A unified DRT-based account of accented and unaccented middle field doch

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Abstract:
English connectives and and but have been said to correspond to three Russian connectives: i, no and a. While i corresponds to the English and, and no to but, the functions of a are ambiguous, overlapping with both and and but. Previous work on these connectives has mostly focused on the contrastive function of a. The main goal of this paper is to analyze the function of a to indicate the attitude of the speaker. Although this function has been mentioned in previous studies (Foolen 1991, Malchukov 2004), it has not been fully addressed. I show that the Russian connective a induces inferences about the attitude of the speaker towards events described in a sentence. These inferences are detachable and non-cancellable, properties traditionally attributed to conventional implicatures (CIs) (Grice 1975, Potts 2005). I argue that a’s speaker-oriented meaning is a consequence of it inducing a CI. I conclude with a number of open questions regarding the implication of this analysis on a distinction between two uses of a: speaker-oriented expressive a and contrastive a.