Some issues with not-at-issueness: Syllabus

V-NYI, Summer 2021

Up to date as of July 20, 2021

Time

Block C: Thu–Tue, 10:30–11:45am NYC / 4:30–5:45pm Oslo / 5:30–6:45pm SPb

Instructor

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Course description

This course will challenge some of the traditionally held beliefs about not-at-issue content in formal semantics and pragmatics and will ultimately call for more explanatory theories for the various aspects of not-at-issueness. We'll be asking (although not necessarily answering) a range of questions about not-at-issue content. What are the various ways in which people have conceptualized not-at-issueness? What is projection? Do presuppositions even exist, as a natural class? What about conventional implicatures? Are expressive meanings or social meanings not-at-issue, or are they a completely distinct type of meaning, such that the at-issue vs. not-at-issue distinction doesn't apply to them? Etc.

Background

Some background in formal semantics and pragmatics is required. Familiarity with such notions as "presupposition", "common ground", "projection", "accommodation" is highly desirable. Ability to read semantic formulas (predicate logic + lambda calculus) would be a plus, as we will be discussing, among other things, to what extent different formal theories capture our intuitions about various aspects of not-at-issueness.

Course materials

All course materials will be added to the NYI website. Please do not share these materials with anyone outside NYI without the instructor's permission.

Readings

You will be expected to do the required readings for this course, as the discussion in class will rely on your familiarity with their content. There will also be optional readings, whose content will be partially covered in class as new material and/or which you can read if you want to gain a deeper understanding of the topics we will discuss.

Homework

The homework—or rather "final project"—for this class involves writing a snippet on any issue related to the broad topic of this class. See here for a description of what a snippet is and examples thereof: https://www.ledonline.it/snippets/. Snippets must be emailed to maria.yesipova@gmail.com by **Thursday, July 29, 23:59pm Oslo time (CEST)**. You are allowed—and encouraged—to collaborate on your snippets (i.e., write a single snippet of a regular snippet length as a group). If you do, one of you then needs to email it to me and indicate all the collaborators in the body of the email and on the snippet itself.

Schedule (subject to change)

Date	Topics	Readings
7/15	Intro. The many ways to conceptualize and "test" for (not-)at-issueness.	Required: Koev 2018
7/20	Configurational not-at-issueness and "conventional implicatures". Case study: appositives.	Required: Potts 2005, ch. 2 & 3; optional: AnderBois et al. 2015; Syrett & Koev 2015; Esipova 2018; Jasinskaja & Poschmann 2018
7/22	Lexicalized not-at-issueness and "presuppositions". Case study: pronouns.	Required: Schlenker 2010; optional: Stalnaker 1974; Heim 1983; Yanovich 2012; Esipova 2021b
7/27	Situational not-at-issueness. Case study: non-restricting modifiers.	Optional: Esipova 2019, 2021c
7/29	Non-truth-conditional meanings and the inapplicability of the at-issue vs. not-at-issue distinction. Case study: expressives.	Required: Potts 2007; Schlenker 2007; optional: Potts 2005, ch. 5; Esipova 2021a

Bibliography

AnderBois, Scott, Adrian Brasoveanu & Robert Henderson. 2015. At-issue proposals and appositive impositions in discourse. *Journal of Semantics* 32(1). 93–138. doi:10.1093/jos/fft014.

Esipova, Maria. 2018. Constraints on QUD-addressing appositives: Pragmatics or prosody? Ms., New York University. https://ling.auf.net/lingbuzz/004144.

Esipova, Maria. 2019. *Composition and projection in speech and gesture*: New York University dissertation. https://ling.auf.net/lingbuzz/004676.

Esipova, Maria. 2021a. Composure and composition. Ms., University of Oslo, submitted. https:

`//ling.auf.net/lingbuzz/005003`.

Esipova, Maria. 2021b. Gender and T–V on pronouns as form indexicals. Talk given at *The 95th Annual Meeting of the LSA*. Slides: `https://esipova.net/files/esipova-lsa2021-slides.pdf`; video: `https://youtu.be/HI7Ep9H7ujM`.

Esipova, Maria. 2021c. On not-at-issueness in pictures. *Glossa: A Journal of General Linguistics* 6(1). 83. doi:10.5334/gjgl.1314.

Heim, Irene. 1983. On the projection problem for presuppositions. In Michael Barlow, Daniel Flickinger & Michael Wescoat (eds.), *Proceedings of the Second West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics*, 114–125.

Jasinskaja, Katja & Claudia Poschmann. 2018. Attachment in syntax and discourse: towards an explanation for the variable scope of non-restrictive relative clauses. In Sireemas Maspong, Brynhildur Stefánsdóttir, Katherine Blake & Forrest Davis (eds.), *Proceedings of Semantics and Linguistic Theory (SALT) 28*, 433–453. doi:10.3765/salt.v28i0.4438.

Koev, Todor. 2018. Notions of at-issueness. *Language and Linguistic Compass* 12(12). e12306. doi:10.1111/lnc3.12306.

Potts, Christopher. 2005. *The logic of conventional implicatures*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. doi:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199273829.001.0001.

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Schlenker, Philippe. 2007. Expressive presuppositions. *Theoretical Linguistics* 33(2). 237–245. doi:10.1515/TL.2007.017.

Schlenker, Philippe. 2010. Presuppositions and local contexts. *Mind* 119(474). 377–391. doi:10.1093/mind/fzq032.

Stalnaker, Robert. 1974. Pragmatic presuppositions. In Milton Kunitz & Peter Unger (eds.), *Semantics and philosophy*, 197–213. New York University Press.

Syrett, Kristen & Todor Koev. 2015. Experimental evidence for the truth conditional contribution and shifting information status of appositives. *Journal of Semantics* 32(3). 525–577. doi:10.1093/jos/ffu007.

Yanovich, Igor. 2012. Indexical presuppositions of pronominal gender features. Ms.