

## **Abstracts Workshop HiTT-LOGOS: Language and Mind**

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Vitoria-Gasteiz

### **The Universe of the Connectives (in Language and Thought)**

David J. Lobina (LOGOS-UB)

Language makes use of a number of coordinators to connect clauses, and a subset of these are “logical” in nature, which is to say that they are analogous to the truthconditional operators of formal logic, even if they can behave rather differently in actual linguistic communication. This is because linguistic expressions in general are very context sensitive. That is, whilst language’s connectives may have a core truthconditional component as part of their meaning (what’s usually referred to as their semantics), their use in context can give rise to a number of implicatures and presuppositions, the domain of pragmatics. Remarkably, only two (or three) of the possible 16 binary connectives of formal logic have been unambiguously lexicalised in the world’s languages: and, (inclusive) or, and, in some accounts, the joint denial nor. In this talk, I provide a panoramic view of the type of research that has been conducted on language’s logical connectives and argue that there is a theoretical split between the “lexicalisation” of conceptual connectives and the “learnability” of invented words corresponding to unlexicalised logical connectives. Moreover, I describe some of the experiments I have been involved with in recent years, which exemplify the split more clearly. I end the talk with a few remarks on what this might mean for the study of the relationship between language and thought.

### **On Singular Propositions**

Michele Palmira (LOGOS- UB)

In this talk I take up the question of what it is that makes propositions singular. I do so by contrasting two different types of approaches. According to what I call the *inflationary* approach, the singular/general divide is to be drawn on the basis of features of propositions themselves. The alternative *deflationary* approach denies this claim either by denying the legitimacy of any explanatory demand (call this *bare deflationism*), or by discharging the explanatory burden at the level of the vehicles, such as representational acts and states, to which propositions are ascribed (call this *substantive deflationism*).

I aim to establish substantive deflationism. To do so, I criticise recent inflationary approach due to Ephraim Glick (*Mind*, 2017) and argue that substantive deflationism can address some objections that can be leveled against it.

### **Denotation and de-compilation of copredicative sentences**

Marina Ortega (HiTT-UPV/EHU)

Many word-forms in natural language are polysemous, but only some of them allow for copredication, that is, they allow for simultaneous predications selecting for two different meanings or senses in a sentence. One of the puzzles about these words is that it is not clear what they denote in the world. This fact has been used as an argument against semantic externalism, that is, the idea that that truth conditions of a statement rely on a correspondence between the content of the statement and real world. As response to the argument against externalism, it has been proposed that nouns that allow copredication are dot objects and they denote complex entities in the world.

In this talk, (i) I give some arguments against the idea that polysemous nouns that copredicate denote complex entities and (ii) I sketch a proposal for the denotation of nouns that allow co-predication. The hypothesis is that the truth conditions of the copredicative sentence derive from a process of de-compilation and the assignment of each predicate to its respective denotation.

### **Polysemous posture in English**

Katherine Fraser (HiTT-UPV/EHU)

The semantic coverage of many expressions includes both literal and non-literal senses. Although there exists many studies with an empirical focus, they tend to describe only the conceptual ideas of polysemous words, e.g., run (Gries, 2006), eat/drink (Newman, 2009), and posture verbs cross-linguistically (Newman, 2002; Lemmens, 2002); formal accounts are lacking (a notable exception outside cognitive linguistics: Spalek 2014). This talk supplements the cognitive descriptions of posture verbs, presenting data from an independent corpus study and proposing a formal analysis. The in-depth investigation of one English posture verb, *sit*, yields an empirical generalization that contributes to the discussion on context-dependency and underspecification surrounding polysemous meaning.

### **On Personal Identity**

Adrián Sampedro (HiTT-UPV/EHU)

In the current discussion on the identity conditions of persons (or, more generally, subjects of experience) two main conceptions can be distinguished: *complex* and *simple* views. According to partisans of the former, identity criteria for minded beings should be established by means of entities of another kind, whereas partisans of the *simple view* contend that subject-identity is basic or primitive. In this talk, I shall pose the question of how some notion of ontological dependence (specifically, *rigid identity dependence*) could be combined with some version of the complex psychological criterion of identity for subjects. I suggest that such a view might leave open the possibility of advocating some sort of bundle-theory of subjects.

### **Ownership and Immunity**

Carlota Serrahima (LOGOS-UB)

Phenomenally conscious mental states are such that, may the subject that undergoes them have the capacity to make judgments in which she reports them, she will use a first-person pronoun in the subject position seemingly compellingly. Bodily experiences, in turn, are a type of mental state such that subjects endowed with a conceptual system or language express by qualifying their content, namely the felt body, with a first-person indexical, in an equally seemingly compelling way. We can express this by saying that subjects typically have a *sense of experience ownership* (SEO) for the experiences they are phenomenally conscious of, and a *sense of bodily ownership* (SBO) for the body they feel in bodily experiences, respectively.

Besides, judgments of mental self-ascription made on phenomenal grounds are typically said to be (logically) *immune to error through misidentification* (IEM) – and, in turn, judgments of bodily self-attribution made on the grounds of bodily experiences are typically said to be (de facto) *immune to error through misidentification* (IEM).

In this talk I aim at defining the connections between SEO, SBO and IEM for mental and

bodily self-ascriptions. Firstly, I will notice that, given that IEM is a feature of judgments relative to their grounds, an explanation of this phenomenon both for mental and bodily self-ascriptions depends on, and in this sense is less fundamental than, an account on the SEO and the SBO respectively. Secondly, I will explore the prospects of a dependence of the SBO on the SEO, and the implications that this dependence would have for an explanation of both mental and bodily IEM.

### **Phenomenal Contrast Arguments and the Ontology of Mental Episodes**

Marta Jorba (HiTT-UPV/EHU)

Phenomenal contrast arguments (PCA) are normally employed as arguments showing that a certain mental feature contributes to (the phenomenal character of) experience, that certain contents are represented in experience and that kinds of sui generis phenomenologies such as cognitive phenomenology exist. In this paper we examine a neglected aspect of such arguments, i.e., the ontological profile of the mental episodes involved in them, and argue that this happens to be a crucial feature of the arguments. We use linguistic tools to determine the lexical aspect of verbs and verb phrases – the tests for a/telicity and for duration. We then argue that all PCAs can show is the presence of a generic achievement-like phenomenology, especially in the cognitive domain, which contrasts with the role that PCAs are given in the literature.

### **Representations as rate-distortion sweet spots**

Manolo Martínez (LOGOS-UB)

The study of information is widely seen as essential to the study of communication and mental representation. Yet philosophers working on these programs often take themselves not to be centrally concerned with "Shannon information", as it is often put. This perception is wrong. Shannon's theory of information is *the* theory of information.

I intend to make good on this last assertion by canvassing a fully information-theoretic explication of the representational content of vehicles, in a certain paradigmatic case. This description will show how a number of apparently disparate threads in the literature on naturalistic metasemantics actually belong in the same coherent picture. Among these threads, first, the claim, advanced by Sterelny, Burge, and Rescorle among others that representation is to be distinguished from mere information transduction by the former holding a many-to-one relation to inputs, and a one-to-many relation to outputs (in a sense to be explained below). A second thread is the claim that natural kinds, and other "reference magnets" are by-default preferable as candidates to figure in the content of simple representations (Lewis, Sider). A third thread is the supposed inability of informational accounts to account for misrepresentation, and therefore the supposed need to distinguish between natural and non-natural information (Scarantino, Birch, Neander). In all three threads the transition from mere information processing to representation is thought to be mediated by the addition of further conditions.

I show that these different extra-informational ideas in fact fall out of a sufficiently expressive information-theoretic description model of representation: representations correspond to signals operating near a sweet spot in a rate-distortion curve.