

Scalar Implicatures - Session of Study at the Semantics/Pragmatics Interface

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THE GRAMMATICAL APPROACH TO SCALAR IMPLICATURES: SOME ARGUMENTS AND COUNTERARGUMENTS

In the recent years, various arguments and counterarguments have been offered in favor or against a grammatical approach to scalar implicatures (as opposed to a traditional pragmatic account): according to one implementation of such an approach, SIs are generated by a covert exhaustivity operator present in the LF of the relevant sentences (cf. Chierchia, Fox & Spector, in progress). Some arguments are however stronger than others. In particular, I will discuss the following issues: a) Arguments for the grammatical view based on 'embedded' SIs in upward entailing contexts are weak, because one can never know for sure that the relevant readings do indeed require computing an SI in an embedded position. By relying on enough alternatives, a globalist account can generate the relevant readings (cf. Spector 2003, 2007, Sauerland 2004, van Rooij & Schulz 2004, 2006). As we'll show, the best empirical evidence is to be found in non-increasing contexts and Hurford disjunctions (cf. Chierchia et al., to appear). We will discuss some of the relevant psycholinguistic literature. b) Arguments based on blind computation of scalar implicatures (cf. Chierchia et al., to appear, Magri 2009). We will assess the force of these arguments in light of potential counterproposals. c) Counterarguments based on the inexistence of certain local readings (e.g., Ippolito 2010). I will carefully discuss a number of such arguments and argue that either they ignore the potential role played by prosody, or the relevant readings can be ruled out on independent grounds.

EXHAUSTIFICATION, FOCUS AND ECONOMY AND QUANTITY

In this lecture, I will investigate the relationships between scalar implicatures and Focus Marking. First, it will be shown that one needs a unified theory of alternatives both for association with focus and for scalar implicatures, and that such a theory turns out to be surprisingly more difficult to formulate than standard theories of alternatives assume (cf. Fox & Katzir 2009). Second, I will formulate an Economy Condition (based on

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Fox & Spector, in progress) which rules out certain alternative sets for covert exhaustification: together with a condition known as 'Minimize Focus' (Schwarzschild 1999), this economy condition will be shown to account for the distribution of embedded SIs and for their prosodic correlates, and to make new and surprising predictions.