

Kajsa Djärv

Embedded V2: Assertion, Presupposition, and the Syntax of Embedded Context Updates

This talk addresses the question of how Assertion and Presupposition are reflected in the syntax of embedded clauses, and how this interacts with the pragmatic and selectional properties of clause-embedding verbs like believe, say, and discover (e.g. "Sue said that Bill left"). Since Kiparsky and Kiparsky 1970 and Hooper and Thompson 1973, assertion and presupposition have often been claimed to provide the semantic-pragmatic underpinnings for a range of complementation patterns, including the licensing of so-called embedded Main Clause Phenomena [MCP].

This talk presents results from a new large-scale experimental study, investigating the lexical and pragmatic licensing conditions of four types of MCP (including Verb Second [V2] and Topicalization) in English, Swedish, and German. The central contribution of the talk is demonstrating what precise dimensions of assertion and presupposition are reflected in the grammar: for V2, what matters is the discourse status of the embedded proposition *p* as new vs. Given (à Schwarzschild 1999) (contra e.g. Truckenbrodt 2006, Wiklund 2010, Julien 2015, Woods 2016b,a, who argue that V2 is licensed by speaker or attitude holder commitment to *p*). We further show that the novelty-Givenness dimension cross-cuts the class of factive verbs; and moreover, that Givenness is not reflected in a (null) DP (e.g. Haegeman and Ürögdi 2010, De Cuba and Ürögdi 2009, 2010; Haegeman 2014, Kastner 2015, a.o.). We discuss some implications for the syntax-meaning interface.