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Abstracts:

MOST

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Ever since Horn 1972, it has been a received view that the lexical meaning of scalar quantifiers specifies only a lower bound. *Most*, it is assumed, codes ‘more than half’, also covering ‘all’. To account for *most*’s common interpretation, ‘more than half but less than all’, linguists have assumed a ‘not all’ implicature. I argue that the implicature analysis cannot account for most of the discourse data, and that the upper bound on *most* is independent of a ‘not all’ implicature. Furthermore, based on questionnaire results, I propose a different semantics-pragmatics division of labor. *Most* denotes ‘a proper subset which is the largest subset given any partitioning of the complement subsets’. Thus, *most*’s lexical meaning does provide an upper bound, but pragmatic inferences may nonetheless sometimes render its use compatible with states of affairs in which ‘all’ is true.

NP-INTERPRETATION AND THE STRUCTURE OF PREDICATES

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Two classes of intensional transitive verbs affect the interpretation of an indefinite object in the same way that stage- and individual-level predicates affect an indefinite subject. The contrast for objects is instantiated inside the scope of intensionality, that is, VP-internally. I claim that the differentiation of subject positions said to underlie the interpretational contrast for subjects recurs in the VP for objects, inside the domain of intensionality. The internal domain of a transitive verb is therefore somewhat syntactically articulated, containing at least two positions for indefinite objects. Quantified objects, however, are VP-external.

KNOWLEDGE OF GRAMMAR, KNOWLEDGE OF USAGE: SYNTACTIC PROBABILITIES AFFECT PRONUNCIATION VARIATION

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Frequent words tend to shorten (see e.g. Schuchardt 1885, Hooper 1976), as do words that have a high probability of occurrence given a neighboring word (Jurafsky et al. 2001). This tendency has been cited in support of the claim that probabilities are an inherent part of grammar, and of syntax in particular. There is widespread consensus, however, that the syntax of natural languages cannot be captured in terms of item-to-item transitions (Chomsky 1957). Therefore, unless one considers probabilities of syntactic structures, rather than particular combinations of neighboring words, pronunciation variation cannot be said to reflect probabilistic effects in syntax. In this article, we report a case of pronunciation variation that reflects contextual probabilities of syntactic structures. The relevant probabilities are based on the probability of a given syntactic structure, given a particular verb. We show that these probabilities affect American English /t,d/-deletion, as well as the durations of words and phrases. Our results are consistent with the notion that knowledge of grammar includes knowledge of probabilities of syntactic structures, and that this knowledge affects language production.

NOMINAL TENSE IN CROSSLINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE

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It is a general assumption in linguistic theory that the categories of tense, aspect, and mood (TAM) are inflectional categories of verbal classes only. In a number of languages around the world, however, nominals and other NP constituents are also inflected for these categories. In this article we provide a comprehensive survey of tense/aspect/mood marking on NP constituents across the world's languages. Two distinct types are identified: PROPOSITIONAL NOMINAL TAM, whereby the nominal carries TAM information relevant to the whole proposition, and INDEPENDENT NOMINAL TAM, in which the TAM information encoded on the nominal is relevant only to the NP on which it is marked—independent of the TAM of the clause as a whole. We illustrate these different types and their various properties using data from a wide range of languages showing that, while certainly unusual, the phenomenon of nominal tense/aspect/mood marking is far less marginal than is standardly assumed. Nominal TAM inflection must be accepted as a real possibility in universal grammatical structure, having significant implications for many aspects of linguistic theory.

DIRECTIONALITY AND (UN)NATURAL CLASSES IN SYNCRETISM

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Syncretism, where a single form corresponds to multiple morphosyntactic functions, is pervasive in languages with inflectional morphology. Its interpretation highlights the contrast between different views of the status of morphology. For some, morphology lacks independent structure, and syncretism reflects the internal structure of morphosyntactic features. For others, morphological structure is autonomous, and syncretism provides direct evidence of this. In this article, I discuss two phenomena that argue for the second view. **DIRECTIONAL EFFECTS** and **UNNATURAL CLASSES** of values resist attempts to reduce them to epiphenomena of more general rule types and require purely morphological devices for their expression.

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