

SEMANTICS SEMINAR:  
REFERENCE TO SPEECH ACTS

**Syllabus**

## INSTRUCTOR:

Professor Maria Bittner

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## WHEN &amp; WHERE:

Tu 2:50 – 5:50 pm, Dep. Linguistics, 18 Seminary Place, seminar room.

## PREREQUISITE:

Working knowledge of dynamic semantics, including Muskens 1995 (see lecture notes from Fall 2007 *Semantics 2*, at <http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~mbittner/lct.html>).

## COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Many natural language expressions involve discourse reference to speech acts. They include indexicals (e.g. *I, now, here, actually*), performative verbs and adverbs (e.g. *wed* in *With this ring I thee wed*, and *hereby* in *I hereby resign*); illocutionary mood inflections (e.g. Kalaallisut (positive) declarative *-pu*, (positive) interrogative *-pi*, (positive) imperative *-gi*, optative *-la*, negative declarative *-la*, negative interrogative *-li*, negative imperative *-qina*); and grammatical illocutionary evidentials (e.g. Cuzco Quechua direct evidential clitic =*m(i)*, conjectural =*chá*, and reportative =*s(i)*, and Kalaallisut reportative =*guuq*).

There is a huge literature on such expressions, but most of the formally explicit accounts are limited to English and/or isolated sentences. The goal of this seminar is to work toward a cross-linguistic theory suited for incremental interpretation of connected discourse. In particular, we will seek a formally explicit representation of indexicals as well as grammatical marking of illocutionary mood and illocutionary evidentiality that accounts for anaphoric interactions involving these elements in discourse. Toward this end we will work through some promising literature on English, Kalallisut, and Cuzco Quechua, and try to extend the proposed accounts to other types of languages (whatever languages the seminar participants bring to the debate).

READINGS: Most are available online. Only those that aren't (•) will be in the xerox room.

Aloni, M. (2007). Free choice, modals, and imperatives. *Natural Language Semantics* 15:65–94.

Bittner, M. (2008a). Counterfactuals as real attitudes. Draft 7/31/2008 [at <http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~mbittner>]. Under review.

Bittner, M. (2008A). Appendix to 'Counterfactuals as real attitudes'.

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

Bittner, M. (2008b). Grammatical centering: Tense, mood, and evidentiality. Draft 8/31/2008 [at <http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~mbittner>] Under review for *Tense across languages* (R. Musan and M. Rathert, eds.). Niemeyer (Series *Linguistische Arbeiten*), Tübingen.

Bittner, M. (2008N). Notes on evidentiality and mood. [<http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~mbittner>]

- Faller, M. (2002). *Semantics and Pragmatics of Evidentials in Cuzco Quechua*. Ph. D. diss., Stanford University, CA. [<http://www.mpi.nl/world/persons/private/marfal/publicat.htm>]
- Green, G. (1996) *Pragmatics and Natural Language Understanding*. LEA, New York.
  - Groenendijk, J. and M. Stokhof. (1982). Semantic analysis of *wh*-complements. *Linguistics and Philosophy* **5**:175–235.
  - Groenendijk, J. (2007) Inquisitive semantics: Two possibilities for disjunction. *Proceedings of the Seventh International Tbilisi Symposium on Language, Logic and Computation*. [<http://dare.uva.nl/auteur/groenendijk,%20j.a.g.>]
  - Hamblin, Ch. (1973). Questions in Montague English. *Foundations of Language* **10**:41–53.
  - Isaacs, J. and K. Rawlins. (2008). Conditional Questions. *Journal of Semantics* **25**:269–319.
  - Kamp, H. (1973). Free choice permission. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, pp. 255–287.
  - Kaplan, D. (1979). On the logic of demonstratives. *Journal of Philosophical Logic* **8**:81–98.
  - Lewis, D. (1972). General semantics. *Synthese* **22**:18–67.
  - Mastop, R. (2005). *What Can You Do: Imperative Mood in Semantic Theory*. Ph.D. thesis, ILLC, Amsterdam. [<http://www.illc.uva.nl/Publications/reportlist.php?Series=DS>]
  - Murray, S. (2008) Evidentiality and Questions in Cheyenne.
  - Stalnaker, R. (1975). Indicative conditionals. *Philosophia* **5**:269–286.
  - Stalnaker, R. (1978). Assertion. In *Syntax and Semantics, Vol. 9: Pragmatics*. (P. Cole, ed.), 315–332. Academic Press, New York.
  - Stone, M. and D. Hardt. (1999). Dynamic discourse referents for tense and modals. In: *Computing Meaning, Vol. 1* (H. Bunt and R. Muskens, eds.), 302–321. Kluwer, Dordrecht. [<http://www.cs.rutgers.edu/~mdstone/compsem.html>]

#### REQUIREMENTS:

Students will be expected to give one *class presentation* and write a *conference paper*. You're welcome—indeed, encouraged—to team up with another student in the seminar, and give a joint class presentation and/or write a joint conference paper.

The class presentation will take up an entire 3-hour seminar session. A team of two students will present two related papers and lead the discussion on these papers. Judging by past experience, you're likely to get more out of this exercise, and give a better presentation, if the two of you read both papers, acting as discussion partners while you're doing that, and then prepare a joint presentation of both. But you don't have to collaborate, if you don't want to. If you plan sensibly, your conference paper will be on a related topic, but that is not required.

What is required is (i) that you explicitly state which conference your paper is intended for (it should be a conference with proceedings), and (ii) that you format your paper exactly as required for the proceedings from that conference (page limit: **15 pages max**).

Note for *2nd year students*: This will be your first semantics paper so talk about conferences may sound rather daunting. Hopefully, it also sounds exciting—no more homework exercises, this is for real! I suggest you take a deep breath, go through the motions, study some abstracts, extended abstracts, and conference papers to get an idea of what is expected, and then just do your best. I'll guide you through this process if you come and ask me well before the deadline.

Important *deadlines*:

- 12/2 (optional): extended abstract or handout for 30 min conference talk (**6-8 pages?**)
  - 12/19 (obligatory): conference paper (**15 pages max**, formatted as for your conference)
- Late papers will *not* be accepted. There will be *no* midterm, *no* final, and *no* incompletes.

## TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE

We will study the following topics in the indicated order. Hopefully we'll cover most of them.

TOPIC 1 (*week 1*). Indexicality

- T 9/2. Indexicality  
Read: •Green 1996:Ch. 2.1–4, Kaplan 1979

TOPIC 2 (*weeks 2–5*). Illocutionary mood in discourse

- T 9/9. Counterfactuals as real attitudes: Data & basic ideas  
Read: Bittner 2008a:1–22
- T 9/16. Illocutionary mood in Kalaallisut (1)  
Read: Bittner 2008a:23–37, 49–52, Bittner 2008A:1–42
- T 9/23. Illocutionary mood in Kalaallisut (2)  
Read: Bittner 2008a:53, Lewis 1972, •Stalnaker 1978
- T 9/30. Conditionals cross-linguistically  
Read: Bittner 2008a:37–48, 54, Bittner 2008A:43–71, •Stalnaker 1975

TOPIC 3 (*weeks 6–8*). Questions in discourse

- T 10/07. (Dynamic) Hamblin semantics.  
Read: •Hamblin 1973  
Review: Bittner 2008a:35–37, 2008A:31–42
- T 10/14. Partition semantics.  
Read: Groendijk & Stokhof 1982  
Deadline for *Will & Salvador*: Draft of your presentation handout due
- T 10/21. Dynamic partition semantics, Inquisitive semantics (*Will & Salvador*)  
Read: Isaacs and Rawlins 2008, Groenendijk 2007

TOPIC 4 (*weeks 9–11*). Directives in discourse

- T 10/28. Mastop on imperatives: Issues & desiderata  
Read: Mastop 2005: Ch. 1–3
- T 11/4. Mastop on imperatives: Formal theory  
Read: Mastop 2005: Ch. 4–5  
Deadline for *Todor & Susan* Draft of your presentation handout due
- T 11/11. Permission (*Todor & Susan*)  
Read: •Kamp 1973, Aloni 2007

TOPIC 5 (*weeks* 12, 14–15). Illocutionary evidentiality in discourse

- T 11/18. Grammatical centering: Tense, mood, and evidentiality  
Read: Bittner 2008b, Bittner 2008N  
Deadline for **Dan & Masahiro**: Draft of your presentation handout due
- T 11/25. THANKSGIVING BREAK
- T 12/2. Illocutionary evidentiality in Cuzco Quechua (**Carlos & Dan**)  
Read: Faller 2002  
Deadline for **Sarah**: Murray 2008 due
- T 12/9. Evidentiality and questions in Cheyenne (**Sarah**). *Course evaluation*.  
Read: Murray 2008