

Call for papers 2nd NegLaB Workshop (NegLaB II)

NegLaB, the Collaborative Research Center 1629 “[Negation in Language and Beyond](#)” at the Universities of Frankfurt, Tübingen and Göttingen invites linguists and psychologists to submit papers to the 2nd NegLaB Workshop (NegLaB II) to be held at the University of Frankfurt on the 1st and 2nd of December 2025.

The NegLaB II Workshop aims to advance our understanding of how the expression of negation is cross-linguistically associated with grammatical and non-linguistic cognitive operations. We aim at determining whether the set of operations observed in negative utterances is part of negation itself or, rather, arises as an effect of the grammatical system and cognitive functions. We welcome contributions on phenomena related to negation (in particular the three issues outlined below) across all areas of linguistics (syntax, semantics, pragmatics, phonology and morphology) as well as other domains (language acquisition, psycholinguistics, historical linguistics and multilingualism).

Description

Negation is a fundamental property of human language that is tightly intertwined with human cognitive capacity. Negation allows speakers and hearers to reason about what is not the case, a unique property of human language. Thus, negation not only expresses a clearly defined and well-circumscribed grammatical function, it also interacts with various aspects of grammar and cognition. Specifically, it has been shown that the acquisition and processing of negation encompass linguistic as well as non-linguistic cognitive procedures. Therefore, negation constitutes an ideal testing ground to enable us to differentiate cognitive mechanisms that are grammatical in nature from those that are shared with other cognitive domains, such as memory, attention, decision making and cognitive control.

We invite talks concerning one of the following general domains.

A. Syntax-Semantics interface: *How is negative semantics realized morphosyntactically?*

Negation's semantics is often analyzed as a single propositional operator, yet its morphosyntactic realization is strikingly diverse, often involving multiple exponents. The semantics of negation would lead one to expect negation to be expressed by a single morpheme positioned at the beginning of the clause. The rich and variable morphosyntax would lead us to expect that negation requires a number of conditions in the semantics. The question arises as to how to resolve this tension between this rich morphosyntax and its more straightforward semantics.

B. Interaction with other categories: *How can we explain similarities and interactions between negation and other grammatical categories?*

Negation seems to stand out with respect to other operators, but the question is still open as to whether this is to be attributed to negation itself or to the properties of the other elements (like indefinites, modals, etc.).

In natural language, expressions of negation typically encode a symbiotic association between negation and other operations on meaning such as negative indefinites, focus or TAM markers. While a close study of these items may reveal empirical motivation to separate their various meaning components, the strong tendency of negation to be associated with other operators is a so far unexplained observation across languages and phenomena.

C. Processing and Cognition: *What are the general properties of processing and acquisition of negation? Which nonverbal and cognitive procedures interact with or resemble negation?*

Another major problem is whether negated sentences are processed by mechanisms specific to negation or by general cognitive processes. Neuro-linguistics evidence suggests a two-step interpretation procedure: first the affirmative proposition is processed, then its truth value is reversed, often via inhibition. This is reflected in acquisition, since children produce negative utterances relatively early, but all the aspects of negation take a rather long time to be

acquired. Downstream effects of this prolonged acquisition process can be seen in adult processing as the comprehension of negative sentences is more costly than for positive sentences. This is supposedly due to the inhibition of the corresponding positive sentence that is necessary for the interpretation of negative statements.

Abstract submissions

Submissions are limited to a maximum of one individual and one joint abstract per author or two joint abstracts per author. Abstracts should be anonymous, written in English and not exceed 2 A4 pages (Times New Roman, 12pt font, single line spacing, 2.5 inches margins).

Please send your submission to neglab.crc1629@gmail.com by **15th of October 2025**. Notification will be provided on November 1st.

Every talk will be allotted 40 minutes in total (30 minutes talk + 10 minutes discussion).