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Knowledge predication – a semantic typology

When using language, we do not only relate to physical reality. We also need to consider facts about *knowledge*. Who knows what, who has the right to a piece of knowledge, who can claim authority when it comes to certain subjects and so on. Consideration of these kinds of issues permeates language use, from influencing factors like word order to being reflected in specialised categories like evidentials. In many languages, however, we also find knowledge expressed by lexical predicates, i.e. forms used to assign or ascribe knowledge to one or more persons – *knowledge predication forms*.

In this talk, I will present two of my thesis' studies on the typology of knowledge predication forms. Firstly, I will address the questions of their universality. Using massive parallel texts as an etic grid, I apply clustering to identify what I term the generalised domain of knowledge predication. Second, I discuss the distinctions made in the 83 investigated languages within the identified domain. Using the same parallel text data, I construct a probabilistic semantic map using MDS and give a semantic interpretation of the six first dimensions.

Finally, I present an implicational semantic map capturing the results of the studies presented in my thesis and discuss some promising avenues for future research.