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*. 