

The Surface-Compositional Semantics of Intonation

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In earlier work (1990, 2000), I argued that combinatory categorial grammar (CCG) syntactic derivational structures are directly reflected in English intonational prosodic structure, and that such derivations translate directly and compositionality into information structure. CCG information structures subsume traditional logical form, rather than constituting an orthogonal level of semantic representation.

The result is to simplify the theory of grammar in both phonological and semantic terms.

The structural case was fairly well established. However, the semantics remained rather informal. The present paper develops a fully formal semantics of information structure for CCG, first presented in 2014.

There are two standard semantic approaches to the problem of information structure: Rooth's alternative semantics and von Stechow's structured meanings have developed largely in isolation from any specific theory of syntax. The former has been criticized (by Wold 1996) for undergeneration of attested readings, while the latter is criticized (by Rooth 2010) of overgeneralization. (A third, syntax-based, approach within the Minimalist Program remains less developed in semantic terms.)

The present paper presents a version of an alternative semantics of information structure embedded in CCG.

The semantics is surface-compositional in the sense that lexical items and rules of syntactic projection map directly to both ordinary and alternative logical values, which are derived in tandem.

Syntactic derivation correctly constrains the scope of "focus projection" to thereby overcome previous criticisms of Rooth's approach.

Steedman, Mark (2014), The Surface-Compositional Semantics of English Intonation, *Language*, 90:2-57