

Modularity and Locality in Interpretation

by

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Abstract

This thesis will argue for four broad claims: (1) That local contexts are needed for a descriptively adequate theory of linguistic interpretation, (2) That presupposition accommodation is made with respect to a set of grammatically defined candidates, (3) That the set of accommodation candidates is derived from the same linguistic objects that are used to derive candidates for implicature (the scalar alternatives of the asserted sentence), (4) That scalar implicatures and accommodated propositions are the output of Fox's [31] procedure of innocent exclusion, modified so as to consider implicature candidates and accommodation candidates together. I argue for claim (1) in Chapter 2 by arguing that Heim's principle of *Maximize Presupposition!* should be checked in local contexts (Local MP). In Chapter 3, I use Local MP to account for an array of blocking effects. We will see that Local MP can help to shed light on the semantics of *only*, counterfactual conditionals, and focus interpretation, as well as highlighting the importance of dynamically changing assignment functions in a theory of interpretation. I argue for claims (2)-(4) in Chapters 4 and 5 by attempting to address the proviso problem (Geurts [43]), as well as a new puzzle for the theory of implicature that arises in the study of attitude ascriptions.

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