

The thin line between fact and fiction – Reflections on the prescientific state of the field

Hubert Haider, Fachbereich Linguistik, Univ. Salzburg

Half a century after Chomsky's publication from 1957, grammar theory has arrived at the age of 50 plus. Asking oneself what kind of scientific qualification the discipline has achieved in this time is not premature, therefore. Since theories determine data to a greater extent than data determine theories, the standards of the field with respect to theorizing and theory evaluation have immediate implications for the data considered to be relevant.

In the talk, I shall attempt to highlight on habits and apparent standards in the field of grammar theory that are problematic, given the benchmarks reconstructed and established by philosophers of science for scientific theories. Changing or abolishing some of these habits and standards is essential for the field in order to successfully continue its development out of its prescientific larva phase.