Nothing is logical

Maria Aloni

ILLC & Philosophy, University of Amsterdam

People reason in ways which often deviate from classical logic. An influential idea introduced by Grice is that these deviations are not logical mistakes but rather consequences of pragmatic enrichments: the fact that language users often interpret linguistic expressions as conveying more than what is literally said (Grice 1975). In the Gricean tradition, pragmatic enrichments (also known as implicatures) are derived as the product of rational interactions between cooperative language users. In this work we propose a different explanation for some of the non-classical inferences people draw in conversation: they are not the result of Gricean reasonings but rather a consequence of a tendency in human cognition to avoid empty representations (neglect-zero bias, Aloni 2022, see also Bott et al 2019). In the talk I will (i) introduce a team-based modal logic, BSML, which models the neglect-zero tendency and makes predictions on its impact on reasoning and interpretation; (ii) present the results of some experiments we conducted to test these predictions and (iii) compare BSML with related systems (truthmaker semantics, inquisitive semantics and possibility semantics) via translations into Modal Information Logic (van Benthem 2019).

Reference

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