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GENERALIZED CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURE AND RELEVANCE STRUCTURE

Alternate

This paper examines whether the inducement of a Generalized Conversational Implicature depends on relevance structure. Recent studies have suggested that information structure plays a role in the inducement of GCI's. These studies, however, are limited to topic and contrastive focus. As *new focus* plays a role in relation to textual inferences it might also play a role in relation to GCI's.

The study takes a starting point in the corpus-based observation that the alleged default GCI in a number of cases seems irrelevant to or even in conflict with the Particularized Conversational Implicature. This observation indicates that either GCI's are not induced per default or the conditions for the inducement are not sufficiently described. The study tries to establish whether relevance structure is such a condition. Two hypotheses, a strong and a weak, are tested. Strong: For the GCI to be induced the GCI related expression must be focussed. Weak: The PCI are related to the new focus of the utterance, and as conversational implicatures are required in order to make the speakers saying consistent with the presumption that the Cooperative Principle is observed, the GCI must serve as a relevant step towards the PCI. Thus, relevance structure indirectly poses restrictions on the inducement of GCI's.

The strong hypothesis can not be supported by corpus-based observations. The weak hypothesis can.