Abstract

The logic of ‘unless’ crops up in papers on conditionals, tense connectives, quantification, and donkey anaphora. This talk presents a unified compositional treatment of ‘unless’ and ‘until.’

The locus classicus on the logic of unless is Willard van Orman Quine’s Elementary Logic (1940). We dub Quine’s advice for applying logic to linguistics “Quine’s Three Dogmas of Linguistic Negativism” after Quine’s celebrated essay “Two Dogmas of Empiricism” (1951), often touted as the single most important paper in toppling the pillars of Logical Positivism.

Our goal is not only to present a unified compositional analysis of ‘unless’ and ‘until’ but in the process of overcoming Quine’s Three Dogmas of Linguistic Negativism to suggest an alternative interface between logic and linguistics that does justice to current advances in these disciplines.

Department Linguistics Brown Bag Talk
Wednesday 30 October, Campus Lifetime

Unless and Until: A Compositional Analysis
Critiquing Quine’s Three Dogmas of Linguistic Negativism*

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