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AS.050.317 – Semantics I
Midterm Exam

74%

I.   Gricean Reasoning (pragmatics)

A: Do you have a siamese?
B: I have a cat.
B': No, I don't.

[a] The context for the utterance of A is that "siamese" is a breed of cat, and both parties agree on that. B's utterance implicates that while he does have a *good* cat, it may or may not be of the siamese variety. The Gricean framework that derives this implication begins with the observation of A that B's utterance is a partial answer, or less informative than it could've been. In addition, A assumes that B is being cooperative, that their utterance is relevant to the conversation that they are having. At this point, A must infer that there must *good* be some reason that B did not give a stronger answer, such as the example ~~14/14~~ 15/15 given in B'. The reason a stronger answer was not given is attributed to the hypothesis that giving a strong answer would violate one of the maxims of cooperativity. For example, the submaxim Quality -1 demands that people do not say what they believe to be false, and submaxim Quality -2 demands that *good* people to do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence. The stronger ~~14/14~~ 15/15 competitor may be a violation of Quality-2, implying that while B knows that they have a cat, and that siamese is a type of cat, they do not know whether their cat is a siamese or not.

do a cancellation tes to show that this is an implicature ~~0/4~~ 0/3

II.   Possesives and more (compositional semantics)

See separate lambda notebook file

III.   Expressive adjectives (semantics/pragmatics)

[a] Most simply put, within the structure of the DP an epithet is a non-intersective adjective. There is no direct entailment stemming from the use of the epithet. The context of the utterance is highly variable, with many factors such as the speaker, the object being described and the tone of voice being used. The epithet "*fucking*" a particularly interesting premise, at seems to be used as a matter of degree. There is no direct

positive or negative connotation attributed to its usage, where it is instead a matter of scale. For example to say "John is a fucking idiot" or in contrast "John is a fucking genius", fucking operates as a manner of scaling how much of an idiot, or how much of a genius John.

good

what happens if you move it around the sentence?

[b] As a result of the modifying nature of "*fucking*" in particular, it contributes a presupposition. Like other words that elicit comparisons, this epithet relies on the fact that John must at base be an idiot if he is going to be a "*fucking* idiot". This epithet is also capable of modifiying verb phrases. And while this ventures out of the realm of DPs, in the same context "*fucking*" is a measure of degree. If someone were to say "Jane was fucking sprinting down the street", *fucking* would be addressing the degree with which she was sprinting. This presupposes that Jane was in fact sprinting down the street, and might even begin to imply that she was doing so in such a notable manner that it required the addition of a epithet for emphasis.

use projection tests and cancellations tests to best answer this question
5/11

[c] For a derivation of [[the ADJ computer]], within the DP, branching from the node of D', is a DegP where the ADJ (epithet) will be located and a D that will contain the word computer. Computer is a noun with the type $<e,t>$, and the overall type of the DP will still be $<e,t>$. With *the* as type $<<e,t>,e>$, and computer as type $<e,t>$ in order for the denotation to be compatible the ADJ needs to be type $<t>$.

why would the whole DP be $<e,t>$? Doesn't [the ADJ computer] refer to a single salient, unique computer? This could be accomplished by makeing [ADJ] $<e,t>$ and using PM, or making ti $<<e,t>,<e,t>>$ and using FA. what things would be harder to encode in the lambda calculus, e.g. emotion?

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