

MACSIM 4 @ Rutgers University-New Brunswick

Roundtable Friday, October 17

Lucas Champollion

NYU

Stratified reference: The making of

The repeated process of formalizing an intuition, checking whether the formalization works, and improving it as needed, is a routine task for experienced formal semanticists. But it can seem frustrating and daunting when you are new to it (and I speak from experience). In this roundtable presentation I want to highlight my own experience of going through many iterations of formalizing the same concept, and how they all didn't work except for the last one. I will use the example of stratified reference, a generalization of several mereology-related properties such as divisive reference and the subinterval property that plays a central role in the theory of distributivity, aspect, and measurement in Champollion (2010, 2014).

Champollion (2010). *Parts of a whole: Distributivity as a bridge between aspect and measurement*. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania.

Champollion (2014). Algebraic semantics and mereology. Lecture notes. Available online at <http://ling.auf.net/lingbuzz/002174>

Kathryn Davidson

Yale University

Gathering intuitions on domain widening and narrowing across modalities

I'll discuss my recent work collaborating with Deanna Gagne (UConn) on a use of vertical space American Sign Language that has been argued to encode definiteness or specificity, but which we argue can be expanded to a more general notion of domain widening/narrowing. This project involves both traditional and experimental methodologies: we have recorded approximately 20 hours of production data with Deaf native signing consultants related to this topic for traditional analysis, and are creating an online experiment using video stimuli to test intuitions on this use in sign and (eventually) co-speech gesture in English using Qualtrics survey software. In both cases we are focusing on (i) the potential for gradient levels of domain widening/narrowing, and (ii) possible morphosyntactic combinations with loci using this space (e.g. quantifiers, inflecting verbs, etc.).

Veneeta Dayal

Rutgers University

Uniqueness vs. Functional Pairing

Among the very first problems in linguistics that intrigued me was the switch from uniqueness in questions with one singular *wh*- expression (*Which book did you read?*) to a functional pairing in questions with more than one such expression (*Which student read which book?*). Why did this strike me as a worthy topic? Why was the formalization so hard? For that matter, why were the intuitions themselves open to negotiation? I want to share the history of my obsession with this topic by showing you how my ideas have played out over the years, referring to three distinct *wh*- constructions in three different languages: English questions, Hindi correlatives, Bulgarian free relatives.