26.01.17

Malka Rappaport-Hovav
The Hebrew University
Towards a Theory of Grammatically Relevant Ontological Categories

Most researchers working on the interface between conceptual categories and argument realization assume that only some aspects of the former are relevant to the latter. These are the only conceptual components relevant for the basic distribution of roots in syntactic structure. I call these Grammatically Relevant Ontological Categories. Among the ongoing challenges are to isolate the grammatically relevant ontological categories, to determine exactly how they figure in argument realization and to distinguish these lexically encoded components of meaning from aspects of meaning which are compositionally derived, and other contextually derived semantic and pragmatic considerations relevant to argument realization.

I suggest the following guiding principles for identifying grammatical relevant ontological categories:

a. It represents a categorical distinction;
b. There is an independent characterization of the type besides the grammatical reflex it is meant to account for;
c. The purported grammatical effects cannot be attributed to other factors;
d. Evidence for the ontological type is found cross-linguistically.

In this talk I first review earlier work of mine reinterpreting the categories of manner and result as grammatically relevant ontological categories, and then show how the categorization of roots as internally caused, externally caused and cause-unspecified in order to account for the distribution of roots in causative alternation variants is misguided. I argue that there is no well-grounded theory of causation to support these distinctions. Rather, I suggest that all causative alternation roots are basically categorized as predicates of states, and I further develop earlier work of mine explicating the (non-lexical) principles which determine the nature and distribution of the external argument of verbs built on these roots.

19.01.17

Israela Becker
Tel Aviv University
The Negation Operator Is Not a Suppressor of the Concept in Its Scope. In Fact, Quite the Opposite.

The psycholinguistic research on the processing of concepts in the scope of negation is dominated by two conflicting hypotheses: the *Suppression*

Hypothesis and the *Retention Hypothesis*. The former maintains that the activation levels of the negated concept are *unconditionally* reduced to baseline levels (or below), due to the immediate suppressive effect of the negation operator on the concept within its scope. The latter maintains that suppression and retention of negated concepts are sensitive to global discourse goals. If deemed relevant for discourse goals, retention of negated concepts will apply; if deemed disruptive, they will be discarded.

As 'suppression' and 'retention' of concepts are on-line mechanisms, the activation levels of the negated concepts, attesting to the suppression or retention of those concepts, are measured by on-line experiments. However, in line with the recent call for converging evidence from different sources I will present a corpus-based approach in which I tap the processing of negated concepts *untraditionally* by looking into a corpus of natural speech. Specifically, I will be looking into the fine-grained features of an entrenched discourse pattern, *not x. In fact, quite the opposite*, which testifies to the high accessibility of the concept in the scope of a negation operator. I will thus provide a different, albeit indirect, support for the Retention Hypothesis, rejecting the unconditional Suppression Hypothesis.

05.01.17

Nomi Erteschik-Shir
Ben-Gurion University
Variation in MSc Object Shift as Prosodic Repair

In this paper we argue for an analysis of Object Shift (OS) in Mainland Scandinavian (MSc) in which the shifted word order is the result of a prosodic repair to enable weak pronoun incorporation. Our analysis builds on the observation that varieties with optional OS also have a tone accent contrast. We argue that the in-situ word order is licensed in these dialects because tonal accent creates a prosodic domain that makes the incorporation of the weak pronoun possible. The proposal has important implications for our understanding of the architecture of the grammar – it adds to the evidence that at least some cases of word order can better be attributed to phonological computation, rather than to narrow syntax.

29.12.16

Idan Landau
Ben-Gurion University
Hybrid Nouns and Agreement Zones within DP

"Hybrid" nouns are known for being able to trigger either syntactic or semantic agreement, the latter typically occurring outside the noun's projection. We document and discuss a rare example of a Hebrew noun that triggers either syntactic or semantic agreement within the DP. To explain this and other unusual patterns of nominal agreement, we propose a configurational adaptation of the CONCORD-INDEX distinction, originated in Wechsler and Zlatić (2003). Morphologically-rooted (=CONCORD) features are hosted on the

noun stem while semantically-rooted (=INDEX) features are hosted on Num, a higher functional head. Depending on where attributive adjectives attach, they may display either type of agreement. The observed and unobserved patterns of agreement follow from general principles of selection and syntactic locality.

22.12.16

Kayla Gold-Shalev
Tel Aviv University
Verb-Specific Lexical Knowledge and Online Sentence Processing in Hebrew: A Look at Prepositions and Filler-Gap Formation

To understand language in real time, speakers must use many different types of information. Previous studies have investigated whether subcategorization information affects the formation of filler-gap dependencies. However, they have reached contradicting results and suffer from some methodological problems, namely they use materials that could trigger unnatural reading and focus on results at the verb, making conclusions susceptible to alternative explanations. Less research has been carried out with regard to head specificity, a more fine-grained type of verb-specific lexical information, and it suffers from the same problems.

To deal with both of these problems, the current study uses a self-paced reading paradigm to investigate (globally) plausible and grammatical Hebrew sentences that manipulate the filled-gap effect. Sentences vary in the type of filler (NP or PP) and its' head (free or bound preposition). Importantly, results will now reflect natural reading and focus on reading times at the verb as well as the filled-gap site, hopefully allowing to draw sound conclusions with regard to the role of lexical information in filler-gap dependency formation.

The talk will include presentation of the motivation for the study, its design, and its predictions. Initial, tentative, results will also be presented.

15.12.16

Sharon Peperkamp
CNRC & École Normale Supérieure
Experimental Investigations in Loanword Phonology

The sound structure of loanwords is typically adapted to comply with the phonology of the borrowing language. In French, for instance, the English loanword 'black' is pronounced with the vowel [a] rather than with [ae], as the latter does not exist in French. Retention of non-native sounds, however, also occurs. For instance, French speakers commonly retain the affricate [dZ], as in the loanword 'jeep', despite the absence of this consonant from their sound inventory. Theoretical phonologists have long held an interest in loanwords, but recent years have seen a steady increase in corpus and experimental work in this domain. Much of this work has provided evidence that adaptation and retention patterns crucially involve non-grammatical factors. In this talk I will present several experimental studies aimed at elucidating the role of psycho- and sociolinguistic factors in loanword phonology.

08.12.16

Tova Rapoport
Ben-Gurion University
Interfaces and the Middle

Various approaches to the lexical, syntactic, and semantic constraints on Middle constructions have resulted in equally-varied characterizations of this construction. Here, I re-examine the properties of the English Middle (e.g., *This bread cuts easily*) and those of related generic readings. I argue for a simple analysis that employs the minimal representations of Atom Theory's view of the lexicon-syntax interface (Erteschik-Shir & Rapoport e.g., 1997, 2005, 2010) combined with elements of a theory of Information Structure.

01.12.16

Tal Ness
Tel Aviv University
Lexical Inhibition Due to Failed Prediction:
Behavioral Evidence and ERP Correlates

During sentence processing, comprehenders form expectations regarding upcoming material, and may even predict a specific word. However, hardly any research focused on the mechanisms which come into play when predictions are disconfirmed.

Previous event-related potential (ERP) studies have shown that disconfirmed predictions elicit a post-N400-positivity (PNP) with two distinct distributions. A frontal-PNP (f-PNP) is elicited when an unexpected but congruent word appears instead of a highly predictable word, whereas an anomalous word elicits a posterior-PNP (Van Petten & Luke, 2012; Delong, Quante, & Kutas, 2014). The current study sought to test the following hypotheses: (1) During sentence processing, when the parser encounters a congruent-unexpected word, there is a mechanism that inhibits the (falsely) predicted word in order to enable integration of the actual incoming material; (2) This inhibitory process does not occur when an anomaly is encountered, as such material cannot be felicitously integrated into the sentence representation; (3) The inhibition is reflected by the frontal post-N400-positivity ERP component.

Experiment 1 used cross-modal lexical priming to test inhibition patterns of predicted words, providing behavioral evidence for active inhibition of the predicted word only when a congruent-unexpected word appears instead of it, and not when an anomalous word does, thus supporting hypotheses (1) and (2). Experiment 2 provided preliminary support for (3) by confirming that the f-PNP component is elicited under the same conditions as the behaviorally-measured inhibition.

Fred Landman
Tel Aviv University
Why Measures Are Mass and How Mass Counts

In Link-style Boolean semantics the oppositions *mass-count* and *singular-plural* are analyzed in terms of the notion of *atomicity*: a singular noun denotes a set of atoms, a plural noun denotes the closure under sum of that set, which is, so to say, a mountain rising up from the atomic sea bed. The notions of *counting*, *distributivity,* and *cardinal comparison* are defined in terms of atomicity.

Technically, in Boolean semantics it is not the notion of atomicity itself that allows the proper analysis of these notions, but the more fundamental notion of *disjointness*. I argued in Landman 2011 for basing the analysis of the mass-count distinction on the opposition *disjointness/overlap* rather than *atomic/non-atomic*. Iceberg semantics makes this precise. It eliminates the notion of atomicity from the semantic theory and specifies a compositional mechanism which associates with the standard denotation of any noun phrase (here called the *body*) a *base* set, a set that generates the body under the sum operation. The denotation of a plural noun phrase is still a mountain rising from its base, but the base is, so to say, lifted up from the sea bed, so count mountains float in a sea of mass. In Iceberg semantics the notions of *mass-count* relate to the base, and *counting*, *distributivity,* and *cardinal comparison* are defined in terms of disjointness of the base.

The theory is a *compositional* theory which means that, given one's assumptions about the mass-count nature of, say, the interpretations of lexical nouns, and the composition principles, the theory makes predictions about the mass-count nature of the interpretations of complex NPs and also of DPs.

In the first part of this talk I will give an overview of Iceberg semantics, showing how the composition process works, and showing that the theory indeed predicts that the interpretation of a complex NP, like the pseudo-partitive *bottle of wine* is count, *both* on its *container* classifier interpretation (bottle containing wine), *and* (more interestingly) on its *portion* classifier interpretation (wine that forms the content of a bottle).

The second part of the talk concerns *measure* readings of measure phrases like *three liters of wine*. Rothstein 2011 has argued that measure phrases – on their measure interpretation – pattern with mass nouns. I propose here a theory which derives this in a non-stipulative way. I assume that measures like *liter* denote measure functions, and I show that extending Iceberg semantics in the most straightforward way to measures gives the measure *liter* an Iceberg interpretation which, provably, is mass. The compositional theory then derives the mass nature of complex measure phrases from that.

The third part of the talk is concerned with *counting*, *distributivity,* and *cardinal comparison*. These properties are traditionally taken to be diagnostic properties of count nouns, count interpretations. Work in the last decade on *neat mass nouns* (or *object mass nouns*), like *furniture*, *kitchenware, livestock* has

brought out a puzzle: these mass noun phrases *do* allow a form of *distributivity* and *cardinal comparison*. Importantly, they do that *without* shifting to count nouns or count noun interpretations: these noun phrases, also when they show distributivity or cardinal comparison, continue to pattern syntactically and semantically with mass nouns and not with count nouns.

That the puzzle is real is shown by data from Dutch that I will discuss, where, in context, the *same* form of *distributivity* and *cardinal comparison* is possible for true blooded *mess mass nouns (or prototypical mass nouns)* like *meat water, mud*, and again, without changing these to count nouns. I will show that these facts actually have a very natural and insightful explanation in Iceberg semantics.

17.11.16

Norvin Richards
MIT
Contiguity Theory and Pied-Piping

In Richards (2016), I develop an approach to the interface between syntax and phonology known as "Contiguity Theory", which is intended to make predictions about the distribution of certain types of overt movements and adjacency restrictions. Standard-issue Minimalism offers no explanatory account of, for example, the distribution of overt *wh*-movement, or the fact that some languages but not others exhibit EPP effects; these are handled by means of diacritic features or properties of features, which have no observable properties other than their ability to trigger the movements in question. The proposal in Richards (2016) is that languages are subject to universal conditions on, for example, the prosodic consequences of Agree relations, and these prosodic conditions are met in different ways in different languages, depending on independently observable facts about the prosodic systems of the languages in question.

In this talk I will apply Contiguity Theory to the problem of pied-piping. We will see that the proposals offered in Richards (2016) may be used to predict Cable's (2007, 2010) conditions on the distribution of pied-piping in A-bar movement, once we join Cable in positing a head Q which participates in A-bar dependencies.

10.11.16

Michael Rochemont
University of British Columbia
Raising only

In the long history of the study of *only* in the generative literature, it has been accepted since Anderson 1972 that when *only* occupies an adverbial position at the beginning of VP, it must have been base generated there. My primary goal in this paper is to outline and defend an analysis of *only* as having achieved this position through transformational raising rather than base generation. A substantial consequence of this reanalysis is that it allows a coherent account of the specific freezing effects to be found in the syntax of *only* and of association with *only*, appealing to the Criterial Freezing proposal of Rizzi 2004, 2010. The

analysis is extended to include an account of the core properties of *only*-phrases in the affective inversion construction, following Rizzi 1991 and Drubig 1992.