervision

Besides his own research, Kjell Johan is greatly respected for his investment in doctoral education at the University of Oslo. For several years Kjell Johan was the coordinator of the PhD program in linguistics, a responsibility for which he was ideally suited, with his broad knowledge of linguistics and supportive attitude towards students.

Kjell Johan is truly an interdisciplinary scholar – being a professor of German, he has supervised four completed doctoral dissertations on various languages, and none of them was conducted at his own department! This volume contains contributions from three of his former doctoral students – Bergljot Behrens (*What the Structure of Criterion Predicates Told Me*), Ingebjørg Tonne (*Elucidating Progressives in Norwegian*) and Atle Grønn (*Norwegian Bare Singulars: A Note on Types and Sorts*).

Currently, Kjell Johan is the supervisor of Eirik Welo (*Pragmatics of the Complex DP in Ancient Greek*). Other young researchers who are inspired by Kjell Johan and benefit from his insights through discussions, occasional supervision and PhD seminars are Pål Eriksen (*The Pragmatic Nature of Grammatical Categories*) and Torgrim Solstad (*Unification and Word-Internal Pragmatics*).

Silence

When he's not doing linguistics or spending his time with his dear family, Kjell Johan prefers the silence of Norwegian mountains or the silent movies of Buster Keaton – no words to analyze, just Kjell Johan alone with his thoughts.

Oslo,

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Atle Grønn, Dag Haug and Torgrim Solstad (editors).

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