

## **On the weak explanatory power of belief reasoning in language processing: Now what?**

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### **Abstract**

Psycholinguists have expended considerable effort investigating how people adapt comprehension and production processes to the informational needs of their particular interlocutors, with lively debates emerging over the extent to which observed adaptations reflect the use of "common ground" or simpler heuristics. But it seems increasingly likely that partner-specific effects will explain only a tiny share of the variance in pragmatic effects which, by and large, seem to be driven by partner-independent representations and processes. Explaining pragmatic phenomena through the lens of partner independence is a seemingly important but utterly neglected agenda. In this talk I will present psycholinguistic evidence that justifies this agenda, along with some preliminary ideas about the way forward.

### **About the Speaker**

Dale Barr is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Psychology and Neuroscience at the University of Glasgow (Glasgow, UK). He received a PhD in Psychology from the University of Chicago (Chicago, USA) in 1999. His main areas of interest are psycholinguistics, statistical modelling, and cognitive science. Most of his work consists of empirical investigations into the cognitive representations and processes underlying spoken dialogue. He has published work on various topics, including pragmatics, perspective-taking, lexical processing, cultural evolution, speech rhythm, disfluency, and multimodal signaling. His recent work investigates how language users integrate linguistic and situational information (such as interlocutors' beliefs and goals) within the constraints of real-time dialogue. His research uses a variety of methodologies, from visual-world eyetracking, EEG, and MEG, to computational modeling and Monte Carlo simulation. He has also contributed to statistical methodology, developing techniques for time-series analysis of visual-world eyetracking data, as well as for linear mixed-effects modeling. He is a founding member of the PsyTeachR teaching team at the University of



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