

**Announcement: Open meeting of Partee-Borschev NSF grant project Oct 25 at 5:30pm**

The second open NSF-grant meeting of the semester will be held Wednesday October 25, 5:30-7:30 pm, with pizza provided, in the Partee room. Everyone is welcome!

**Agenda:**

**(1) Keir Moulton, Exploring Reflexive Verb Meanings**

There is a well known verb class often referred as inherent reflexives, a subset of which denote "self-action" meanings (Reinhart and Reuland 1993, Rooryck and vanden Wyngaerd 1997, Lidz 1997). I will review arguments that these meanings cannot be derived by a reflexivization operation (see Rooryck and vanden Wyngaerd 1997, Reinhart and Siloni 2005 for different conclusions). Rather, I will propose a meaning postulate to characterize this class of "self-action" meanings and an in-progress proposal for how reflexive morphology can signal it (in essence, providing a semantics for Reinhart and Reuland's 1993 'semantically reflexive predicates'). I will then explore whether English is sensitive to this lexical distinction.

**(2) Vladimir Borschev and Barbara Partee, Sentential and Constituent Negation in Russian BE-sentences Revisited**

In this talk, based on the 5-author paper [Borschev et al. \(2006\)](#), we bring some new perspectives to the interaction of syntax, semantics, and pragmatics in negative sentences, in order to address some puzzling anomalies in the occurrence of Genitive of Negation in BE-sentences in Russian. What is the negation of (1)? We will show that while neither (2) nor (3) is the syntactic sentential negation of (1), each may be a near-optimal functional negation of the sentence in appropriate contexts.

- |                                                         |                                                                    |                                                                           |
|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (1) Kolja doma.<br>Kolya at-home<br>'Kolya is at home.' | (2) Kolja ne doma.<br>Kolya NEG at-home<br>'Kolya is not at home.' | (3) Koli net doma.<br>Kolya-GEN NEG.is at-home<br>'Kolya is not at home.' |
|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|

The "moral" of this talk will be that the notion of "the negation of" a sentence is often not straightforward. The (sentential) negation of a simple locative sentence like (1) "should" be (2), which differs from (1) only by the addition of the negative morpheme *ne*. But it has been argued (Chvany 1975, Babby 1980, Kondrashova 1996, Harves 2002a) that (2) involves constituent negation, and that the sentential negation of (1) is (3); most native speakers agree. This is an anomaly (Babby 1980, Harves 2002b), since *net* '(there) is/are not' and Genitive of Negation are generally found in existential sentences and generally impossible in locative sentences.

Following (Horn 1989, Sgall et al. 1986 and others), we may say that pragmatic negation, or "functional negation", produces a proposition that is narrower than pure logical negation, preserving the presuppositions of the Theme and negating only the content of the Rheme. Then what is "the negation of" a given sentence? Slavic linguists have concentrated on syntactic sentential negation, since only that structure licenses *ni*-words, for instance. But since Russian constituent negation often falls on the Rheme as in (2), constituent negation may often provide the best "functional negation" for the sentence.

The functional importance of constituent negation in Russian, and the corollary that (2) is a good functional negation of (1), may have been underestimated in previous studies.

What about (3), *Koli net doma*? Most researchers have called this sentence the negation of (1). An alternative approach (Partee and Borschev, in press) treats (3) as a mixed case, neither a typical locative nor a typical existential, characterized by disharmonies among ‘Perspective Structure’, Theme-Rheme structure, and definiteness. While (3) may not be an existential sentence, (3), like existential sentences, suggests a ‘Perspective’ or implicit ‘observer’ centered ‘at home’ (e.g. it is natural if the speaker is ‘at home’), and remarks on the absence of Kolja; sentence (2) resists such a perspective. We discuss two competing approaches to how either of these near-optimal negations can become the optimal one in a given context in the absence of the all-purpose general negation caused by the defectiveness of the verb *byt’* ‘be’. We don’t have an actual optimality-theoretic analysis, and would especially welcome help in how one might be constructed. We have aims to produce a journal paper on this topic together with our Russian colleagues, and welcome all feedback.

**Future meetings:**

**Wednesday Nov 5, 5:30: Amy Rose Deal and Borschev & Partee**

**Wednesday Nov 29, 5:30, Florian Schwarz and TBA**

**Wednesday Dec 6, 5:30 (last meeting), Aynat Rubinstein and Borschev & Partee**