

LSA.311: Lecture 10

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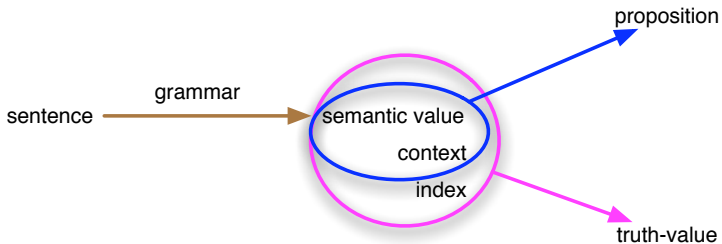
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Where We Were

- Intensional semantics
- Two kinds of parameters of evaluation
 - utterance context parameters
 - world, time, speaker at a minimum
 - index of evaluation parameters
 - world, time
- Only the index parameters are shifted away by operators

A Picture



Notation

- $[[\phi]]^{c,i}$
 - $c = \langle w_c, t_c, s_c \rangle$
 - $i = \langle w_i, t_i \rangle$
- The intension of ϕ :
 - $[[\phi]]_{\mathfrak{C}} = \lambda c, i. [[\phi]]^{c,i}$

Proposition Expressed

- An utterance of a sentence ϕ by s in world w at t expresses the proposition $\lambda w. \llbracket \phi \rrbracket_{\mathfrak{C}}(c, \langle w, t \rangle)$.

Truth of an utterance

- An utterance of a sentence ϕ in world w is true if the proposition expressed by the utterance is true of w .

The Seven Little Goats

- In the fairy tale “The Wolf and the Seven Little Goats”, the little goats are home alone when the wolf knocks on the door and says
- “Open the door, my dear little goats! I am your mother.”
- Alternative: The Gas Man
 - The door bell rings.
 - A: Who is it?
 - B: I am from the gas company.

Diagonalization

- In exceptional cases (says Stalnaker), the common ground may include several candidate contexts.
 - in other words: the hearer may not know what context he is in
- In these cases, the *diagonal proposition* expressed by a sentence comes into play
- $\lambda w : w \in cg. \llbracket \phi \rrbracket^{c^w, \langle w, t_{cw} \rangle}$
- I am from the gas company
 - expresses the diagonal proposition:
 - The person speaking is from the gas company.

More Goats

- Before the mother goat goes out, she instructs the little goats not to open the door to a stranger: “If somebody knocks, ask him to show his hoof in the window, and open the door only if you recognize the hoof as mine.” But since she doesn’t trust them, she decides to put them to the test. She returns and knocks, and the little goats open the door immediately. She chides them and says:
- “You shouldn’t have opened the door. I could have been the wolf. If I had been the wolf, I would have eaten you all by now.”

The Rest of the Course

- Referential Definites
 - Indexical or not?
- Attitudes de se [added]
- Monsters?
- We'll skip the unit on assessment relativity.

Today

- Referential Definites
- Typical Example:
 - Her husband is kind to her. (Linsky)
 - Context: The speaker has never met her husband. He mistakenly thinks (and presupposes) that she is married to the guy he has just seen her with. The guy she is with is in fact kind to her. Her real husband is not.

Terminology

- α is **rigid** = **directly referential**:
 - $\forall c, i, i' : \llbracket \alpha \rrbracket^{c,i} = \llbracket \alpha \rrbracket^{c,i'}$
- α is **context-dependent**:
 - $\exists c, c' : \llbracket \alpha \rrbracket_{\mathfrak{C}}^c \neq \llbracket \alpha \rrbracket_{\mathfrak{C}}^{c'}$
- α is **absolute** = **stable** iff it is not context-dependent
- α is **descriptive** iff it is absolute but not rigid
- α is an **indexical** iff it is rigid and context-dependent
- Exercise: give examples of expressions that are both rigid *and* absolute

The Ambiguity Thesis

- Definite descriptions are ambiguous:
 - attributive reading (= descriptive)
 - referential reading (= indexical)
- Big topic alert!
 - We will only scratch the surface
 - The goal is to see how the *c, i*-framework can help frame the issue

Baseline

- attributive reading of definites
- Fregean semantics
 - $\llbracket \text{the}_a \zeta \rrbracket^{c,i} =$ the unique x such that x has the property $\llbracket \zeta \rrbracket_{\Phi}^c$ in w_i at t_i (undefined if there isn't a unique such x).
 - $\llbracket \text{the}_a \zeta \rrbracket^{c,i} = \lambda x. (\llbracket \zeta \rrbracket^{c,i}(x) = 1)$.
- Russellian semantics
 - $\llbracket \text{the}_a \zeta \rrbracket^{c,i} = \lambda f_{\langle e,t \rangle}. \text{there is exactly one } x \text{ that has the property } \llbracket \zeta \rrbracket_{\Phi}^c \text{ in } w_i \text{ at } t_i \text{ and that } x \text{ is such that } f(x) = 1.$

Three Referential Readings

- Kaplan
 - $\llbracket \text{the}_r \zeta \rrbracket^{c,i} = \lambda x. (\llbracket \zeta \rrbracket^{c, \langle w_c, t_c \rangle} (x) = 1).$
- Stalnaker
 - “the referent [of a referential definite] is the one and only member of the appropriate domain who is *presupposed* to have the property expressed in the description”
 - $\llbracket \text{the}_r \zeta \rrbracket^{c,i} = \lambda x. (s_c \text{ in } w_c \text{ at } t_c \text{ presupposes } \lambda w. \llbracket \zeta \rrbracket^{c, \langle w, t_c \rangle} (x)).$
- Kripke’s Strawman
 - $\llbracket \text{the}_r \zeta \rrbracket^{c,i} = \lambda x. (s_c \text{ in } w_c \text{ at } t_c \text{ takes } x \text{ to have property } \llbracket \zeta \rrbracket_{\mathbb{C}}^c \text{ and } s_c \text{ in } w_c \text{ at } t_c \text{ intends to refer to } x.$

Kripke's Alternative Analysis

- The putative referential readings are not outcomes of the semantic interpretation.
- Instead, the speaker intends to convey a certain piece of information and the hearer understands that intention.
- Semantic reference and speaker reference come apart in the classic referential examples.

Linsky's Case

- Her husband is kind to her. (Linsky)
- Context: The speaker has never met her husband. He mistakenly thinks (and presupposes) that she is married to the guy he has just seen her with. The guy she is with is in fact kind to her. Her real husband is not.
- Predictions
 - Frege, Russell, Kaplan: false
 - Stalnaker, Kripke's Strawman: true

Kripke

- "... if we had a direct intuition that 'Her husband is kind to her' could be true even when her actual husband is cruel, then we could have decisive evidence for the D-language model [i.e. the thesis that English definites have a referential reading]; but Donnellan rightly disclaims any such intuition. On the other hand, I myself feel that such a sentence expresses a falsehood, even when 'her husband' is used referentially to refer to the kind man; but the popularity of Donnellan's view has made me uncertain that this intuition should be pressed very far. In the absence of such direct intuitions that would settle the matter conclusively, it would seem that the actual practice of English speakers is compatible with either model, and that only general methodological considerations favor one hypothesis rather than another. Such a situation leaves me uneasy."

Some Possible Dialogues

- A: Her husband is kind to her.
- B: He is kind to her, but he isn't her husband. (Kripke, p. 261)
- B': Yes, he is kind to her, but he isn't her husband.
- B": True, he is kind to her, but he isn't her husband.

Irene's Chicken Curry

- Context: There is no chicken curry, but there is a turkey dish that A thinks is chicken. B knows it's turkey.
- A: How can you call me greedy? I gave you a huge serving of chicken curry.
- B: That's true, but you poured yourself all the wine.

Anaphoric Reference to Individuals

- A: Her husband is kind to her.
- B: He is kind to her, but he isn't her husband.

Kripke, p. 261 (Dialogue II)

Another Dialogue

- A: Her husband is kind to her.
- B: No, he isn't. The man you're referring to isn't her husband.

Kripke, p. 261 (Dialogue I)

VP Anaphora

- John talked to the man in the purple turtleneck.

Mary { thinks
told me } that she didn't.
is glad

- John talked to the man in the purple turtleneck. If Mary had as well, he probably would have been persuaded to wear something else.

Propositional Anaphora

- The student that John recommended got the job.
Mary had predicted that.
But Mary denies it.
... as Mary had suspected all along.
... which is surprising.
That happens all the time.

Argument from Scope

- The man in the purple turtleneck shirt might have worn white tie and tails.
- Stalnaker 1970: "It would be highly implausible to suggest that the English sentence is syntactically ambiguous. There are no natural syntactical transformations of [the sentence] that remove the ambiguity."

Scope Islands

- John overheard the rumor that each of my students had been called before the dean.
'each' scopes below 'rumor'
- John thinks that for each of my students to be called before the dean would be preposterous.
'each' scopes inside 'for'-clause
- If each friend of mine from Texas had died in the fire, I would have inherited a fortune.
'each' scopes inside 'if'-clause

Definites in scope islands

- John overheard the rumor that the man in the purple shirt had been called before the dean.
- John thinks that for the man in the purple shirt to be called before the dean would be preposterous.
- If the woman on the phone had died in the fire, I would have inherited a fortune.

Next week

- Monday: *de se* attitudes, centered propositions
- Wednesday: Monsters?