

Anna Chernilovskaya

Exclamativity in discourse

Exploring the exclamative speech act from a discourse perspective

This dissertation studies the phenomenon of exclamativity. It suggests a formal definition of the exclamative speech act based on a discourse perspective.

In the literature wh-exclamative sentences, such as “*What a delicious dessert John baked!*”, are mostly studied from a semantic perspective. Various semantic theories of wh-exclamatives have been suggested, focussing on the denotation of this type of sentences. What is often left outside of consideration is how uttering such a sentence affects the conversation. The context-change effect of wh-exclamatives is sometimes associated with the notion of “exclaiming”, which has not been formally defined in the literature. This dissertation sets out to define the exclamative speech act from a discourse perspective, on the basis of a case study of wh-exclamatives. The central assumption here is that studying the discourse behaviour of such sentences provides useful information for defining the exclamative speech act. The discourse properties of wh-exclamative sentences are thoroughly investigated based on naturally occurring examples from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). Subsequently, the exclamative speech act operator is defined in a model of context. This study thus provides an answer to the question what the context-change effect of uttering a wh-exclamative sentence is. The discourse perspective taken in this dissertation suggests new directions for analysing various speech acts.

This study is of interest to researchers working on expressivity and speech acts, as well as those concerned with semantics, formal pragmatics, dialogue, and corpus research.

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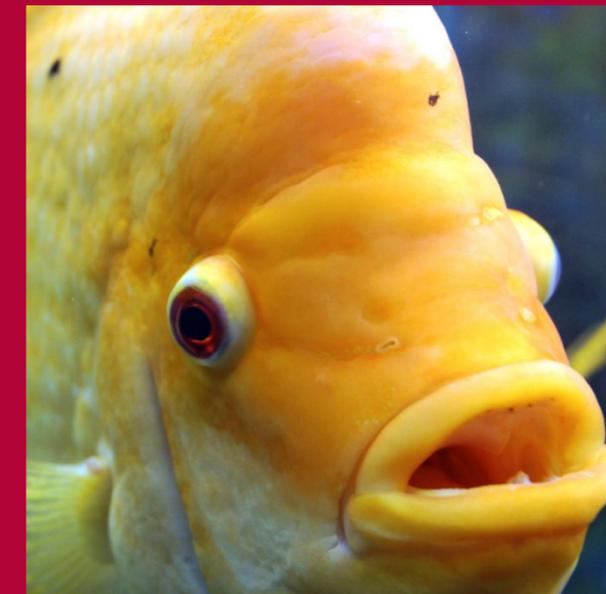
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