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Title: Immediate and General Common Ground

Abstract: The traditional literalist account of meaning has been challenged by several theories that stress the importance of context and of contextual information in communication, especially for mechanisms of meaning determination and reference fixing. However, the role of lexical meaning in such contextualist accounts often remains only vaguely defined. In this paper, we defend an account of communication that keeps the advantages of contextualist theories, while a new element is introduced that we claim could help solving some of the remaining issues. By differentiating Immediate and General Common Ground in communication, we draw a distinction between mechanisms related to the situation at hand and those concerned with world and language knowledge. We further argue that such a distinction can help understanding cases of loose use and metaphors of which we provide some examples. Finally, we claim that this distinction has grammatical reality, as it is shown by the examples from Lakhota (North America), Umpithamu (Australia), Kuuk Thaayorre (Australia) and Mongsen Ao (India) discussed in the paper.