

Blockseminar: 11. / 12. February 2010

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Lexical Meaning in Context: An Introduction

Linguists working on word meaning have discovered many fascinating facts about the meanings of words. In particular, they have described various sorts of what appear to be modifications of lexical meaning due to the demands of a certain predicational environment. Well known examples come from coercions involving aspectual verbs or verbs like 'enjoy'. Nevertheless, no rigorous and thoroughgoing analysis of these examples exists in the literature to my knowledge. In my forthcoming book, I offer such an analysis and a general type theoretic framework within which to examine how the selectional restrictions of predicates, which I interpret as presuppositions of a sort, can be met in various ways by their arguments. Very roughly, what emerges is a very constrained system for type shifting.

Constructing a type theoretic framework which is sensitive to the rich system of subtypes of the type 'e' that linguists postulate is non trivial, because of the problem of extending the subtyping relation from subtypes of 'e' to higher order types. I will discuss this problem and provide a solution to it. I will then introduce types that are appropriate to analyze various forms of predicate /argument selection. I will discuss two cases: "local adjustments" which comprise most of the coercion examples and then aspect selection cases, where a predicate selects an aspect of a more complex type. Time permitting, I will discuss the model theory of this system and why standard set theoretic models are not very helpful.

Thursday, 11.2. 2010, 10.00 – 12.30, 13.00 - 17.30

- conceptual foundations of lexical semantics
- data to be covered
- existing work in the area
- type presuppositions
- the compositional process

Friday, 12.2.2010, 10.00 – 12.30, 13.30 - 15.00

- complex types
- coercion of various sorts

Room **31/433**

Master students are welcome to join us.

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