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TITLE: Planning, Pragmatics and Psychology

This talk, which is based on ongoing work with Luciana Benotti, takes as its starting point a computational model of causal implicatures (Benotti 2010, Benotti and Blackburn 2011, 2014). A causal implicature is a certain type of Gricean conversational implicature, namely a relevance implicature about causes in a conversation situated in a physical interaction. In this kind of interaction, language and action co-occur and affect each other while the real-world is modified by the discussed physical actions. The computational model uses planning as its key inference tool; until now we have used classical AI planning, but dynamic epistemic planning seems like an interesting alternative.

The model attempts to take certain Gricean themes seriously. Firstly, we treat conversational actions and real-world actions even-handedly: both are viewed as responses available in a conversational context, and planning draws freely on both. Secondly, we view implicature as the negotiation of meaning in a conversation. This has a number of consequences. For a start, it leads us to a new empirical view of conversational implicatures where clarification requests are indicators that an implicature has been made. And it points towards psychology, where pragmatics is sometimes viewed as theory of mind applied to conversation: speaker and hearer know that they see the same situation but are aware that they might do so from a different perspective.

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