EBERHARD KARLS
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EGG 2018: Perspective sensitivity (week 1)

Session 3: An analysis of perspective sensitivity and its predictions

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Yesterday's class

- Indexicals and pronouns depend on the context differently, which is modelled via two different interpretational parameters:
  - Indexicals: dependence on the rather rigid context parameter *c*
  - Pronouns: dependence on the very variable assignment function *g*
- Comparison: the type of context dependence of perspective-sensitive locatives vs. that of pronouns and indexicals
- Conclusion: perspective-sensitive items have their own brand of context dependence

Today: look at a semantic proposal to capture perspective sensitivity and explore its predictions

$\Rightarrow$ the sketch in Bylinina et al. 2015

Roadmap

Intro

Bylinina et al.'s (2015) sketch of Partee's suggestion

More data: Perspective sensitivity and direct dissent

Summary

Remember: analyses of context dependence with pronouns and indexicals

- Pronouns: dependent on the variable assignment g, which can be manipulated by semantics
- Indexicals: dependent on the context parameter c, which cannot be manipulated by semantics (as freely/in all languages)

General strategy: encode different types of context-dependence via different interpretational parameters

$\Rightarrow$ interpretational parameters make the non-linguistic circumstances of communication accessible

Step 1: adding a parameter for the perspectival centre

- Bylinina et al. (2015) – following Partee's (1989) suggestion – (kinda) include g in their context parameter c.
- They do not assume an assignment function, but assume that the sequence of individuals encoded by g is part of c (= their s_c).
- They are not concerned with idexicals, so c is not really the Kaplanian context.
- They state, however, that c could be enriched with the elements in Kaplan's c (their fn. 4).

Step 1: add another element P_c to c for the perspectival centre

(1) $c = \langle P_c, s_c \rangle$ (with $s_c = \langle x_1, \ldots, x_n \rangle$)

Step 2: make perspective-sensitive items depend on P_c

Step 2: propose P_c-dependent extensions for *left* and *local*

(2) $[\![\text{left}]\!]^c = \lambda x_e.\lambda y_e.$ *y*'s location is left of *x*'s location relative to P_c

(3) $[\![\text{local}]\!]^c = \lambda x_e.$ *x* is in the vicinity of P_c

In contrast: pronouns depend on the values in s_c, which are accessed via indexed projection functions

(4) $[\![\text{he}_i]\!]^c = \pi^i(s_c)$

Step 3: make P_c and s_c semantically accessible in different ways

To capture the different variable interpretations of pronouns and perspective-sensitive items, s_c and P_c are made accessible to different operators:

- To capture binding with pronouns: the abstraction operator Λ_i

(5) $[\![\Lambda_i \text{ XP}]\!]^c = \lambda x_e.[\![\text{XP}]\!]^{\langle P_c, s_c[i \to x]\rangle}$ (→ *Predicate Abstraction*)

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- To capture non-speaker perspective: the shifting operator Π_i

  (6) $[\![\Pi_i \text{ XP}]\!]^c = [\![\text{XP}]\!]^{\langle \pi^i(s_c), s_c\rangle}$

Note! Π shifts the original P_c to another "contextually salient" individual via s_c. Once Π applied, the first element in c "behaves pronominally".

Checking the extent of what is captured

How does the above proposal capture the following properties of and observations about perspective sensitivity?

(7) a. $[\![\text{left}]\!]^c = \lambda x_e.\lambda y_e.$ y's loc is left of x's location relative to P_c
b. $[\![\text{local}]\!]^c = \lambda x_e.$ x is in the vicinity of P_c

(8) $[\![\text{he}_i]\!]^c = \pi^i(s_c)$

(9) a. $[\![\Lambda_i\ \text{XP}]\!]^c = \lambda x_e.[\![\text{XP}]\!]^{\langle P_c, s_c[i \to x]\rangle}$
b. $[\![\Pi_i\ \text{XP}]\!]^c = [\![\text{XP}]\!]^{\langle \pi^i(s_c), s_c\rangle}$

1. Default speaker-orientation
2. Shiftability
3. Bound uses of perspective-sensitive items
4. Shift-together-locally
5. Syntactic restrictions: expressions that may introduce perspectival centres

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Summary

Background: the target of dissent

- Properties of P_c:
  - P_c is part of the extension of *local* and *left*.
  - P_c is set contextually – depending in part on the containing utterance.
- Observation: negation and direct dissent target the (at-issue) content of an utterance (e.g., Tonhauser 2012; but: Snider 2017)

(10) A: Mary is unfortunately sitting on the bed.
B: No, that's not true / she isn't.

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(10) A: Mary is unfortunately sitting on the bed.
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- Important: Expressions for which parts of their semantics is contextually supplied do not change value in denials.

(11) A: I am sitting on her bed.
B: No, that's not true.

(12) A: Every student actively contributed.
B: No, that's not true.

Prediction: locatives and dissent – I

Observation: similar behavior for *local* and *left*

(13) A: Mary is visiting a local school.
B: No, that's not true.

- B can negate 'Mary is visiting a school that is local for A/Mary'.
- B cannot negate 'Mary is visiting a school that is local for B'.

(14) A: Mary is sitting to the left of the tree.
B: No, that's not true.

- B can negate 'Mary is sitting to the left of the tree relative to A'.
- B cannot negate 'Mary is sitting to the left of the tree relative to B'.

Prediction: locatives and dissent – II

Assumption about denial: a denial by S takes the at-issue content p expressed by the previous utterance and signals that S commits to $\neg p$ and refuses to make p common ground (see Farkas & Bruce 2010)

Bylinina et al.'s semantics:
P_c is set contextually to A and is part of the content of *local*
$\Rightarrow$ the relevant perspective is fixed at the level of content

(15) $[\![\text{Mary is visiting a local school}]\!]^{\langle A, s_c \rangle} = 1$ iff
$\exists x[\text{school}(x) \,\&\, \text{in-vicinity-for}(A)(x) \,\&\, \text{visit}(x)(\text{Mary})]$

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So: Bylinina et al.'s account can capture intuitions that dissent negates "contextually resolved content" (= content for which the perspectival centre has been fixed) for locatives.

What about aesthetic predicates and predicates of personal taste?

What does B deny in (16) and (17)?

(16) [**Context:** A and B discuss which box to use for C's present.]
A: The blue box is pretty.
B: No, that's not true / it isn't.

(17) [**Context:** A and B each just downed a shot of rakija.]
A: This rakija is tasty.
B: No, that's not true / it isn't.

Summary

- General strategy to model context dependence: interpretational parameters
- Bylinina et al. 2015 sketching Partee 1989:
  - introduction of a new element that is part of the context parameter *c*
  - uniquely encodes the current perspectival centre
  - the semantics of perspective-sensitive items dependes on this parameter
- The account captures most properties of perspective-sensitive items that distinguish them from pronouns.
- New data: direct dissent

  $\Rightarrow$ diverging intuitions for locatives vs. aesthetic / personal taste predicates

  $\Rightarrow$ two types of perspective sensitivity?

Literatur

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