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Information Structure and Dialogue

PROGRAM

10h00-10h30
• Urtzi ETXEBERRIA and Aritz IRURTZUN, CNRS-IKER
« Interaction of quantification and information structure : the case of the Basque particle 'ere' »

10h30-11h00
• Marri AMON, Tartu University & Université Sorbonne Nouvelle – Paris 3
« Detachment constructions in spoken Estonian »

11h00-11h30
• Jirasak ACHARIYAYOS, Université Sorbonne Nouvelle – Paris 3, CNRS-LACITO
« Discourse particles and information structuring in Thai »

11h45-12h30
• Peter SLOMANSON, Aarhus University
« Cross-linguistic influence and new information structuring processes »

LUNCH

14h00-14h45
• Jean-Louis DESSALLES, Paris-Tech (Telecom)
« What type of information makes an utterance relevant? »

14h45-15h30
• M.M.Jocelyne FERNANDEZ-VEST, CNRS-LACITO, Université Paris 3-Sorbonne Nouvelle
« Information grammar and typologies :Why dialogue is a prerequisite »

15h45-16h45
• **Jeanette GUNDEL, University of Minneapolis :**
*« **Reference and cognitive status: Some typological considerations** »*

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Information Structure and Dialogue

ABSTRACTS

Interaction of quantification and information structure: the case of the Basque particle 'ere'

Urtzi Etxeberria and Aritz Irurtzun, CNRS-IKER

The Basque particle *ere* has as its core meaning that of simple addition, as represented in the example in (1B):

(1) A: Jonek badaki erantzuna.   B: Aitorrek ere badaki erantzuna.
     Jon   know answer.art   Aitor   ere know answer.art
     'John knows the answer'   'Aitor does too'

Adapting the analyses of Karttunen & Karttunen (1977), Karttunen & Peters (1979), or Rooth (1985) the presupposition brought by (1B), would be an existential presupposition (existential implicature) which could be characterized as in (2):

(2) 'There are other x under consideration besides Jon such that x knows the answer'

This is basically the lexical import of English particles like *too* or *also*, a 'simple additive' meaning. Related to this use, a very interesting property of Basque *ere* is that it can also induce scalar additive effects, as shown in (3):

(3) Jonek ere badaki erantzuna
   Jon   ere know answer.art
   'Even John knows the answer'

In cases like (3), there would be an additional implicature regarding the likelihood of the eventuality:

(4) Implicatures in (3); note that (4i) is the existential implicature in (2):
       (i) 'There are other x under consideration besides Jon such that x knows the answer'
       (ii) 'For all x under consideration besides Jon, the likelihood that x knows the answer is greater than the likelihood that Jon knows the answer'.

The potential ambiguity of the two meanings of *ere* is resolved by means of prosody (Nuclear Stress placement); in order to have the simple additive reading the Nuclear Stress must fall on the particle *ere* itself (5a). Alternatively, if the Nuclear Stress is placed on the element preceding the particle, then the meaning is that of a scalar additive (5b):

(5a) Jon ERE etorri da. (*Simple additive*)   (5b) JON ere etorri da. (*Scalar additive*)
    Jon ere come aux   Jon ere come aux
    'Jon also came'   'Even Jon came'

Our proposal will be based on the 'alternative semantics' account of focus proposed by Rooth (1985, *et seq.*): assuming that the simple additive in (5a) presupposes "that X came (X ≠ Jon)", scalar additives like (5b) will have two presuppositions: the very same lexical presupposition of the simple additives (6a), and the FSV which is obtained by the substitution of the focal subject with alternative values (6b), leaving the rest of the clause as an existential presupposition.

(6a) *Lexical*: $x [x ≠ Jon$ Ù came (x)]
      (6b) *Focal*: {came (x)| x Î *E* Ù x ≠ Jon} = {[[Mary came and she is not Jon]], [[Peter came and he is not Jon]], [[Ted came and he is not Jon]], ...}

We will argue that with this analysis, the 'scalarity' of the scalar implicature derives directly from the focus semantic value of (6b), where all the alternative values are considered but the actual subject (*Jon* in (5b)).

Detachment constructions in spoken Estonian: focus on left detachments
Marri Amon, University of Tartu & Université Paris 3

When comparing Estonian to some typologically different languages (Romance languages, especially French), it becomes clear that Estonian (a language where the word order is argued to be conditioned by pragmatics rather than by syntax) uses discourse segmentation for information structuring purposes to a lesser extent than the above-mentioned languages. However, the detachment constructions (initial detachments/final detachments which often correspond to the informational constituents preceding and following the Rheme) which have been described as a universal property of unplanned discourse are relatively frequent in different types of conversations. In my presentation I will focus on the left detachments in spoken Estonian: the conditions of their use in different types of conversations, questions related to the information structuring and the insertion of detachments in discourse (discourse particles and other prosodic means).

Discourse particles and IS in Thai: *kɔ̂* particle case
Jirasak Achariyayos, Paris 3 - ED268 - LACITO

Thai traditional grammar described *kɔ̂* as a conjuntion word, and as an equivalent to «also» in English. However many scholars argue that *kɔ̂* is more likely a particle that functions as a linker; noun or sentence linker. In this presentation I will show its functions as linker, and I argue that it can also be described as a border between theme and rheme in information structuring perspective; the element that precedes *kɔ̂* is a theme, and the element that follows a rheme.

Cross-linguistic influence and new information structuring processes
Peter Slomanson, Aarhus Universitet, Denmark

A morphosyntactically instantiated finiteness contrast can be motivated by discourse-pragmatic transfer in contact languages. In Sri Lankan Malay (SLM), predicate focusing in sentences containing a temporally ordered sequence of predicates sequences is a plausible trigger for the development of (non-)finiteness morphology. Morphosyntactic reorganization is motivated by the failure of the older grammar to accommodate two information structuring processes simultaneously, in this case (1) strict temporal ordering of predicates, and (2) detachment as a strategy for focusing temporally non-primary predicates.

Events in complex sentences typically appear as subclauses in the order in which the events occur in time. In many languages, this linear ordering and context are sufficient to convey event sequence, and focusing a temporally secondary event can be accomplished prosodically. In a smaller number of languages, such as those spoken in Sri Lanka, the temporally non-primary events, those that did not occur first, must also appear as non-finite participial adjuncts. There may also be a tendency to dislocate such constituents to the sentence periphery in order to focus them in discourse, just as nominal constituents can be dislocated in order to focus them (focus detachment). In the sprachbund that includes SLM, nominal arguments can be focused in this way, as can verbal predicates representing related events in a temporal sequence. In such an information structuring system, contrastive finiteness marking facilitates the interaction of these two structural patterns, i.e. temporal sequencing and focus. A finiteness contrast can preserve the temporal sequence, not necessarily recoverable from context, under focus detachment. This becomes necessary when a temporally secondary event is in focus. It is possible to reproduce this grammatically in formal English (though only if a clear prosodic break is introduced before the final clause) with the sentence "Having awoken, the child went to school, having gotten dressed". The linear position of the final adjunct clause highlights its focal status, but the fact that it is participial shows that it is temporally non-primary.

What type of information makes an utterance relevant?
Jean-louis Dessalles
www.dessalles.fr

Casual conversation is by far the main manifestation of language behaviour.

We spend six hours a day conversing. Though we feel mostly relaxed during this activity, conversation is a high stakes behaviour, in which any failure to be relevant may have damageable social consequences for the speaker.

I will show that what makes a conversational utterance relevant can be formally characterized, using *simplicity theory*.

References

Dessalles, J-L. (2009). *Why we talk* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
See on :http://WWT.dessalles.fr

Dessalles, J-L. (2008). La pertinence et ses origines cognitives - Nouvelles théories. Paris: Hermes-Science Publications.
http://pertinence.dessalles.fr

Simplicity theory: www.simplicitytheory.org

Information grammar and typologies : why Dialogue is a prerequisite
M.M.Jocelyne Fernandez-Vest, C.N.R.S.-LACITO & Université Paris 3
http://mmj-fernandez-vest.wikidot.com/
http://lacito.vjf.cnrs.fr/membres/fernandez.htm

Among the basic assumptions underlying this presentation are the following : 1/ An ambitious semantics of human language, which lays claims towards generalization, should take into account two kinds of typologies : i) discourse typology, distinguishing for instance everyday conversation from discourse with special purposes ; ii) language typology, apt to explain, through studying comparatively the structures of individual linguistic systems, what kind of ressources (phonological, morphosyntactic…) are mobilized for building meaningful constructions. 2/ Word order studies should actively question the relevance of traditional classifications (SVO, SOV etc.) originating in the analysis of allegedely « neutral » utterances, i.e. in practice contextless declarative sentences. 3/ Conversation analysis could be a decisive contribution to points 1 and 2 – provided it is not dazzled by the social impact of interactions.

This talk concentrates on Answers (A) as primary elements of Information Structuring. The methodology, originally elaborated in the 1970s for the study of an interlanguage, Finnish spoken by bilingual Sami, was then applied to Northern Sami (a corpus of conversations and life stories collected in the border region of the Deatnu Valley), still prototypical of pure orality in the 1980s, and was later extended to several other European languages. Distinguishing 3 types of As (simple / complex / multiple A), I show the role in impromptu speech of the MCU (Minimal Communicative Utterance), a Rheme marked by a terminative intonation : when preceded by a repetition of the Q Theme and followed by a Mneme (a textual variant of Lambrecht's Antitopic), the MCU is the pivot of the 2 main binary information strategies (1. Th-Rh, 2. Rh-Mn). In view of a revised typology of Qs and As, I take examples of QA pairs from different discourse genres – from Finnish conversations to French political debates and interviews – and claim that a typology of these pairs, as contextualized utterances of ordinary language, not only permits to tackle //context / cotext / sentence combining//, but can challenge the traditional word order classifications.

Ref: •• Fernandez-Vest M.M.J., 1987, *La Finlande trilingue, 1. Le discours des Sames. Oralité, contrastes, énonciation,* Paris, Didier Erudition.• 2009, « Typological evolution of Northern Sami : spatial cognition and Information Structuring », *The Quasqui-centennial of the Finno-Ugrian Society,* Jussi Ylikoski (ed.), Helsinki, Mémoires de la Société Finno-Ougrienne, SUST 258, 33-55. • 2012, *Detachments for cohesion. Toward an information grammar of oral language*, 320 p., Ms. •• Gundel J.K. & Bassene Mamadou & Gordon Bryan &

Hummick Linda & Khalfaoui Amel, 2010, Testing predictions of the Givenness Hierarchy framework : A cross-linguistic investigation, *Journal of Pragmatics*, 42, 1770-1785.

Reference and Cognitive Status: Some Typological Considerations
Jeanette K. Gundel, University of Minnesota

This presentation summarizes and provides some recent updates on the Givenness Hierarchy theory of reference production and understanding (Gundel, Hedberg, and Zacharski 1993 and subsequent work).

The focus will be on some typological facts and hypotheses relating to correlations between referring forms and cognitive status across languages - ways in which natural languages can differ with respect to such correlations and ways in which they appear to be alike.

 I conclude with a comparison between the English original of a dialogue in one of the books in the Harry Potter series with its Norwegain translation, illustrating some of the points made in the presentation.

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