Tel Aviv University
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THURSDAY INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLOQUIUM

Thursday 30.12.2021

16:15-17:45
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Frontal lecture in Webb 103
transmitted at

Generalized and ad-hoc scalar implicatures: methodological considerations and insights from ASD

In everyday conversations speakers convey much more than they explicitly say. For example, the sentence "some of my pets get along with each other" will probably be understood as "not all of my pets get along with each other". It is assumed that this enriched meaning is achieved by the process of generating alternatives, utterances the speaker could have said but did not, and then negating them. Inferences of this kind are called generalized scalar implicatures (SI). This type of inference arises when using weak scalar expressions, such as some. Other inferences, such as the scalar ad-hoc implicature (AHI), require specific contexts to arise. For example, in a context where there are two dogs, Suna and Mochi, when a speaker utters "You should take Suna to the beach" the hearer will probably infer that they should take Suna and not Mochi. In a context where there is only one dog this inference will not arise.

Concentrating on these two types of implicatures, different factors affecting their computation were examined across five experiments. Four experiments were designed to examine methodological aspects, comparing two different tasks, the order of appearance, and restrictive versus neutral contexts. The fifth experiment (currently running) examines implicature computation in people with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) since this population is characterized with an impaired inferential system. The results will be discussed in light of two main theories, Default Theory claiming scalar implicatures arise effortlessly by default and Relevance Theory claiming implicatures arise only when optimally relevant in a specific context.

Click [here](#) to see the colloquium program.