LIN6049
Advanced semantics: puzzles in meaning

2024-2025

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Week 9

Today

General feedback on puzzle 4

Demonstrative determiners, part 1

General feedback on puzzle 4

-a justified syntax and semantics for Atara Imere *eetasi* ‘one’

-how your analysis works for the examples given

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General feedback on puzzle 4

Providing a syntax for *eetasi* implies providing a syntactic tree for noun phrases with *eetasi*

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Justifying this tree implies providing reasons why you think this tree is correct. If you can relate it to meaning, do

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Providing a syntax for *eetasi* implies providing a syntactic tree for noun phrases with *eetasi*

Justifying this tree implies providing reasons why you think this tree is correct. If you can relate it to meaning, do. For example, if you generate *eetasi* in the D position, it means the null D of Atara Imere I proposed in class can't be there. Is that correct? How would you know?

General feedback on puzzle 4

Providing a semantics for *eetasi* implies providing the following ‘recipe’:

‘Eetasi NP VP’

Presupposition: _____ (if relevant)

Assertion: _____

General feedback on puzzle 4

Justifying the semantics: does this give rise to the correct meaning? Show it!

General feedback on puzzle 4

Justifying the semantics: does this give rise to the correct meaning? Show it!

You need to show how it provides the correct semantics for example (4)...

General feedback on puzzle 4

(4) Atara Imere

Te-gata	eetasi	ee-moe	go
SG-snake	one	3SG.NFUT-sleep	and
te-gata	eetasi	s-ee-moe	kee.
SG-snake	one	NEG-3SG.NFUT-sleep	NEG

‘One snake was sleeping and one snake wasn’t sleeping’

General feedback on puzzle 4

Justifying the semantics: does this give rise to the correct meaning? Show it!

…and why (4) is good, but (3) isn’t

General feedback on puzzle 4

(3) Atara Imere

#Te-gata	ee-moe	go
SG-snake	3SG.NFUT-sleep	and
te-gata	s-ee-moe	kee.
SG-snake	NEG-3SG.NFUT-sleep	NEG

‘A snake was sleeping and the snake wasn’t sleeping’

General feedback on puzzle 4

Justifying the semantics: does this give rise to the correct meaning? Show it!

in doing so, you'll have to discuss examples (1) and (2) as well

General feedback on puzzle 4

(1) Atara Imere

Te-gata	ee-moe
SG-snake	3SG.NFUT-sleep

‘A/the snake is sleeping’

(2) Atara Imere

Te-gata	eetasi	ee-moe
SG-snake	one	3SG.NFUT-sleep

‘One snake is sleeping’

Demonstrative determiners

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(2) That is new and that is old

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Demonstrative determiners

Demonstratives and demonstrative determiners are different from definite articles:

(1) #The computer is old, and the computer is new

(2) [That]$_{\rightarrow L1}$ is new and [that]$_{\rightarrow L2}$ is old

(3) [That computer]$_{\rightarrow L1}$ is old, and [that computer]$_{\rightarrow L2}$ is new

Demonstrative determiners

Arguments that the pointing gesture needs to be taken into account by our semantics:

Demonstrative determiners

Arguments that the pointing gesture needs to be taken into account by our semantics:

(3) [That computer]$_{\rightarrow L1}$ is old, and [that computer]$_{\rightarrow L2}$ is new

(4) #[That computer]$_{\rightarrow L1}$ is old, and [that computer]$_{\rightarrow L1}$ is new

Demonstrative determiners

Arguments that the pointing gesture needs to be taken into account by our semantics:

(3) [That computer]$_{\rightarrow L1}$ is old, and [that computer]$_{\rightarrow L2}$ is new

(4) #[That computer]$_{\rightarrow L1}$ is old, and [that computer]$_{\rightarrow L1}$ is new

1. If the pointing is to the same location/entity, oddness results

Demonstrative determiners

2. Sometimes, if the pointing is removed altogether, we can’t interpret the sentence anymore

(5) #That computer is old

Demonstrative determiners

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(5) #That computer is old

Pointing includes eye gaze and any other gesture that would be interpreted as picking up a location

Demonstrative determiners

3. Sometimes, when the pointing is removed, a different meaning obtains:

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(6) A woman walked into the room. This/that woman was wearing a funny hat

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→ lack of pointing means the demonstrative nature of *that* and *this* is lacking

Demonstrative determiners

3. Sometimes, when the pointing is removed, a different meaning obtains:

(7) #A woman walked into the room. [This/that woman]$_{\rightarrow L}$ was wearing a funny hat

→ pointing *forces* the demonstrative nature of *that* and *this* to be present. That's weird in (7)

Building in the deictic component

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Question: how do we build it into the semantics?

Building in the deictic component

‘[This NP]$_{\rightarrow L}$ VP’

Presupposition: _____ (if applicable)

Assertion: _____

‘[That NP]$_{\rightarrow L}$ VP’

Presupposition: _____ (if applicable)

Assertion: _____

Building in the deictic component

‘[This NP]$_{\rightarrow L}$ VP’

Presupposition: _____ (if applicable)

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‘[That NP]$_{\rightarrow L}$ VP’

Presupposition: _____ (if applicable)

Assertion: _____

Building in the deictic component

‘[This NP]$_{\rightarrow L}$ VP’

Presupposition: _____

Assertion: {x: x is an NP in s} ∩ {x: x VPs in s} ≠ ∅

Building in the deictic component

‘[This NP]$_{\rightarrow L}$ VP’

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Assertion: {x: x is an NP in s and x is in L in s and speaker points at L in s} ∩ {x: x VPs in s} ≠ ∅

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‘[This NP]$_{\rightarrow L}$ VP’

Presupposition: _____

Assertion: {x: x is an NP in s and x is in L in s and speaker points at L in s and L is close to the speaker in s} ∩ {x: x VPs in s} ≠ ∅

Building in the deictic component

‘[That NP]$_{\rightarrow L}$ VP’

Presupposition: _____

Assertion: {x: x is an NP in s and x is in L in s and speaker points at L in s and L is not close to the speaker in s} ∩ {x: x VPs in s} ≠ ∅

Presupposition

Do demonstrative determiners carry a presupposition?

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(8) [Context: in a competition where there can only be one winner]

[That winner]$_{\rightarrow L3}$ will receive a lot of money

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[That winner]$_{\rightarrow L3}$ will receive a lot of money

(9) # [That moon]$_{\rightarrow L6}$ has risen

Presupposition

Do demonstrative determiners carry a presupposition *of anti-uniqueness*?

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(9) # [That moon]$_{\rightarrow L6}$ has risen

maybe the oddness of (8) and (9) follows from there only being one winner in (8) and only one moon in (9)?

Presupposition

‘[That NP]$_{\rightarrow L}$ VP’

Presupposition: **|{x: x is an NP in s}| > 1**

Assertion: {x: x is an NP in s and x is in L in s and speaker points at L in s and L is not close to the speaker in s} ∩ {x: x VPs in s} ≠ ∅

Presupposition

‘[That NP]$_{\rightarrow L}$ VP’

Presupposition: **|{x: x is an NP in s}| > 1**

an anti-uniqueness presupposition

Assertion: {x: x is an NP in s and x is in L in s and speaker points at L in s and L is not close to the speaker in s} ∩ {x: x VPs in s} ≠ ∅

Presupposition

However:

Presupposition

However:

(10) I don’t know if there are any other cars in this showroom, but [that car]$_{\rightarrow L3}$ looks expensive

Presupposition

However:

(10) I don’t know if there are any other cars in this showroom, but [that car]$_{\rightarrow L3}$ looks expensive

speaker is explicitly saying that there may not be any other cars in the showroom, so they can’t be presupposing that there is more than one car in the showroom

Presupposition

However:

(11) [We live in a neighbourhood that forbids cars on its roads. One day we wake up to find a white car parked outside our apartment. A while later you tell me:]

[That car]$_{\rightarrow L4}$ is still parked outside

Presupposition

But what about:

(8) [Context: in a competition where there can only be one winner]

[That winner]$_{\rightarrow L3}$ will receive a lot of money

(9) # [That moon]$_{\rightarrow L6}$ has risen

Presupposition

But what about:

(8) [Context: in a competition where there can only be one winner]

[THAT winner]$_{\rightarrow L3}$ will receive a lot of money

(9) # [THAT moon]$_{\rightarrow L6}$ has risen

Let that sink in

Let that sink in

(12) Let [THAT]$_{\rightarrow L}$ sink in

Let that sink in

(12) Let [THAT]$_{\rightarrow L}$ sink in

(13) Let [that sink]$_{\rightarrow L}$ in

Let that sink in

(12) Let [THAT]$_{\rightarrow L}$ sink in

(13) Let [that sink]$_{\rightarrow L}$ in
(14) # Let [THAT sink]$_{\rightarrow L}$ in

Presupposition

So it is when demonstrative determiners are focused that an anti-uniqueness effect obtains, not otherwise

(9) # [THAT moon]$_{\rightarrow L6}$ has risen

Presupposition

So it is when demonstrative determiners are focused that an anti-uniqueness effect obtains, not otherwise

(9) # [THAT moon]$_{\rightarrow L6}$ has risen

'the object in the situation located in L6 which I'm pointing at is a moon that has risen, and other objects in the situation which are moons have not risen'

Presupposition

So it is when demonstrative determiners are focused that an anti-uniqueness effect obtains, not otherwise

(9) # [THAT moon]$_{\rightarrow L6}$ has risen

'the object in the situation located in L6 which I'm pointing at is a moon that has risen, and other objects in the situation which are moons have not risen'

i.e., other moons have not risen

Presupposition

So it is when demonstrative determiners are focused that an anti-uniqueness effect obtains, not otherwise

(9) # [THAT moon]$_{\rightarrow L6}$ has risen

'the object in the situation located in L6 which I'm pointing at is a moon that has risen, and other objects in the situation which are moons have not risen'

i.e., other moons have not risen $\Rightarrow$ #

Presupposition

Is this special to demonstrative determiners?

Presupposition

Is this special to demonstrative determiners? No, focus seems to generally have this effect

(15) Bill only introduced John to MARY

Presupposition

Is this special to demonstrative determiners? No, focus seems to generally have this effect

(15) Bill only introduced John to MARY

> “Bill introduced John to Mary, and Bill introduced John to nobody else”

Presupposition

Is this special to demonstrative determiners? No, focus seems to generally have this effect

(16) Bill only introduced JOHN to Mary

> “Bill introduced John to Mary, and Bill introduced nobody else to Mary”

Presupposition

Is this special to demonstrative determiners? No, focus seems to generally have this effect

(15) Bill only introduced John to MARY

(16) Bill only introduced JOHN to Mary

Presupposition

So the anti-uniqueness effect (that there have to be other NPs in addition to the one I'm pointing at) is not due to the determiner itself, it's due to focus

Presupposition

So the anti-uniqueness effect (that there have to be other NPs in addition to the one I'm pointing at) is not due to the determiner itself, it's due to focus

So we shouldn't build an anti-uniqueness presupposition into the semantics of demonstrative determiners

Presupposition

‘[That NP]$_{\rightarrow L}$ VP’

Presupposition: |{x: x is an NP in s}| > 1

Assertion: {x: x is an NP in s and x is in L in s and speaker points at L in s and L is not close to the speaker in s} ∩ {x: x VPs in s} ≠ ∅

Presupposition

‘[That NP]$_{\rightarrow L}$ VP’

Presupposition: ~~|{x: x is an NP in s}| > 1~~

Assertion: {x: x is an NP in s and x is in L in s and speaker points at L in s and L is not close to the speaker in s} ∩ {x: x VPs in s} ≠ ∅

Presupposition

Do demonstrative determiners have any other kind of presupposition?

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(17) [Pointing to a distant group of students in L11:]

[That student]$_{\rightarrow L11}$ came to office hours earlier

Presupposition

Do demonstrative determiners have any other kind of presupposition?

(17) [Pointing to a distant group of students in L11:]

[That student]$_{\rightarrow L11}$ came to office hours earlier

There can't be *more than one NP being pointed at*!

Presupposition

Do demonstrative determiners have any other kind of presupposition?

(18) [Pointing to a distant pile of books on a table:]

[That book]$_{\rightarrow L7}$ is fascinating

There can't be *more than one NP being pointed at*!

Presupposition

~~an anti-uniqueness presupposition: 'not just one NP'~~

'[That NP]$_{\rightarrow L}$ VP'

Presupposition: ~~|{x: x is an NP in s}| > 1~~

Assertion: {x: x is an NP in s and x is in L in s and speaker points at L in s and L is not close to the speaker in s} ∩ {x: x VPs in s} ≠ ∅

Presupposition

a uniqueness presupposition:
'just one NP being pointed at'

'[That NP]$_{\rightarrow L}$ VP'

Presupposition: |{x: x is an NP in s and x is in L in s and speaker points at L in s and L is not close to the speaker in s}| = 1

Assertion: {x: x is an NP in s and x is in L in s and speaker points at L in s and L is not close to the speaker in s} ∩ {x: x VPs in s} ≠ ∅

Presupposition

(9) # [THAT moon]$_{\rightarrow L6}$ has risen

’the unique object in the situation located in L6 which I’m pointing at is a moon that has risen, and other objects in the situation which are moons have not risen’

Presupposition

(9) # [THAT moon]$_{\rightarrow L6}$ has risen

’the unique object in the situation located in L6 which I’m pointing at is a moon that has risen, and other objects in the situation which are moons have not risen’

‘just one NP being pointed at’ + ‘not just one NP’

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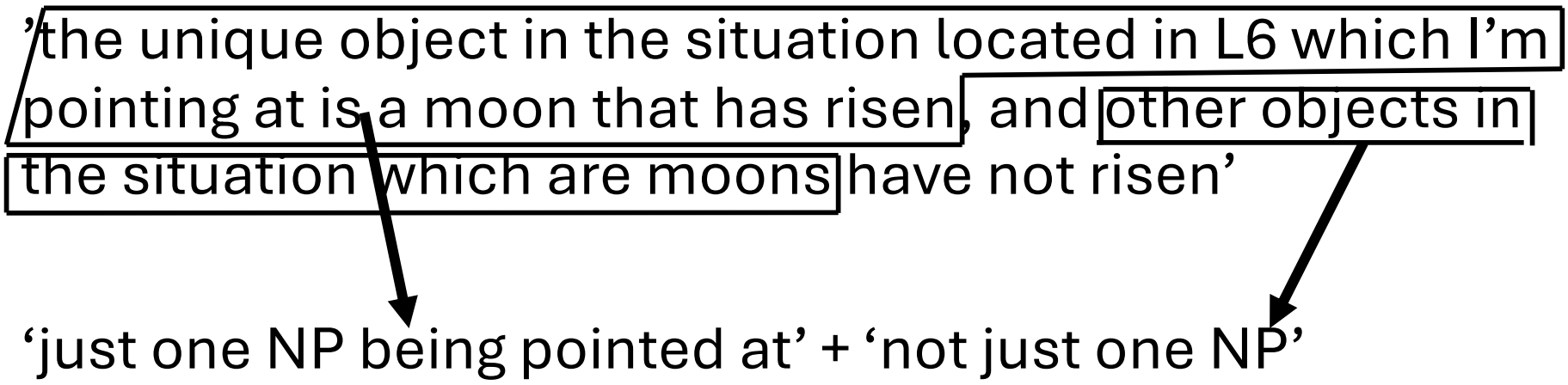

Presupposition

(9) # [THAT moon]$_{\rightarrow L6}$ has risen

’the unique object in the situation located in L6 which I’m pointing at is a moon that has risen, and other objects in the situation which are moons have not risen’

‘just one NP being pointed at’ + ‘not just one NP’

⇒ # because focus presupposition is not met

Presupposition

(19) [Clearly pointing to a certain book on a table, on which there are two additional books]

[THAT book]$_{\rightarrow L8}$ is fascinating

Presupposition

(19) [Clearly pointing to a certain book on a table, on which there are two additional books]
[THAT book]$_{\rightarrow L8}$ is fascinating

'the unique object in the situation located in L8 which I'm pointing at is a book and fascinating, and other objects in the situation which are books are not fascinating'. I.e., other books are not fascinating

Presupposition

(19) [Clearly pointing to a certain book on a table, on which there are two additional books]
[THAT book]$_{\rightarrow L8}$ is fascinating

'the unique object in the situation located in L8 which I'm pointing at is a book and fascinating, and other objects in the situation which are books are not fascinating'. I.e., other books are not fascinating

'just one NP being pointed at' + 'not just one NP'

Semantics of demonstrative determiners

‘[That NP]$_{\rightarrow L}$ VP’

Presupposition: |{x: x is an NP in s and x is in L in s and speaker points at L in s and L is not close to the speaker in s}| = 1

Assertion: {x: x is an NP in s and x is in L in s and speaker points at L in s and L is not close to the speaker in s} ∩ {x: x VPs in s} ≠ ∅

Semantics of demonstrative determiners

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-it has an effect on meaning, that is, a semantics

Semantics of demonstrative determiners

Important innovation:

-pointing, which is not usually considered to be part of linguistic representations, is part of them in this proposal

-it has an effect on meaning, that is, a semantics

-pointing then just like any other grammatical element

Semantics of demonstrative determiners

What happens if there’s no pointing?

Semantics of demonstrative determiners

What happens if there’s no pointing?

(5) #That computer is old

Semantics of demonstrative determiners

What happens if there's no pointing?

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(6) A woman walked into the room. This/that woman was wearing a funny hat

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Puzzle 6!