

TEMPORAL ANAPHORA IN TENSELESS LANGUAGES

Syllabus

INSTRUCTOR:

Professor Maria Bittner

e-mail: mbittner@rci.rutgers.edu

url: <http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~mbittner>

(download lecture notes, publications, text studies)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course presupposes familiarity with the DRT theory of temporal anaphora. According to DRT, tense is crucial for temporal anaphora in English. However, the Eskimo language Kalaallisut does not have any tense morphology (Bittner 2005). Instead, verbs inflect for mood, classifying eventualities not as past, present or future, but as facts, non-facts or requests. Still, Kalaallisut translators readily translate English books and vice versa. Temporal information is encoded in Kalaallisut as precisely as in English, albeit by a very different grammatical system.

This course will first introduce the Kalaallisut system and compare it point for point to English. We will then develop a general theory, extending DRT, in a dynamic system that combines the Logic of Change of Muskens 1995 with the stack-based theory of centering of Bittner 2001. Corresponding discourses in English and Kalaallisut will be explicitly analyzed by surface-based Online Update (OU, see Bittner in press). If time allows, we will also extend the OU analysis to another tenseless language, e.g. Yukatek (Mayan) or Mohawk (Iroquoian).

REFERENCES:

- Bittner, M. 2001. 'Surface composition as bridging' *Journal of Semantics* **8**:127–177.
Bittner, M. 2005. 'Future discourse in a tenseless language'. *Journal of Semantics* **12**:339–388.
Bittner, M. in press. 'Online Update: Temporal, modal, and *de se* anaphora in polysynthetic discourse'. In C. Barker & P. Jacobson, eds, *Direct Compositionality*. Oxford U. Press.
Bittner, M. 2006. 'Aspectual universals of temporal anaphora'. Rutgers ms. [To appear in S. Rothstein, ed., *Theoretical and Crosslinguistic Approaches to the Semantics of Aspect*.]
Muskens, R. 1995. 'Tense and the Logic of Change'. In U. Egli *et al*, eds. *Lexical Knowledge in the Organization of Language*, John Benjamins, Amsterdam, 147–84.
Shaer, B. 2003. 'Toward the tenseless analysis of a tenseless language' *Proceedings of SULA 2*, GLSA, University of Massachusetts at Amherst, 139–56.
Webber, B. 1988. 'Tense as discourse anaphor'. *Computational Linguistics* **14**:61–73

SCHEDULE OF LECTURES:

SCHEDULE OF LECTURES:		READ:
<i>Lecture 1</i>	The problem: Temporal anaphora in a tenseless language	Bittner 2005
<i>Lecture 2</i>	English-based theory: Kalaallisut as English minus tense	Muskens 1995 Shaer 2003
<i>Lecture 3</i>	Aspect-based theory (1)	Bittner 2006
<i>Lecture 4</i>	Aspect-based theory (2)	Bittner <i>in press</i>
<i>Lecture 5</i>	Aspect-based theory (3)	Webber 1988