



## SPAGAD 4: Sequencing and Referencing Speech acts

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### Adjacency Pairs in Common Ground Update: Assertions, Questions, Greetings, Commands

*Speaker:* Manfred Krifka  
*Time:* Nov 25, 18:30 – 19:30  
*Zoom:* [link](#)

In Conversation Analysis, a basic notion for the organization of discourse are adjacency pairs (Schegloff and Sacks 1973), conversational moves by one participant, the “first pair part”, that invite other conversational moves of a particular type, usually by the other participant, the “second pair part”. Typical examples are greeting – greeting back, question – answer, request – grant (or refusal), invitation – acceptance (or declination), but also assertion – confirmation (or rejection). If the initial action is not followed by a corresponding response action, the conversation is felt incomplete, and quite often the initial action will be repeated.

Adjacency pairs have not found a lot of attention in formal theories of discourse (an exception being the work of Ginzburg). In Krifka 2015, I have developed the framework of Commitment Spaces, with the distinguishing property of incorporating the possible continuations of a conversation into the notion of Common Ground. In this talk I will show how this look-ahead feature can be used to model adjacency pairs as expected continuations. One critical task is how to deal with unexpected continuations – denials to accept an assertion, unexpected responses to biased questions, non-uptake of greetings, refusals to heed a command and the like. I will propose two models to deal with such unexpected continuations: By rejecting the last move and going back one step in conversation (Krifka 2015), or by using an “else” condition to the preferred continuation.

#### *References*

- Krifka, Manfred (2015). “Bias in Commitment Space Semantics: Declarative questions, negated questions, and question tags”. In: *Proceedings of the 25th Semantics and Linguistic Theory Conference*. Ed. by Sarah D’Antonio, Mary Moroney, and Carol Rose Little, pp. 328–345.
- Schegloff, Emanuel A. and Harvey Sacks (1973). “Opening up Closings”. In: *Semiotica* 8 (4), pp. 289–327.