

Computing Scalar Implicatures

Chierchia (2004) proposed that some pragmatic processes are closely aligned with the grammar. On this view, scalar implicatures are computed locally, hand-in-hand with the semantic computation. In this talk, several adult comprehension experiments inspired by this view will be presented. They focus on questions concerning the contexts in which scalar implicatures are computed. For example, does it matter whether the trigger for a scalar implicature occurs in a Downward Entailing (DE) or non-DE context? Do non-veridical contexts behave like DE contexts? Are scalar implicatures drawn on-line, or only as part of a post-sentence evaluation process? Do people draw embedded implicatures? The results support the view that some pragmatic processing is automatic, highly structured, and not strictly global.