

Dimensions of Meaning – an exercise

The following sentences contain contributions in different semantic dimensions: presupposition triggers, conventional implicatures, and/or conversational implicatures, in addition to the “meaning” in the narrow sense – the assertion (“what is said”).

For each sentence, please describe each part of meaning – all propositions that follow from the utterance. If possible, determine the semantic dimension for each piece of meaning. How can you tell?

1. Ich kann doch nicht kommen, weil ich ja auf die Zwillinge aufpassen muss.
2. a. Mary got married and had a baby.
b. Mary had a baby and got married.
3. a. Peter is sad because Anna obviously doesn't like him.
b. Peter is sad because it is obvious that Anna doesn't like him.
4. They offered the damn job to Karl, who, to tell you the truth, doesn't have a clue about programming.
5. Ehrlich gesagt, Anke kommt heute nicht zu unserem verdammt Treffen, weil sie glücklicherweise ihren Flug verpasst hat.
6. a. Peter hat seine Töle mitgebracht.
b. Peters Hund ist eine Töle.
7. Wer leiht Wulff eigentlich das Geld für seine Anwälte? Ganz billig ist die Veranstaltung nämlich nicht.
8. a. Last night Tatjana watched Gravity again.
b. Did Tatjana watch Gravity again last night?
c. Tatjana didn't watch Gravity again last night.