

TOPICS IN SEMANTICS 1
PRESUPPOSITION, ACCOMMODATION AND ASSERTION

Syllabus Fall 2002

INSTRUCTOR:

Maria Bittner, Department of Linguistics, 18 Seminary Place, Room 203A.
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WHEN & WHERE:

Th 9:50 am –12:50 pm, SEM–108

PREREQUISITES:

Semantics 2 or permission of the instructor. You should be familiar with typed logic with lambda abstraction and its use, in static semantic theories like Montague 1973, to analyze phenomena such as quantification and modality in English.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In general, an utterance may *presuppose* that the context meets certain requirements, it may also require some *accommodation* (context repair) on the part of the listener if the presuppositions fail to be met, and it makes an *assertion* which gives rise to a new context. This course is an introduction to the dynamics of these interrelated phenomena and to the theoretical framework of Dynamic Semantics, broadly understood, which dominates current semantic research in this field (amongst others).

REFERENCES:

- Beaver, David (2001) *Presupposition and Assertion in Dynamic Semantics*, Ch. 1–9. CSLI, Stanford.
[PADS, **Ch. 1–5**]
- Gazdar, G. (1979) 'A Solution to the Projection Problem'. In Choon-Kyu Oh and David A. Dineen (eds) *Syntax and Semantics*, Vol. 11: *Presupposition*, pp. 57–89. Academic Press, New York.
- Heim, Irene (1983a) 'File Change Semantics and the Familiarity Theory of Definiteness'. In Rainer Bäuerle *et al* (eds.) *Meaning, Use and Interpretation of Language*, pp. 164–189. de Gruyter, Berlin.
- Heim, Irene (1983b) 'On the Projection Problem for Presuppositions'. In Michael Barlow *et al* (eds.) *Second Annual West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics*, pp. 114–126. Stanford University.
- Kamp, Hans and Uwe Reyle (1993) *From Discourse to Logic*. Kluwer, Dordrecht.
- Karttunen, Lauri (1973) 'Presuppositions of Compound Sentences'. *Linguistic Inquiry* **4**: 169–193.
- Karttunen, Lauri (1974) 'Presuppositions and Linguistic Content'. *Theoretical Linguistics* **1**: 181–194.
- Karttunen, Lauri (1976) 'Discourse Referents'. In J. McCawley (ed.) *Syntax and Semantics*, Vol. 7, pp. 363–385. Academic Press, New York.
- Karttunen, Lauri and Stanley Peters (1979) 'Conventional Implicature'. In Choon-Kyu Oh and David A. Dineen (eds) *Syntax and Semantics*, Vol. 11: *Presupposition*, pp. 1–56. Academic Press, New York.
- van der Sandt, Rob (1992) 'Presupposition Projection as Anaphora Resolution'. *Journal of Semantics* **9**:333–377.

REQUIREMENTS:

Students registered for credit will do a research project — preferably about some less familiar language — and report their results in a class presentation (ca. 30 min, **Th Dec. 5**), and a conference style paper (see examples, e.g., in proceedings of SALT). The paper should be sent as a **pdf file** to mbittner@rci.rutgers.edu by **Mon, Dec. 16**.

As usual, there will be no late papers and no incompletes — that is, I will assign grades based on whatever you give me, or fail to give me, by the due date of Dec. 16.

TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE (v. 2)

We will study the following readings in the indicated order. If we need more time at any point we'll take it, so we may not cover all of the readings on this syllabus. But hopefully we'll cover most of them.

TOPIC 1 (*week 1*). Introduction to presupposition.

- Presupposition vs. entailment/implicature: Empirical diagnostics.
Read: PADS, **Ch. 1**

TOPIC 2 (*weeks 2–3*). Extensional two-dimensional theory of assertion and presupposition.

- Multivalence and partiality. Extensional presupposition triggers in K&P '79.
Read: Karttunen & Peters 1979
PADS, **Ch. 2**
- Projection from extensional contexts in K&P '79. Some problems.
Read: Karttunen & Peters 1979 (2nd time)

TOPIC 3 (*weeks 4–5*). Intensional two-dimensional theory of assertion and presupposition.

- Two-Sorted Type Theory (Ty_2). Extensional fragment of K&P '79 revisited.
Read: Muskens, Reinhard (1995) *Meaning and Partiality*. CSLI, Stanford, **pp. 7–11, 21–28**.
- Full intensional theory of K&P '79 recast in Ty_2 . Problems revisited.
Read: Karttunen & Peters 1979 (3rd time)

TOPIC 4 (*weeks 6–7*). Local filtering of presuppositions.

- Selective filtering of presupposition sets (Part 1).
Read: Karttunen 1973
- Selective filtering of presupposition sets (Part 1).
Read: PADS, **Ch. 3.1–3.4**

TOPIC 5 (*weeks 8-9*). Toward a dynamic theory of presupposition.

- Updating local contexts subject to consistency (Part 1).
Read: Gazdar 1979
- Updating local contexts subject to consistency (Part 1).
Read: PADS, **Ch. 3.5–3.9**

TOPIC 6 (*weeks 10-12*). Dynamic theory of presupposition and accommodation.

- File Change Semantics and the Familiarity Theory of Definiteness (by Sofia Malamoud).
Read: Karttunen 1976
Heim 1983a
- Updating local contexts subject to definedness.
Read: Heim 1983b
PADS, **Ch. 4**
- Apparent presupposition cancellation due to accommodation.
Read: PADS, **Ch. 5**

Week 13: THANKSGIVING

Week 14: Student presentations.