Working Group 6

Ontology Structure
Contributors

• co-chairs: Dietmar Zaefferer, Scott Farrar
• liason: Amy Renaud
• participants:
  
  Brian Lowe         Robert Munro
  Farhad Mostowfi    Andreas Witt     Ron Zacharski
  David Robson       William Croft    Jung-ran Park
  Alexis Dimistriadis Alison Alvarez   James Mason
  Laure Vieu         Hans-Jörg Bibiko
Session I

- Overview of upper structures
- Topics & Issues
  - form/function separation, wrt feature values
  - identify and classify formal categories
  - relationship between GOLD categories and language instances
LinguisticSign

- 3 aspects
  - form (phonology)
  - content (meaning, function)
  - structure (morphosyntax)
  - realization (physical)
The GOLD definitions

• Individual feature values are mixed with form/meaning notions.

• Notion of definiteness in definition of Determiner.

• Encourage field linguists to tell us what kinds of criteria are used to motivate their categories.
Indiv. Feature Values

- Stay away from complex hierarchies for the moment.
- Other than constituent order, it's hard to pinpoint purely formal features.
General Methodology

• Methodologically, it's good to identify the disagreement points, i.e., 'critical choices'.
• Coherent view 1 = GOLD_1
• Coherent view 2 = GOLD_2
Residual Issues

- Version control
- non-equivalence of formal categories across languages
- semantics (for tomorrow...)
Working Group 6
2nd day

Ontology Structure
Contributors

- co-chairs: Dietmar Zaefferer, Scott Farrar
- liason: Amy Renaud
- participants:
  - Brian Lowe  Robert Munro
  - Farhad Mostowfi  Andreas Witt  Ron Zacharski
  - David Robson  William Croft  Jung-ran Park
  - Alexis Dimistriadis  Alison Alvarez  James Mason
  - Laure Vieu  Hans-Jörg Bibiko
Linguistic Sign

- 3 aspects
  - form (phonology)
  - content (meaning, function)
  - structure (morphosyntax)
  - realization (physical)
LinguisticSign

- Signs can be complex: a bound morpheme, a cleft sentence, ... an entire text.
- Is the category SemUnit a category at all?
- Understanding of content/function/semantics is much fuzzier than the formal counterpart.
- BUT: form/function issue is much less problematic in describing content.
Major areas of concerns

- lexical semantics
- propositional acts
  - referent status
- pred-arg structure
- topic-focus
- interclausal/sentential structure
- speech act / illocution
- there's lots of overlap!
Features

- Still contentious regard WHAT has the feature.
- Two possibilities:
  - the sign itself has all kinds of features
  - each unit type has its particular feature
    - the semantic units have semantic features
    - the morphosyntactic units have the m/s features
- Arguments in the lit. for the former.
- Having features predicated of the sign is misleading to linguists (form/function issue).
Other remarks

• Stay with commonly accepted “carvings up” of semantic parameters (e.g., singular, paucal, plural, dual...): don't posit categories just for sake of symmetry.

• Information structure and semantics proper are two realms, logically independent, or maybe they aren't. Keep the structure flat so as not to put off users.

• Topic, focus aren't categories, but role-like.
Other remarks

• Build COPEs to account for commonly used semantic fields, e.g., kinship or color.
Lessons Learned

• Be clear about the basic formal ontological toolkit before diving in.

• BUT: a lot of progress can be made by modeling using higher levels of abstraction, e.g., writing out axioms in prose.

• Upshot: provide some guidance on the website concerning the basic tools of ontological modeling.
Lessons Learned

• Don't build in too many dependencies.
• Recurring theme: flatten the hierarchies.