

Editors' preface

A gracious thank you to the graduate students and postdocs at MIT, who are the organizing committee for NELS 54: Johanna Alstott, Agnes Bi, Cora Lesure, Keely New, Giovanni Roversi, Zhouyi Sun, and Stanislao Zoppi. Along with this, we extend our appreciation to the faculty advisors Athulya Aravind, Danny Fox, and David Pesetsky. Lastly, thank you to the department staff for their invaluable help as well as the entire Linguistics Community at MIT and to everyone who made the conference possible.

An acknowledgement must be made to the previous editors of NELS. A big thank you to Alessa Farinella, Satoru Ozaki, and Suet-Ying Lam for their assistance. Thank you also to all previous editors of NELS for incrementally building a long tradition of help in the form of style sheets and author guidelines. Without these, our task would have been much harder.

We thank the Linguistics Department at UMass Amherst for its financial support. We also thank the many authors who submitted their papers and generously contributed their time and continued effort during the editing process, while making said process fun and painless. And lastly, we thank you, our readers, for your continued interest in these volumes. Without you, they would not exist.

Shaunak Phadnis, Carla Spellerberg, and Brynne Wilkinson
Amherst, November 2024

A brief history of NELS

John Jensen & Lisa Reed

The North East Linguistic Society, originally known as the New England Linguistic Society, held its first meeting at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) on November 7th, 8th, and 9th, 1970. The original meeting of NELS attracted not only the expected audience from the northeastern United States, but also an unexpectedly large number of participants from eastern Canada. For this reason, at the business meeting of NELS 1, Professor David Lightfoot (at that time a professor of linguistics at McGill University) made the proposal that the conference expand the geographical range of hosting institutions to include eastern Canada. This proposal was immediately accepted and accounts for the change in title of the conference. Since NELS 1 in 1970, NELS has further expanded the geographical pool of its participants, although the traditional geographical base for hosting institutions has remained unchanged. NELS now annually draws speakers and participants from the entire United States, Canada, and Europe. It has been hosted by the following institutions, listed in chronological order.

NELS 1	(1970)	MIT
NELS 2	(1971)	McGill University
NELS 3	(1972)	University of Massachusetts Amherst
NELS 4	(1973)	Brown University
NELS 5	(1974)	Harvard University
NELS 6	(1975)	Université du Québec à Montréal
NELS 7	(1976)	MIT
NELS 8	(1977)	University of Massachusetts Amherst
NELS 9	(1978)	The City University of New York
NELS 10	(1979)	University of Ottawa
NELS 11	(1980)	Cornell University
NELS 12	(1981)	MIT
NELS 13	(1982)	Université du Québec à Montréal
NELS 14	(1983)	University of Massachusetts Amherst
NELS 15	(1984)	Brown University
NELS 16	(1985)	McGill University
NELS 17	(1986)	MIT
NELS 18	(1987)	University of Toronto

NELS 19	(1988)	Cornell University
NELS 20	(1989)	University of Pittsburgh
NELS 21	(1990)	Université du Québec à Montréal
NELS 22	(1991)	University of Delaware
NELS 23	(1992)	University of Ottawa
NELS 24	(1993)	University of Massachusetts Amherst
NELS 25	(1994)	University of Pennsylvania
NELS 26	(1995)	Harvard University and MIT
NELS 27	(1996)	McGill University
NELS 28	(1997)	University of Toronto
NELS 29	(1998)	University of Delaware
NELS 30	(1999)	Rutgers University
NELS 31	(2000)	Georgetown University
NELS 32	(2001)	The City University of New York and New York University
NELS 33	(2002)	MIT
NELS 34	(2003)	Stony Brook University
NELS 35	(2004)	University of Connecticut
NELS 36	(2005)	University of Massachusetts Amherst
NELS 37	(2006)	The University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
NELS 38	(2007)	University of Ottawa
NELS 39	(2008)	Cornell University
NELS 40	(2009)	MIT
NELS 41	(2010)	University of Pennsylvania
NELS 42	(2011)	University of Toronto
NELS 43	(2012)	The City University of New York
NELS 44	(2013)	University of Connecticut
NELS 45	(2014)	MIT
NELS 46	(2015)	Concordia University
NELS 47	(2016)	University of Massachusetts Amherst
NELS 48	(2017)	University of Iceland
NELS 49	(2018)	Cornell University
NELS 50	(2019)	MIT
NELS 51	(2020)	Université du Québec à Montréal
NELS 52	(2021)	Rutgers University
NELS 53	(2023)	University of Göttingen
NELS 54	(2024)	MIT

NELS has always been and remains the most prestigious conference in theoretical linguistics hosted in its geographical area and is among the most highly respected in the field at large. (Conferences in theoretical linguistics of comparable quality, hosted in different geographical areas, include the Chicago Linguistic Society, the West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics (WCCFL), and the Generative Linguistics in the Old World (GLOW).) The papers presented at NELS are of a consistently high calibre, not only because of the large number of abstracts received, but also because of the anonymous reviewing process,

conducted by leading figures in the field. The papers presented at NELS have appeared in published form since NELS 5, and are frequently cited in refereed journals of the field. Since NELS 11, the proceedings have been published by the Graduate Linguistics Student Association at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

From its beginning, NELS has been organized by Linguistics graduate students of the hosting institution, though one or two faculty members frequently lend assistance. As a result, every effort is made by the organizing committee to ensure that a significant number of speakers are graduate students. This tradition has been maintained principally because it provides graduate students who are relatively new in the field with a unique opportunity to meet and discuss their work with established researchers from other universities.

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