



The components of quantity inference

A response to Andrea Beltrama's
Personae and pragmatic reasoning

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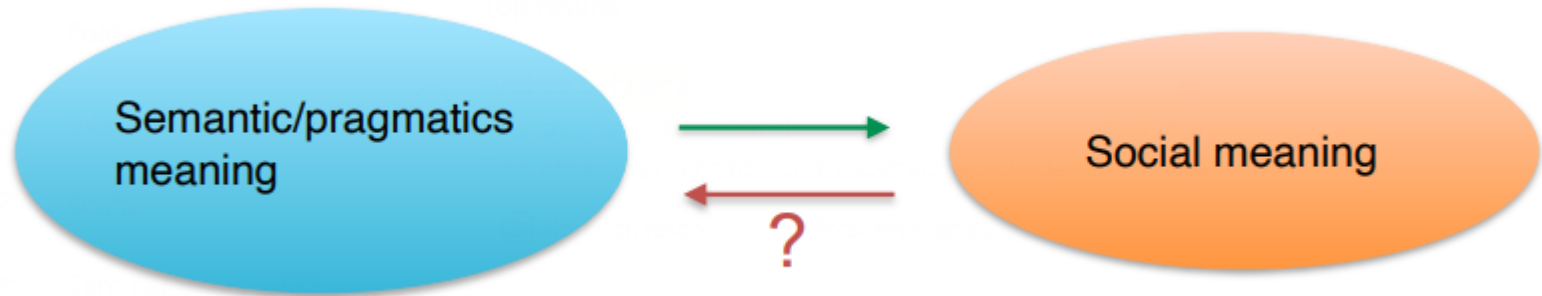
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Themes

- Number as an excellent testbed for theories of pragmatic reasoning, because of its rich scale structure
- How the various facets of pragmatic reasoning interact with each other
 - Or, perhaps, the extent to which they are separable

One interplay



- As exemplified by Andrea, with reference to an aspect of semantic/pragmatic interpretation and an aspect of social identity
- Could think of this as inferences one way or the other – could we think of it as **joint inference**?

Quantity implicature



Variant



I saw some of your children today



He doesn't know that he saw all of them

He saw all of them



**SPEAKER
IGNORANCE**



Inferential direction

- If the speaker said 'some' and could be assumed to be competent, we would understand 'not all'
- If the speaker said 'some' and we knew 'all' to be the case, we would assume that the speaker was not competent
 - This could also apply if the hearer had three children and knew that the speaker only uses 'some' for cardinalities above two – which would be information about the speaker's linguistic personality
- Every assumption that we make when drawing an inference might instead become an inference that we draw based on the observed behaviour
 - Speaker knowledge, cooperativity, relevance of the stronger alternative, politeness of uttering it, etc.

'Factorising'

- Perhaps an analytic convenience?
- We take it that we can discuss quantity implicature assuming that all the preconditions are (typically) in place
- And when we want to talk about one of these preconditions (e.g. speaker knowledge), we typically assume that the others (cooperativity, linguistic capability, personality) are all in place
- We also often assume that we're drawing inferences to the (single) best explanation and disregarding all others

More disjunctive inferences?

- Suppose you send a present to a friend, get no acknowledgement, then text “Hope all is OK” and they reply “Busy – talk soon”. What do you infer?
 - And do you infer one thing with subjective certainty, or that it’s one thing or another?
- As applied to the socio-pragmatic domain – when do we go straight to the (quantity) implicature, and when do we start entertaining inferences about the status of the assumptions?