

INTRODUCTION TO MEANING AND THE DYNAMICS OF INTERPRETATION

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This selection of original papers written by Hans Kamp—philosopher-linguist-logician-cognitive-scientist and computer-scientist of great repute and lasting influence—presents to you the core of his scientific research on natural language semantics and its relation to logic, philosophy and linguistics. In selecting his best papers we often faced some difficult decisions, but we maintained as editorial guiding principles that (1) the paper should have Hans Kamp as sole author, (2) the paper should have had a significant impact in its field upon first publication, (3) the paper should still have lasting importance for various readerships, and last but not least, (4) easy access to the paper must be guaranteed for future generations. Although the selected papers have been printed here in their original version, some minor corrections, adjustments in formal details or removal of typos have been allowed. Each paper contains a first footnote acknowledging its original place of publication, thanking its publisher for its kind permission to include it in this selection.

The tremendous breadth of Hans Kamp's research is reflected in the distribution of the selected papers over six parts, ranging from philosophical reflection on the foundational issues in the ancient Sorites Paradox with a formal account of what its solution is, to a detailed review of current analyses of presuppositions in dynamic semantic theories. Each part is introduced by Hans Kamp with a new text in which the papers are positioned. Part One *Events, Temporal Reference, and Discourse* contains three influential papers on the logic of time and temporal reference, including Kamp's early and justly very famous paper *Formal Properties of 'Now'*, which established Kamp's reputation at a relatively young age in 1971 as a model-theoretic logician, shortly after completing his Ph.D. at UCLA with Richard Montague. *Events, Instants and Temporal Reference* addresses, among other topics, how instants may be derived from events, following in the footsteps of a historical logical analysis advocated by Bertrand Russell, Norbert Wiener and Alfred Whitehead in the beginning of the 20th century. *Deixis in Discourse. Reichenbach on Temporal Reference* contains a detailed account of how the historic theory of temporal reference from Hans Reichenbach—a logician in the Vienna Circle (±1924–1936), who showed a surprising

sensitivity to natural language at a time this was definitely out of fashion—currently may help linguists to understand the deictic aspects of temporal reference times and their dynamics. It reviews also the shortcomings of the Priorean tense logics, that Montague had adopted in his work on natural language semantics.

Part Two *Semantics and Pragmatics* contains two classical papers on the interface of semantics, as the logical theory of truth-functional meaning, and the pragmatic aspects of interpretation in context. *Free Choice Permission* addresses the logical properties of disjunctive permission, arguing that giving permission cannot be reduced to asserting that something is permitted, as had previously been equated in von Wright's deontic logic. Kamp investigates in more depth the intensional logical relations between performative acts and assertions in terms of options and continuations of given situations in *Semantics versus Pragmatics*, showing that even assertions cover a diverse set of acts whose meaning cannot be adequately captured by concepts of truth and satisfaction only, while maintaining a universal semantics for logical vocabulary. The paper also addresses Kaplan's notion of *character* in discussing the essential indexical aspects of making assertions in context, ending on a more cognitive science note of whether ways in which people may differ in computing meaning in context should bear on theories of linguistic competence. With our current hindsight both papers may be viewed as early precursors of the more comprehensive, dynamic theory of meaning Kamp was to develop a decade later.

Part Three *Vagueness* contains two early papers addressing the semantics of adjectives. In *Two Theories about Adjectives* Kamp first reviews as possible solutions multi-valued logics, supervaluations, and vague models with degrees of satisfaction and a probability distribution over possible completions, before specifying the notion of a graded context-dependent model as a first theory of adjectives. His second theory of adjectives proposes to take coherence of contexts as core notion in the model theory and exploits the dynamic modification of context as a new semantic tool, leaving the meta-logical question just what kind of logic it yields wide open. The *Paradox of the Heap* investigates the consequences of contextual fixing of the extensions of vague predicates. Its semantics for a formal language containing vague predicates is highly non-standard, worth pursuing for even someone who questions the assumptions the semantics is based on. Some technical aspects of this semantics are made explicit in an appendix, added in this reprint. If a reasonable solution could be found using the fixed point logics the paper defines with some reasonable inferential properties, such a solution might still qualify as illuminating, since it has been obtained under what must be about the most unaccommodating preconditions. The two

papers can both be regarded as precursors of a growing trend of seeing context-dependence as a central aspect of vagueness in natural language predicates and to identify and disentangle the different contextual factors that can influence the use and interpretation of such predicates.

Part Four *Discourse Representation* starts with the famous 1981 paper *A Theory of Truth and Semantic Representation* which first outlined Discourse Representation Theory (DRT) as the dynamic theory of interpretation, relying essentially on a level of representation to characterize not only inference and entailment, but also cross-sentential pronominal dependencies (anaphora) and other forms of constraints on binding. The paper explicitly sets out to unite truth-functional aspects of meaning with the more pragmatic or epistemic aspects of what language users do when they come to understand what a clause means in the context in which it is used, presenting the account as a rule based fragment of a syntax-semantics mapping reminiscent of Montague Grammar. The paper *Context, Thought and Communication*, reverts to some classical puzzles in the philosophy of language concerning referential identity, suggesting that anchoring a discourse referent in DRT may provide us with the right concept to identify referents across belief contexts and other attitudes. *Disambiguation in Discourse* was written some ten years after the '81 paper on DRT, and argues for the importance of lexical meaning in determining content and the fact that cognition and interpretation are necessarily and intrinsically intertwined.

Part Five *Presupposition* contains two influential papers on how contexts may be adjusted to fit the requirements of a phrase to be interpreted by not only verifying whether its presuppositions are satisfied by the context, but also repairing it whenever it does not satisfy these by accommodating information that is otherwise thought of as entailed by the discourse. In *Presupposition Computation and Presupposition Justification: One Aspect of the Interpretation of Multi-Sentence Discourse* this is accomplished by constructing preliminary DRs and interpreting the novel phrase against these as context. In *The Importance of Presupposition* the interaction between various presuppositions triggered by one phrase are investigated and computation of presupposition is distinguished fundamentally from their justification in context. Part Six *Propositional Attitudes* presents two papers on the logic of epistemic attitudes, where *Prolegomena to a Structural Account of Belief and Other Attitudes* goes back to older arguments that any theory that identifies epistemic attitudes with sets of possible worlds will be unable to explain behavioral differences that may come about, if logically equivalent propositions remain indistinguishable. To account for how beliefs guide our actions, an extension of DRT is proposed to deal with the more structural aspects of attitudes, as well as with indexicals, interactive forms of conversational

exchange and shared information. The final paper *Temporal Reference Inside and Outside Propositional Attitudes* combines the DRT account of presupposition with its analysis of epistemic attitudes and attributions thereof to others, exploiting external anchors to formally effectuate referential binding across such contexts. Notions of doxastic strength and persistence of beliefs provide novel ways to formally account for dynamic belief revision in DRT and how people actually may come to understand each other. A long, in-depth interview with Hans Kamp is included at the end of the book. It reviews Kamp's entire intellectual development in its historical and often very personal context, while discussing core examples that drove the development of linguistic semantics and assessing their impact on the way DRT became seen as the linguist's tool of preference to analyze meaning, interpretation and inference as the triad of human language understanding.

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