Introduction to Semantics

Session 1

Introduction

Cornelia Endriss
Cognitive Science Program
University of Osnabrück
cendriss@uos.de
Outline for Today

1. Plan for the Seminar
2. Approaching Semantics
   (a) Aspects of Meaning
   (b) Semantics as a Linguistic Discipline
   (c) The Nature of Meaning
3. (Preliminary) Schedule
Plan for the Seminar
The Idea

... of this course is to **learn more about our language faculty**, in particular about semantics, i.e. about how we interpret sequences of words based on a given (syntactic) structure.

To try and make this a seminar that actually features some discussions, the seminar has two components:

1. I will introduce the basic semantic concepts to you – based on the textbook *Semantics in generative grammar*, 1998 from Irene Heim & Angelika Kratzer (4 copies in the library, BFL W / Hei) and Manfred Krifka’s lecture notes (available via StudIP).

2. One group of students will give us a **20min presentation** about a topic that is only briefly touched or not mentioned in the textbook, and we will discuss this topic in class.
The Plan

• The topics that are discussed in the lecture should be studied at home by reading the respective chapters in the textbook/lecture notes and working through the slides.

• There will be homework exercises from one week to the other so that you can check whether the concepts are actually understood.

• Homework exercises and presentations are group work with groups of 3 people. Choose a presentation topic and sign up for the group associated with this topic via StudIP (first come first serve). If you sign up for “Group x – Topic x”, you are “Group x” and you have to present “Topic x”.

• Every participant has to write a term paper of about 1000 words about a semantic topic.
Requirements

Hence, in order to acquire a certificate for this course (4 ECTS points) you have to...

1. attend the seminar sessions regularly and read the corresponding chapters of the textbook/lecture notes

2. hand in the homework assigned regularly and on time (group work)

3. hold one seminar presentation (group work)

4. write a term paper of about 1000 words

(check also requirements file in StudIP)
Homework

- Homework exercises are group work.

- Solutions must be sent to me by email before 24:00h on the Friday following the seminar session (docs or pdfs).

- Each assignment will give you a number of points, depending on the difficulty and amount of work involved. The fewer correct assignment you hand in (and hand in in time – the deadline is strict) the fewer points you will collect.

- The points you score for the homework tasks accounts for 1/3 of the final grade.
• Presentations are group work.

• Presentations should be **20min** long, *accompanied by handouts or slides*.

• They tackle a topic that has only been briefly touched in class or deal with new semantic problems.

• The materials have to be **discussed with me at least one week before the presentation**. The presentations should be more or less ready when we discuss them. My office hours are Wednesdays, 2-3pm. But we can also arrange other appointments via email. I am happy to give you any help you may need.
Presentations

• The final version of the presentation (including suggestions that have been made during the discussion in class) must be uploaded in StudIP not later than one week after the presentation. The mark is based on the presentation plus the quality of the final presentation materials.

• The points you score for the presentation accounts for 1/3 of the final grade.
• Each participant has to hand in an individually written term paper on one of the presentation topics to be completed after the course has finished. **The topic for the written paper must not be the same as the group presentation topic.**
• Term papers are to be handed in electronically in .rtf, .doc., .pdf or .ps format no later than 15.08.08. The paper must consist of around 1000 words (not counting graphics). Each paper must carry the author’s name and its title at the top of the first page. All sources used must be referenced.
• The points you score for the term paper accounts for 1/3 of the final grade.
Approaching Semantics

Aspects of Meaning
• Imagine a speaker S calls “112” and says: “Es brennt im Gebäude Albrechtstraße 28” (‘The building Albrechtstraße 28 is on fire’).

• This will cause a chain of events (sirenes, fire engines with firemen will move to Albrechtstraße 28, bring their equipments in place, etc.)

• How can S cause these events just by producing some sound waves?

• Or take weddings: how come that – at least in former times – two people are married with all the legal consequences just because someone produces some sound waves (“I hereby declare you man and wife”).

• This is one of the mysteries of language and we will deal with some aspects of it in this seminar.
Take the fire example again.

1. S *informs* the fire department about a state of affairs, namely that the IKW-building is on fire at the time of his telephone call.

2. S *intends* to cause certain actions by conveying these pieces of information, namely that firemen will come and control the fire.

We call (1.) the **literal meaning** (or **linguistic meaning**) of an expression. Certain expressions are connected with certain concepts and these concepts can be mapped to a certain situation.

(2.) is called the **communicative meaning** (or **speaker’s meaning**). Imagine the listener at the phone answering: “*Oh, that is very interesting.*” The intention of the speaker would definitely have failed.

Aim and literal meaning of an expression often have an indirect relationship. (cf. *Ich bin ein Berliner*, John F. Kennedy, 26.6.1963)
• The first aspect – the interrelation of expression and literal meaning and the relationship of meaning and actual things or situations in the world – is part of the semantics component. The meaning of an expression independent of the speech context.

• The second aspect – the relation of an expression to what the speaker actually intends – is part of pragmatics. The communicative meaning of an expression in a certain context.

• We will focus on the first aspect in this seminar, but also discuss some parts of the second.
• The relation between expressions, meanings and things is often given in form the so-called **semiotic triangle** (cf. Ogden & Richards 1923, *The meaning of meaning*):

![The Semiotic Triangle Diagram]

- **Meaning**
  - Most important objective in this course
  - Not directly observable
- **Expression**
- **Things/Situation**
  - Only indirect relation
Expressions, Meanings, Things

• We have to distinguish between what expressions stand for in the real world, and their meanings.

• A quote of a commentary of Aristotle by Muhammad Al-Farabi (870-950):

One of the first things anyone taking up logic [here: = semantics] must know is that there are sense-objects or, more generally, entities outside the soul [= things]; furthermore thoughts, pictures, and representations within the soul [= meanings]; and [finally] speech and scripts [= expressions]. We must know how they relate to one another; for the logician [here: = semanticist] considers thought as relating both sides, namely to the entities outside the soul and speech. He also studies speech by itself, but always in terms of its relation to thought.
Semantics as a Linguistic Discipline
Where Semantics is Located

• The study of meaning in natural languages.
• Greek σεμα = `sign, feature’.
• The psychological (or cognitive) organization of sentence structure in the mind.
• A sentence is a hierarchically organized structure of words that maps sound to meaning and vice versa.

\[ \text{sounds} \Leftrightarrow \text{sentences} \Leftrightarrow \text{meaning} \]

Phonetics —— Phonology —— Morphology —— Syntax —— Semantics

subject area of linguistics

articulatory movements
acoustic phenomena

things?
meanings?
Meanings of Expressions

• What do linguistic signs stand for?
• E.g. names:
  • *Rio Reiser* stands for a certain person.
  • *Osnabrück* stands for a city.
  • *Mount Everest* for a mountain.
• And what does the noun *dog* stand for?
  For all the dogs in the world? But imagine that dogs die out; does this mean that *dog* looses its meaning?
• What about *dodos* and the *short-tailed hopping mouse*?
  Both died out. Are their meanings identical?
• What about *quantifiers* like *nobody* or *verbs* like *eat*, *adjectives* like *lazy*, *adverbs* like *unwillingly*, *function words* like *if* etc.?
The Nature of Meanings
What is the proper nature of meanings?

Meanings cannot be directly observed.

First try: meanings lead to actions that ARE observable.

Example – **command**:

A to B: *Come here!*

If B moves to A, then B’s movement could be seen as a result of his understanding the meaning of what A said.

Example – **assertion**:

A to B: *You are standing on my foot.*

If B removes his foot, then this is a sign that B understood the meaning of what A said. But if he doesn’t, does it mean that he did not understand the sentence?
And what about: 2nd example – assertion:
A: *I met Peter Bosch this morning.*
No predictable observable phenomenon related to this sentence.

It seems hopeless to relate meanings to directly observable behaviour. (But see Skinner, 1957 and his *Behaviorism* for a famous attempt.)
Mental States

- One could try to grasp meanings by relating them to physically observable states of the brain.
- E.g. fMRIs (functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging) trace blood volume changes.
- Revealed that nouns and verbs are processed in different regions of the brain. Same for different types of nouns (natural objects, animals, artefacts) or regular and irregular word forms.
Mental States

• Or ERP (Event-Related Potentials), taken with electroencephalograms, which tracks electromagnetic waves.

• One type of wave implied in linguistic processing is N400 (a wave that reaches maximal negative amplitude 400 ms after the onset of a stimulus).

• Observed for words that do not fit semantically into what is expected at a particular point.

Example:

She took the book and put it in the shelf vs.

She took the book and put it in the shoe.
• **Problem:** the direct observation of semantic processing in the brain will be very difficult to isolate from other types of processing.

• One person will react to a given piece of information quite differently from another person.

• When we inform John, who has invested most of his retirement money in IBM stocks, that IBM stocks went down 50%, we will see a different change in brain states than if we inform Mary, who has not invested in IBM stocks.
The Nature of Meanings

• The bad news for philosophers, then, is: We don’t really know what meanings are.

• But the good news for linguists is: We don’t have to know what meanings really are!

• As linguists, we are interested in the relation between linguistic expressions and meanings, and we can investigate this without being committed to very specific assumptions about the nature of meaning.
Meaning Relations

• A linguistic example: it is unclear what the meaning of the word *Haflinger* really is. But we can observe that it is related to the meaning of *horse*.

• In particular, the meanings of *Friesian* and *horse* stand in the same relation as the meanings of *Main Coon* and *cat*, or of *assassinate* and *kill*. (We will say that *Friesian* expresses a subconcept of *horse*).

• Everything that is a *Friesian* is a *horse*, everything that is a *Main Coon* is a *cat*, and every act of *assassinating* someone is an act of *killing* someone.
• Though we still don’t know what the meanings of sentences and words are, we know that they must be somehow related to each other.

(1) Cassandra is a skewbald horse.

• We don’t know what exactly (1) means nor do we know what Cassandra, is, a, skewbald, and horse mean.

• But we know that the meanings of the involved words must be somehow related to the meaning of the sentence.

• And in general we can study the relation between the meaning of complex expressions and the meanings of their parts.
Truth Conditional Semantics

• We develop first a theory of meaning for sentences.
• Then we derive the notion of meanings of the parts from the theory of sentence meanings.
• We take simple declarative sentences (assertions) as the point of departure.
• Imagine a chess board:
  (2) The white queen is on a black field.
• If a person understood the meaning of (2), this person must be able to determine under which circumstances (2) is true or false.
• The version of semantics that takes truth conditions as the basis of all semantic judgements is called truth-conditional semantics.
Object- and Meta-Language

• How can we express the truth conditions of a declarative sentence? For (2) the following will do:
  (3) The sentence “The white queen is on a black field” is true if, and only if, the white queen is on a black field.
• This formulation of truth conditions was proposed by the Polish logician Alfred Tarski.
• Sounds trivial, but just because we use the same language, English, to describe the truth conditions of a sentence in this language.
• It is important to make a distinction between the language that is used for the description (= meta-language), and the language that is being described (= object language).
• Cf.: This sentence consists of six words.
(3) The sentence “The white queen is on a black field” is true if, and only if, the white queen is on a black field.

- The part in quotation marks is an expression of the object language, and the rest belongs to the meta-language.

  Convention: object language in italics

- Ludwig Wittgenstein: „Einen Satz verstehen heißt, wissen was der Fall ist, wenn er wahr ist. (Man kann ihn also verstehen, ohne zu wissen, ob er wahr ist.)“

  `To understand a sentence means to know what is the case if it is true. (You can hence understand it without knowing whether it is true.)`
Sets of Configurations

• We can identify the meaning of a sentence with all the circumstances in which this sentence is true.

• Imagine all possible configurations of a chess board. Now, for some configurations the white queen is on a black field, for others the white queen is on a white field, and for still others, there is no white queen on the field at all.

• The meaning of (2) then can be given as follows:

(4) \[[\text{The white queen is on a black field}]\] = the chess configurations in which the white queen is on a black field.
Sets of Configurations

• Of course, the number of possible chess configurations is incredibly large. Reducing the chess board to nine fields, and disregarding all the other figures, we can give the following graphical representation for our example.

[Diagram showing all possible situations with the notation: "The white queen is on a black field"]
Possible Worlds

• A generalization of this idea (due to the German philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz): we refer to the notion of *possible worlds*.

• A possible world is one way how the world could look like — one way of determining every aspect of the world.

• The *real world* is just one of these possible worlds (the so-called “actual” world).

• We can analyze the meaning of the sentence *Berlin is the capital of Germany* as follows:

  (5) \(\llbracket \text{Berlin is the capital of Germany} \rrbracket = \text{the possible worlds in which B. is capital of Germany.}\)
Now that we have found sensible meanings for sentences, **what is the meaning of smaller units?**

Take:

(6) *Cassandra limps.*

We know that (6) **denotes** (= means/represents) the collection or set of possible worlds in which it is the case that Cassandra limps.

*Cassandra* refers to a particular entity, namely

But what does *limps* mean?
Basic idea: the meaning of a complex expression, like *Cassandra limps*, should be computable from the meanings of the parts, here *Cassandra* and *limps*.

This is called the **principle of compositionality**. It was first proposed, although in a rather implicit way, by Gottlob Frege, and is also known as **Fregean Principle**.
(6) *Cassandra limps.*

We will sometimes (over)simplify the syntactic structure and omit projections etc.:

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(6) Cassandra limps.

We will sometimes (over)simplify the syntactic structure and omit projections etc.:
```
• The meaning of the whole sentence, \( S \), is a function of the meanings of its immediate parts, the noun phrase \( \text{NP} \) and the verb phrase \( \text{VP} \).
Likewise here the meaning of the whole sentence, $S$, is a function of the meanings of its immediate parts, the noun phrase $NP$ and the verb phrase $VP$.

In turn, the meaning of the $VP$ is a function of its immediate parts, the verb $V$ and the prepositional phrase $PP$.

Also, the meaning of the $PP$ is a function of its immediate parts, the preposition $P$ and the noun phrase $NP$. 

Principle of Compositionality
Principle of Compositionality

• So we do not learn the meanings of complex expressions, like *Berlin is in Germany* or *Cassandra limps*.

• What we have to learn is the meanings of basic expressions, like *Berlin, is, in, Germany* or *Cassandra and limps*, and **how to compute the meaning of a complex expression from the meanings of its parts.**
Meanings on Subsentence Level

• We know that combining the meaning of *limps* with the meaning of *Cassandra* should give us the meaning of *Cassandra limps*, i.e. the set of worlds in which Cassandra limps.

(7) a. $\llbracket \text{Cassandra limps} \rrbracket =$
    all the possible worlds in which Cassandra limps

b. $\llbracket \text{Cassandra} \rrbracket =$
    the horse

c. $\llbracket \text{limps} \rrbracket =$
    something that assigns every entity $x$ to the possible worlds in which $x$ limps (a *function*)
(Un)Saturated Meanings

• (7) a. \([Cassandra \text{ limps}] = \) all the possible worlds in which Cassandra limps.
b. \([Cassandra] = \) the horse
c. \([\text{limps}] = \) something that assigns every entity \(x\) to the possible worlds in which \(x\) limps

• We say that name meanings and sentence meanings are complete or saturated.

• The meaning of \(\text{limps}\) is something that has to be combined with another meaning (e.g. the meaning of \(\text{Cassandra}\)) to produce a complete meaning (namely, a set of possible worlds). Hence the meaning of \(\text{limps}\) is incomplete or unsaturated.
Summary

• We discussed the subject matter of semantics — the **study of meaning** of natural language expressions.

• While it is unclear what meanings actually are, we can build **models of meaning** that capture the essential understanding of the meaning relations that speakers of natural languages have.

• It turned out useful to start with the **meaning of declarative sentences**, which are related to the **notions of truth**.

• From that, the meaning of the constituents that make up the meaning of a sentence can be derived, following the **principle of compositionality**.
Preliminary Schedule

Note that this schedule is still preliminary. There might be changes!!
## Session Planning

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<td>Section 1 from Krifka’s lecture notes</td>
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We agreed on grasping meanings of sentences as truth conditions. However, there are other aspects of meanings that we have to distinguish.

1) Assertions vs. other speech acts

2) Assertion vs. presupposition

3) Literal Meaning vs. implicature

4) Denotation vs. connotation

5) Information Structure
E.g. Assertions vs. Other Speech Acts

• If we base our system on truth conditions, we run into problems: only assertions can be true or false. What about other types of speech acts, e.g. questions or commands?
  
  (8) a. Is Berlin the capital of Germany?
      b. Give me the salt!
      c. I hereby declare you man and wife.

• What went wrong here:

  (9) #I promise you that you will go into the kitchen and get me some sweets.
• Often certain components of meaning have **backgrounded** status — they are **presupposed**.

• Take a situation where there are two salient dogs. What about:

  (10) *The dog barks.*

• Is (10) true or false? It seems that the question somehow does not arise.

• And what about:

  (11) *The pope’s wife has blue eyes.*
  (12) *Russian astronauts stepped on Mars again.*
• We will talk about lexical meaning relations like hyponyms and hyporonyms as exemplified by the pair Haflinger, horse.

• We will also talk about sentence relations like entailments, monotone increasing/decreasing contexts, and other things.
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In this part, we will discuss the notion of functions (and also briefly talk about sets).

Crucially, we will introduce the lambda notation for functions.

Finally, we will talk about different types here (e.g. sentence types, entity types, predicate types, etc.).
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• How do we derive meanings compositionally from a given syntactic structure?
• We will see that type theory constrains possible meanings.
• And we will see how type theory can in a way account for the same facts as the theta-criterion and thus can replace it to a certain extent.
May 06: Modifiers and Definite DPs

Chapter 4 of H&K’s textbook and Section 5 from Krifka’s lecture notes
• We will be concerned with non-verbal modifiers such as adjectives like *happy*.

• The principle of compositionality tells us that the meaning of *happy person* is related to the meanings of *happy* and *person*?

• Obviously, *happy person* is a subconcept to *person*.
Modifiers

• One might suspect that when a noun combines with an adjective, the result is always a subconcept to the noun as with happy person and person.

• But consider:
  (13) fake 100 EUR bill or
  (14) alleged murderer
Definite DPs

• Also we will discuss the semantics of the definite determiner *the*.

• It seems that

  (10) *The dog barks.*

  is neither true nor false in a situation where there are two dogs.

• We will discuss how we can account for this in semantics.
### Session Planning

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27.05.2008 Slides based on semantics textbook from I. Heim & A. Kratzer and lecture notes from M. Krifka
(a) Classify the following adjectives into intersective, non-intersective, and intensional ones. Give reasons for your classification.

friendly; modest; straight; previous; Russian

Give the lexical semantics of all non-intensional adjectives and compute the following sentence.

The modest Russian teacher was friendly.

(b) The intensifier very combines with adjectives as the following DP illustrates.

the very intelligent student

Which class of adjectives can be intensified by very? Why can others not be intensified by very? Figure out the semantic type of very and try to give a lexical semantics for it. For instance, you can think of a very intelligent student as intelligent compared to the intelligent students.
PT 2: Definiteness and Uniqueness

(a) Describe in detail the semantics of the DP in the sentence

(1) The circle in the box is red.

(b) Now consider a situation that is given by the following three pictures and discuss how the truth conditions of sentence (1) you calculated under (a) relate to this situation: Is (1) true or false with regard to this situation or does it suffer from presupposition failure? What are your intuitive reactions?

(c) Compare the results you arrived at for sentence (1) under (b) with the results for the following sentences, all interpreted with regard to the situation given in the above drawing:

(2) The circle that is in the box is red.
(3) The red circle is in the box.

(4) The circle is in the box and is red.
(5) A circle in a box is red.

Can you think of a way of changing the semantics of (1) so as to make the predictions of the theory match the intuitive judgement?
Accommodation and Presupposition

- We have talked about **presuppositions**. They are backgrounded information. It is still possible to transport new information via presuppositions (ex. due to Larry Horn).

  (15) A: *Jeff is really a smart guy, isn’t he?*
  
  B: *Yes. And his wife is lovely, too!*

- We call the hearer’s process of accepting presuppositions she did not actually know in advance **accommodation**.

- In general, we only accommodate plausible information (ex. due to Nirit Kadmon):

  (16) A: *Why are you late?*
  
  B: *I had to take my dog to the vet.*
  
  B’: *#I had to take my giraffe to the vet.*
PT 3: Accommodation and Presupposition

Read Section 1.4 - 1.7 and Section 5 of Nirit Kadmon (2000): *Formal Pragmatics* (available in the library).

Explain to the class the concepts of presupposition and accommodation and provide the relevant data.

Explain briefly what presupposition projection is and how it works according to the approaches that are discussed in this section.
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Session Planning

08 May 27 Information Structure and Definite DPs
PT 4: Information Structure
PT 5: Definite DPs – Strawson
PT 6: Definite DPs – von Fintel
Information Structure

• There are sentences that have the same meaning because their truth conditions are the same:

(17)  a. Berlin is the capital of Germany.
       b. The capital of Germany is Berlin.
       c. Germany has Berlin as its capital.

• However, they differ in their information structure. (17a) is about Berlin, (17b) about the capital of Germany, and (17c) about Germany.

• Berlin, the capital of Germany, and Germany are the respective topics of the sentences. The rest of the sentence is the comment.

• Information structure is often indicated via accentuation.

(18)  a. Berlin is the capital of GERmany.
       b. BerLIN is the capital of Germany.
Information Structure

• Another important information-structural notion is focus.
• Consider

  (19)  a. Bill hates trousers with SMALL yellow buttons.
       b. Bill hates trousers with small YELLOW buttons.

• Focus is indicated by stress. It invokes alternatives.
  (19’) a. … but he likes trousers with BIG yellow buttons.
       b. … but he likes trousers with small RED buttons.
Read the following two articles:


Explain to the class the concepts of **focus-background** and **topic-comment** and other information structural notions you find important and interesting. Provide examples to illustrate the concepts.
Definite DPs and Topicality

- Consider again:
  
  (20) The pope’s wife has blue eyes.

- Compare it to:
  
  (21) I saw the pope’s wife in Osnabrück the other day.
  
  (22) The pope’s wife is sitting right there on that chair.

- (20) seems strange and unevaluable, while (21) and (22) could be judged as plainly false.

- Strawson argues that this difference is due to topicality.

- Von Fintel argues against this view.
Read Strawson’s article on definite DPs.

- Strawson, Peter: *Identifying Reference and Truth-Values*, (orig. in Theoria 1964, pp. 96-118)  
  [available in the reader in my office]

Read this paper and give a short and clear representation of Strawson's view.
Read von Fintel’s article on definite DPs and truth value gaps.

Read this paper and give a short and clear representation of von Fintel's view paying particular attention to where he differs from Strawson.
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Quantificational DPs

[A woman] / [Somebody] – an arbitrary individual?

[Everybody] – every individual? A set?

[Few people] – an arbitrary small set?

[Nobody] – no individual? The empty set?

[At most two people] – an arbitrary set of at most two people?
### Session Planning

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Scope Ambiguity

Sentences containing more than one quantifier are often ambiguous:

\[
S \\
\text{DP} \quad \text{VP} \\
\text{everybody} \\
\text{offended} \\
\text{somebody}
\]

\[
S \\
\text{DP} \\
\text{everybody} \\
\text{somebody offended}
\]
Session Planning

11 June 17

Quantifiers and Scope

PT 7: Quantifiers – *There*-insertion
PT 8: Quantifiers – Scope
PT 9: Exceptional Wide Scope: Fodor & Sag
PT 7: Quantifiers – *There*-insertion

(a) Read Section 6.6 of H&K’s textbook (pp. 151-152) and make sure you understand the mathematical properties of the determiner relations explained there. Try to find some examples of determiners that exemplify these properties. These may be English or German examples. Give a clear outline of these determiner properties supported by examples.

(b) Complete the task set in Exercise 2 on p. 152/3. You may use the English construction of *there*-insertion from the textbook or, alternatively, the German construction *Es gibt einige Filme über Rio Reiser/ *Es gibt jeden Film über Rio Reiser* and then look at German quantifier expressions. Describe in detail the results that you achieve (even if you feel that they are not fully satisfactory).
Islands

• Sometimes, sentences containing more than one quantifier are not ambiguous

(23) *Peter read some book that every teacher recommended.*

• The sentence has only one reading. This is because the second quantifier *every teacher* is in a scope island and cannot move out.

• However, sometimes sentences that contain quantifiers embedded in a scope island are still ambiguous.

(24) *Peter read every book that some teacher recommended.*
PT 8: Quantifiers – Scope

(a) Read Chapter 8, pp. 209-215 of Heim & Kratzer’s textbook and complete the task set in the Exercise on p. 214.

(b) Consider the following sentences.

(1) Most movies that some critique praised were awarded.

(2) Most movies that every critique praise were awarded.

Describe all possible readings by evaluating situations that make the sentences true/false. Do both adhere to similar constraints you considered in the exercise?
Read Fodor & Sag’s article on referential indefinites.


*available via StudIP*

Present the core ideas of this paper to the class.
Session Planning

11 June 17  Quantifiers and Scope
PT 7: Quantifiers – There-insertion
PT 8: Quantifiers – Scope
PT 9: Exceptional Wide Scope: Fodor & Sag

12 June 24  Pronouns and Ellipsis
Chapter 9 of H&K’s textbook and Section 8 from Krifka’s lecture notes
Pronouns and Ellipsis

• Pronouns can be **anaphoric** or **deictic**.

• Sentences containing pronouns can vary in interpretation. We will account for the different readings of the sentences under discussion.

(25) *John hates his father.*

(26) *Every man put a screen in front of him.*

• Consider also cases with **ellipsis**. Again, we encounter possible ambiguities, which we want to account for:

(27) *Yesterday, Philipp went to his office. Marcel didn`t.*
Session Planning

13 July 1 Pronouns and Other Topics

PT 10: Pronouns and *only*

PT 11: Ellipsis

PT 12: Intensional Semantics

27.05.2008 Slides based on semantics textbook from I. Heim & A. Kratzer and lecture notes from M. Krifka
Related ambiguities arise when pronouns are combined with focus sensitive operators such as *only*.

(28) *Only Mary knows why she is crying.*

- **b)** *Only Mary knows, why she (herself) is crying.*
  - **b₁)** *Only Mary knows, why she (herself) is crying.*
  - **b₂)** *Only Mary knows, why Mary is crying.*
PT 10: Pronouns and only

Read Section 9.3.3 from Heim & Kratzer’s textbook and complete the exercise on p. 257.
Read Lappin’s article on ellipsis.


[available in the reader in my office]

Present the core ideas of this article to the class.
Intensional Semantics

• Up to this point, we have worked in an extensional framework and have identified denotations of sentences with actual truth values.

• This causes problems and we have to make the step into an intensional framework.

• Consider

(29) a. Anne thinks that the current coach of the Greek national soccer team is Greek. [true]

     b. Anne thinks that Otto Rehagel is Greek. [false]
PT 12: Intensional Semantics

Present the core problem and ideas of Chapter 12 of Heim & Kratzer’s textbook (pp. 299-311), compute exercise 1 on page 309 and present your results to the class.
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Thank you!