

Preface

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The Evaluability Hypothesis: The syntax, semantics, and pragmatics of polarity item licensing

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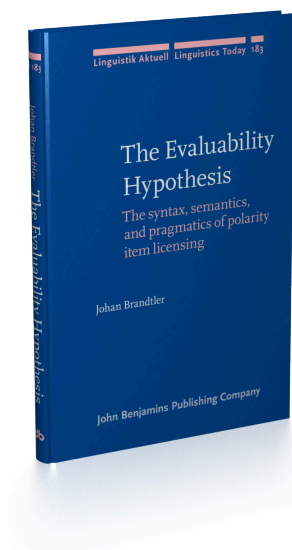
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Preface

The hypothesis presented in this book has been developed over a number of years. Originally, it was an attempt to reconcile the syntactic distribution of polarity items in Swedish with the semantic properties of the hosting sentences. As this work progressed, however, the role of pragmatics in polarity item licensing seemed more important than I first had acknowledged. As I attempt to show in this book, not only the syntactic structure or the semantic function of a given sentence is of relevance for polarity sensitivity; also the conversational function of that sentence as an utterance affects its ability to host polarity items. This heavier leaning towards pragmatics resulted in the notion of *evaluability* as defined herein. It is in fact with respect to pragmatics that the present hypothesis is most distinct from previous theories on polarity item licensing.

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Johan Brandtler
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