TEMPORALITY: UNIVERSALS AND VARIATION

Syllabus
(February 23, 2012)

LECTURES
Th 11:30 am – 2:30 pm, in SEM-108

INSTRUCTOR
Professor Maria Bittner
email: mbittner@rci.rutgers.edu
office: SEM-203A
office hour: M 11:15 am – 12:15 pm in SEM-203A (by appointment only)

PREREQUISITE
16:615:531 Semantics II, or permission of the instructor

COURSE DESCRIPTION & GOALS
Current theories of temporal discourse reference are mostly based on English (see e.g. Reichenbach 1947, Partee 1973, Webber 1988, Kamp & Reyle 1993, Klein 1994) and similar languages (e.g. Kamp 1981, Kamp & Rohrer 1983, on French). According to these theories, grammatical tenses anaphorically refer to contextually salient time periods, in much the same way as pronouns and definite descriptions anaphorically refer to contextually salient people or things.

However, recent research has shown that some languages have no tense marking at all, and yet temporal anaphora in discourse is still as precise as in English (see e.g. Li and Thompson 1989, Wu 2003, on Mandarin Chinese; Bohnemeyer 2002, 2007, 2011, on Yukatek Maya; Bittner 2005, 2007, on Kalaallisut; Tonhauser 2011, on Guaraní). This finding is a puzzle for English-based theories, as is the fact that some languages (e.g. Polish, Kalaallisut, and Mandarin) express nominal anaphora without articles or pronouns. Thus, the universal phenomenon of discourse anaphora to semantic entities of various types (such as time intervals, people, and things) must be distinguished from grammatical categories (such as tenses, pronouns, and articles) that may, but need not, be used to express it.

In Bittner (2012) Temporality: Universals and Variation (Ch. 1–9 at http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~mbittner), I develop a cross-linguistic theory of nominal, temporal, and other types of discourse reference, based on English, Polish, Mandarin Chinese, and Kalaallisut. The goal of the theory is to use the universal rules of Categorial Grammar to directly build sample discourses in these languages and simultaneously translate them into a dynamic logic that is transparently related to the actual surface forms of these languages. Part one of the book (Ch. 1–7: Universals) develops a suitable logic, Update with Centering, beginning with a simple variant and then gradually motivating and defining various enrichments. In this seminar, we will read this part of the book as well as some related literature. To the extent that time allows, temporal CG.UC fragments of English, Polish, Mandarin Chinese, and Kalaallisut (Ch. 9–12) will also be discussed.

Students will be expected to work out sample derivations along the way and present them to the class. They will also be expected to define a research project, give a conference style presentation on their research at the end of the course, and write a first draft toward a conference paper.
COURSE WEBPAGES
• After each class, lecture notes will be made available at http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~mbittner
• Course participants will also have access to the website “16:615:535 SSem S12” on Sakai.

READINGS (under “Resources” on Sakai, except for •Bittner 2012):
AnderBois, S. et al. 2010. Crossing the appositive/at-issue meaning boundary. SALT XX.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS (for credit):
• Presentations 1–2: Sample computations in UC… (joint with a discussion partner)
For-credit students will twice work through sample computations in UC…, together with another student, and then jointly present their results to the class (2 × 25min?).
• Presentation 3: Conference-style talk (30 min talk + discussion)
For-credit students will each define a research project and give a conference-style presentation on the current state of their research during the last class (see tentative schedule below).
• Conference-style paper
For-credit students will write a conference-style paper about their research project. Ideally, it should be a draft that could be developed into an actual conference paper and/or QP.
TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE
To be revised if and when necessary. The parenthesized readings are optional.

1 Th 1/19. Introduction
   Read: Bittner 2012: Ch. 1

2 Th 1/26. Attention-guided anaphora.
   Read: Bittner 2012: Ch. 2
      Li 2004
      Kertz-Kehler-Elman 2006
      (Partee 1970)
   Sample computations in UC₀: Maria

3 Th 2/2. Tense as temporal centering.
   Read: Bittner 2012: Ch. 3.1–3
      Moens and Steedman 1988
      Webber 1988
   Sample computations in UC₀: Maria

4 Th 2/9. Update with Temporal Centering (UCₜ)
   Read: Bittner 2012: Ch. 3.4
      Lascarides & Asher 1993
      Kehler 1994
   Sample computations in UC₀ and UCₜ: Maria

5 Th 2/16. Aspect as eventuality centering (English & Polish).
   Read: Bittner 2012: Ch. 4.1–4.2
      Kamp 1981/to.appear
      Mlynarczyk 2004
   Sample computations in UCₜ: group work

6 Th 2/23. Aspect as eventuality centering (Mandarin).
   Read: Bittner 2012: Ch. 4.3–4.4
      Bach 1986
   Sample computations in UCₜ: Beibei & Mingming

7 Th 3/1. Aspect as eventuality centering (Mandarin ctd).
   Read: Smith & Erbaugh 2005
      (Huang 2003)
   Direct composition in CG.UCₜ: Maria

8 Th 3/8. Quantification as top-level anaphora
   Read: Bittner 2012: Ch. 5
      Lewis 1975
   Sample computations in UCₜ: Maria + group work

9 SPRING BREAK 3/10–3/18
10 Th 3/22. $UC_\tau$ with discourse referents for sets ($UC_\tau$)
   Read: Bittner and Trondhjem 2008
   (Bittner 2012: Ch. 9:1–9.3)
   Sample computations in $UC_\tau$: Atsushi & Mingming

11 Th 3/29. Mood as illocutionary centering
   Read: Bittner 2012: Ch. 6
   AnderBois et al. 2010
   Sample computations in $UC_{\omega^\tau}$: Maria + group work

12 Th 4/5. Update with Illocutionary Centering
   Read: Murray 2010
   Sample computations in $UC_{\omega^\tau}$: Atsushi & Beibei

13 Th 4/12. Mood-based temporality in Kalaallisut (part 1)
   Read: Bittner 2012: Ch. 7
   Bittner 2005
   Sample computations in UC: Maria + group work

14 Th 4/19. Mood-based temporality in Kalaallisut (part 2)
   Read: Bittner 2007
   Bittner 2011
   Sample computations in UC: ___________ & ___________

15 Th 4/26. Conference-style presentations