

**Tel-Aviv University
The School of Philosophy, Linguistics and Science Studies
Department of Linguistics**

THURSDAY INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLOQUIUM

**Thursday 8.4.2021
16:15-17:45**

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[Joint work with Paul Marty, Joe Cowan, Jacopo Romoli & Richard Breheny]

What primes what? Experimental framework to explore alternatives for SIs

Recent research on SI (Bott & Chemla, 2016; Rees & Bott, 2018; Waldon & Degen, 2020) has established the usefulness of this priming paradigm for discerning how SIs are computed, but we will argue that there is currently a significant gap in our understanding of the priming effects on SIs. Specifically, the results of previous studies do not allow us to see if what is primed is computing an SI, or not computing it, or both, as most of these studies lack reasonable baselines to answer this question (but see Waldon & Degen, 2020). In this study, we systematically compare the results of a baseline experiment that involves no priming, and a version of the experiment with priming, and observe that for certain scalar items such as 'some' and numerals, what is primed is primarily not computing an SI, rather than computing it, which is contrary to what is claimed by previous studies. On the other hand, for 'ad hoc SIs', which are SIs that arise from contextually determined scales, it is computing an SI that can be primed. We will also report an experiment that compares two types of priming trials for ad hoc SIs, priming trials that involve logically stronger and logically independent expressions. Theoretically, either of them could be used to generate ad hoc SIs. Our results indicate that having seen logically stronger alternatives makes it more likely that the ad hoc SI is generated, while having seen logically independent alternatives has no comparable effect. We will discuss theoretical implications of these findings.

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