Characterizing the Response Space of Questions

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One of the ultimate testing grounds for a theory of questions is its ability to characterize the response space to a query use of a question, as in (1), where the (a) cases include felicitous and the (b) examples include infelicitous responses:

(1)   a.   A: Is that chair new?
             B: Yes/It's a Louis XIV replica/new?
       b.   B: # Tomorrow/ Please insert your card /The train.

In this talk the setting I will assume is dialogue. I will consider two aspects of this problem, (i) the practical task of developing classifications of the different classes of responses, and (ii) the theoretical problem of characterizing the relation of relevance that holds between a felicitous response and a query.

With respect to the first problem, the most detailed work to date has been on developing taxonomies for clarification requests (Purver et al 2003) and more generally for query/query responses (Łupkowski and Ginzburg, 2016); I will describe an extension of the latter work. For the second problem, which remains surprisingly underexplored, I will propose an account within the KoS framework (Ginzburg, 2012), considering in particular the problem of domain dependence (Larsson and Berman, 2016).

References: • Larsson, S. and Berman, A. 2016. Domain-specific and general syntax and semantics in the Talkamatic Dialogue Manager In: Christopher Piñón (ed.), Empirical Issues in Syntax and Semantics 11, Paris: CSSP. http://www.cssp.cnrs.fr/eiss11 • Ginzburg, J. 2012. The Interactive Stance: Meaning for Conversation. Oxford University Press, Oxford. • Łupkowski, P. and Ginzburg, J. 2016. Query Responses *Journal of Language Modelling*, 4(2): 245–292. • Purver, M., Ginzburg, J., & Healey, P. 2003. On the means for clarification in dialogue. In van Kuppevelt, J. & Smith, R. (Eds.), Current and New Directions in Discourse and Dialogue, pp. 235–256. Kluwer.