

Introduction to Experimental Semantics: Exploring (some of the) Mechanisms underlying Creativity in Meaning

Oliver Bott

Abstract

This course provides an introduction to experimental work investigating various forms of meaning adjustments at the semantics-pragmatics interface. The main questions to be addressed are: How can we explain the high degree of context dependence in the interpretation of lexical expressions? And what are the limits of the observed flexibility? We will mainly focus on experimental work of various forms of coercion to address the question which linguistic mechanisms subserve the flexible adjustments of lexical meaning to the larger discourse context. Besides reviewing work from realtime processing, we will also discuss the limits of the phenomenon by looking into interpretation studies probing interpretational possibilities of sentences displaying coercion.