Bar-Ilan
University
אוניברסיטת בר-אילן

Syllabus - Teaching Program for the Course

Not-at-issue Meaning

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379025-01

Course Type:	seminar
Scope of credits:	___
Year of study:	___
Semester:	2023-2024, Semester B
Day & Time:	Tuesday, 10am-2pm, 404-115
Office hours:	Thursday, 10:45-11:45am, room 404-066
Lecturer Email:	mariia.esipova@biu.ac.il
Moodle Site:	https://lemida.biu.ac.il/course/view.php?id=90174

Course description and learning goals

Course Abstract

Not-at-issue meaning, such as presuppositions or content contributed by appositives, has been one of the most popular topics in semantics and pragmatics. This seminar provides a critical overview of different aspects of not-at-issueness and how they have been analyzed in the literature. We'll be discussing a range of questions about not-at-issue content, such as: what are the various ways in which people have conceptualized not-at-issueness? What is projection? What is accommodation? 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?

Learning objectives

1. The students will become familiar with some of the core empirical phenomena pertaining to not-at-issueness in natural language, as well as analytical concepts and insights that have been proposed to capture those phenomena.
2. The students will learn how to read papers in formal semantics and pragmatic in a critical way, with a focus on empirical and explanatory adequacy of the proposed accounts.
3. The students will learn how to use formal tools to make our semantic and pragmatic intuitions precise and testable.

Course structure (subject to change)

Week No.	Lesson topic	Readings
1	Introduction. The many ways to conceptualize and "test" for (not-)at-issueness.	Required: Koev 2018
2-3	Configurational not-at-issueness: "conventional implicatures".	Required: Potts 2005, ch. 2-3, AnderBois et al. 2015; optional: Syrett & Koev 2015; Esipova 2018; Jasinskaja & Poschmann 2018
4-5	Lexical not-at-issueness: "presuppositions".	Required: Stalnaker 1974; Schlenker 2010; optional: Heim 1983; Yanovich 2012; Esipova 2021b; Roberts & Simons 2023
6	Situational not-at-issueness: non-restricting modifiers.	Required: Esipova 2019a; optional: Esipova 2019b
7	Not-at-issueness beyond segments and beyond language.	Required: Esipova 2021a

8	Non-truth-conditional (affective and social) meanings (across channels) and the inapplicability of the at-issue vs. not-at-issue distinction.	Required: Potts 2007; optional: Esipova 2022, 2023; Beltrama 2020
9	Student presentations.	

Note on the course format

By default, **the classes will be held in hybrid format (in person + on Zoom)**, but please contact the instructor in advance if you expect to be joining over Zoom with a justification. The classes will also be recorded, and the recordings will be made available to the students. Look out for additional announcements about the format of individual classes. Please contact the instructor if you need an alternative participation format.

Formative Assessment

Description of the product	Weight in the final score
Paper proposal	20% of final grade
Paper presentation	20% of final grade
Seminar paper	60% of final grade

Final grade

Paper proposal: 20% of final grade
Paper presentation: 20% of final grade
Seminar paper: 60% of final grade

Course requirements

Attendance: you can miss two classes without an explanation. Additional absences require justification for a passing grade, but contact the instructor if you need more flexibility.

Plagiarism policy

Any instance of plagiarism in your paper proposals, presentations, or final write-ups will immediately result in you failing this course and will be reported to the administration. Please consult the department's guidelines on what constitutes plagiarism: https://english.biu.ac.il/sites/english/files/shared/what_is_plagiarism_biu_english_literature_and_linguistics.pdf

Use of generative AI (such as ChatGPT) to generate any of the actual text of your paper proposals, presentations, or write-ups **will be treated as an instance of plagiarism**.

Prerequisites

Course number	Course name
37-289 OR 37-987	Semantics Introduction to Syntax and Semantics

Bibliography: Up-to-date reading, viewing, and listening content items

The readings will be made available to the students electronically.

Required:
- AnderBois, Scott, Adrian Brasoveanu & Robert Henderson. 2015. At-issue proposals and appositive impositions in discourse. *Journal of Semantics* 32(1). 93–138. https://doi.org/10.1093/jos/fft014
- Esipova, Maria. 2019a. Composition and projection of co-speech gestures. In Katherine Blake, Forrest Davis, Kaelyn Lamp & Joseph Rhyne (eds.), *Proceedings of Semantics and Linguistic Theory (SALT) 29*, 117–137. https://doi.org/10.3765/salt.v29i0.4600
- Esipova, Maria. 2021a. On not-at-issueness in pictures. *Glossa: A Journal of General Linguistics* 6(1). 83. https://doi.org/10.5334/gjgl.1314
- Koev, Todor. 2018. Notions of at-issueness. *Language and Linguistic Compass* 12(12). e12306. https://doi.org/10.1111/lnc3.12306
- Potts, Christopher. 2005. *The logic of conventional implicatures*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199273829.001.0001 (Ch. 2-3)
- Potts, Christopher. 2007. The expressive dimension. *Theoretical linguistics* 33(2). 165–198. https://doi.org/10.1515/TL.2007.011
- Schlenker, Philippe. 2010. Presuppositions and local contexts. *Mind* 119(474). 377–391. https://doi.org/10.1093/mind/fzq032
- Stalnaker, Robert. 1974. Pragmatic presuppositions. In Milton Kunitz & Peter Unger (eds.), *Semantics and philosophy*, 197–213. New York University Press.

Optional (for a more in-depth understanding of a given topic):

- Beltrama, Andrea. 2020. Social meaning in semantics and pragmatics. *Language and Linguistics Compass* 14(9). e12398. https://doi.org/10.1111/lnc3.12398
- Esipova, Maria. 2018. Constraints on QUD-addressing appositives: Pragmatics or prosody? Ms. https://ling.auf.net/lingbuzz/004144
- Esipova, Maria. 2019b. Composition and projection in speech and gesture: New York University dissertation. https://ling.auf.net/lingbuzz/004676
- 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. 2022. Composure and composition. Ms. https://ling.auf.net/lingbuzz/005003
- Esipova, Maria. 2023. The silence of the slurs: inferences about prejudice under ellipsis. Ms. https://ling.auf.net/lingbuzz/007109
- 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. https://doi.org/10.3765/salt.v28i0.4438
- Roberts, Craige & Mandy Simons. 2023. Preconditions and projection: Explaining non-anaphoric presupposition. Ms. https://ling.auf.net/lingbuzz/007406
- 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. https://doi.org/10.1093/jos/ffu007
- Yanovich, Igor. 2012. Indexical presuppositions of pronominal gender features. Ms.