Priming Three Categories of Implicature (joined work with Roman Feiman, UCSD)

Priming is a powerful and widely used method; its applications range from establishing the existence of implicit stereotyping (e.g., Banaji & Hardin 1996) to arguing for the reality of syntactic representations (e.g., Raffray & Pickering 2010). To the young field of experimental pragmatics, however, the priming paradigm has only been introduced very recently (Bott & Chemla 2016).

In this talk, we ran a series of experiments in which we try to prime the computation of three categories of inferences: scalar implicature, *exactly*-readings of numerals, and (disjunctive) Free Choice inferences. As we will see, it is theoretically attractive to derive these inferences through the same mechanism. The existence of a priming effect between these three categories of inferences would provide strong evidence in favor of the cognitive reality of this theoretical assumption. Before we can produce and believe in such evidence, however, a few more questions need to be answered. Can the results of Chemla & Bott be replicated? What are the kinds of stimuli that work best for the paradigm and the linguistic material? Are we really priming the mechanism in question, or a confound? And finally: What *are* the mechanisms involved in these inferences for which we find evidence in the form of cross- and within-category priming effects? We will present our results and discuss their relevance to these questions, as well as to the theory of (recursive) scalar implicature.