

# Radical Inquisitive Semantics

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## Abstract

In inquisitive semantics the proposition expressed by a sentence is viewed as a proposal to update the common ground. Such a proposal may be inquisitive, in the sense that it may offer the addressee a choice between several alternative updates. Propositions are modeled as sets of possibilities, where possibilities are sets of possible worlds.

Radical inquisitive semantics enriches this notion of meaning by pairing the proposition expressed by a sentence with a counter-proposition. The possibilities in this counter-proposition embody the ways in which the addressee may choose to counter the proposal expressed by the sentence.

Whereas the proposition expressed by a sentence gives directions for positive responses that accept the given proposal, the counter-proposition for a sentence gives directions for negative responses that reject the proposal.

We will present a radical inquisitive semantics for the language of propositional logic, and illustrate its workings with a number of examples showing how it accounts for positive and negative responses to sentences of natural language.

Much of our attention will be devoted to the treatment of conditional sentences, both indicative conditionals and conditional questions. A remarkable result is that ‘denial of the antecedent’ responses to a conditional are characterized as negative responses to the ‘question behind’ that conditional.

## References:

Jeroen Groenendijk & Floris Roelofsen, Radical Inquisitive Semantics,  
<http://sites.google.com/site/inquisitivesemantics/papers-1/in-progress>