



Disarming Context Dependence

Context dependence is ubiquitous in natural languages. Any semantic framework that adopts a truth-conditional view of meaning needs some account of how contextual factors affect truth conditions. In the current debate about how to achieve this, various frameworks have been proposed. *Indexicalism* accounts for contextual effects in terms of a rich covert syntax. *Truth-conditional pragmatics* locates the mechanisms for context dependence not in syntactic structure but in the interpretation process.

This dissertation explores the hypothesis that the two positions, which in various forms dominate much of the discussion, are in fact empirically equivalent, at least with respect to the main examples discussed. The debate in the philosophy of language mostly employs intuitive or semi-formal arguments about what certain sentences mean in various situations. This thesis, on the other hand, provides detailed syntactic and (compositional) model-theoretic semantic analyses of fragments of English containing the relevant sentences. The two approaches are compared and the claim about their empirical equivalence is made precise. One aim of the thesis is to show that detailed formalization, which is not always straightforward, actually yields novel insights.

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An Inquiry into Indexicalism and Truth-Conditional Pragmatics

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