

---

# Taking stock of an idiom's background assumptions: An alternative Relevance Theoretic account

Nicholas Griffen\*<sup>1</sup> and Ira Noveck

<sup>1</sup>Laboratoire de Linguistique Formelle – Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Université Paris  
Cité – France

## Abstract

In this talk, we introduce our novel account on idiom processing. We argue that previous accounts of idiom processing may have overlooked certain characteristics that idioms hold. We posit that idioms include a procedural meaning that considers relevant presuppositional information. For example, an idiomatic string such as breaking the ice not only asserts that social contact is being initiated, but it includes background assumptions such as there exists a social distance that calls for relief. We will show how we developed our presuppositional hypothesis and what our pilot experiment reveals about our theoretical inclinations.

**Keywords:** idioms, figurative language processing, presuppositional content

---

\*Speaker