Presupposition and Antipresupposition:

When Discourse Requires Redondancy

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1. Introduction

Grammaticality / Agramaticality

⇒ Sentence grammar

Appropriate / Inappropriate discourse

⇒ Constraints on discourse

Minimal pairs

1. Introduction

(1) a. Chaque enfant sait qu'il va recevoir un cadeau à la kermesse.
Every child knows that he will receive a gift during the fest.
*b. * Chaque enfant va recevoir un cadeau à la kermesse. Il sera content.*
Every child will receive a gift during the fest. He will be happy.
c. Le directeur va recevoir un cadeau à la kermesse. Il sera content.
The director will receive a gift during the fest. He will be happy.

1. Introduction

(2) A: Who did Paul introduce to Sue?
B: a. Paul introduced BILL to Sue.
b.# Paul introduced Bill to SUE.
(2') A: Who did Paul introduce Bill to?
B: a. Paul introduced Bill to SUE.
b. # Paul introduced BILL to Sue.

(3) A: Qui a préparé le gâteau ?
B: a. C'est Jean qui a préparé le gâteau.
b. # C'est le gâteau que Jean a préparé.

1. Introduction

(4) a. *Jean a fait une grosse erreur. Il ne la fera **plus**.*
John made a big mistake. He won't do it again.

b. *Jean a fait une grosse erreur. Il ne la **re**fera pas.*
John made a big mistake. He won't redo it.

c. *Jean a fait une grosse erreur. Il ne la **re**fera **plus**.*
John made a big mistake. He won't redo it any more.

d. *# Jean a fait une grosse erreur. Il ne la fera pas.*
 # John made a big mistake. He won't do it.

1. Introduction

How to generalize the phenomenon illustrated by (4)?

- presupposition
- antipresupposition
- conversational rules

(R1) Avoid redondancy.

(5) a. # It's raining. John knows that it's raining.

b. It's raining. John knows that.

(R2) Maximize presupposition.

(cf. Sauerland, Schlenker)

2. Data & generalization
2.1 An amazing contrast

Difference between *ne…pas* and *ne…plus:*

(6) Jean ne fume pas. / John doesn't smoke.

- Assertion: John doesn't smoke

(6') Jean ne fume plus. / John doesn't smoke anymore.

- Assertion: John doesn't smoke
- Presupposition: John used to smoke

2. Data & generalization

2.1 An amazing contrast

A presupposition:

- is a **background belief**, mutually assumed by the speaker and the addressee for the utterance to be considered appropriate in context
- **survives** when the utterance is negated, questioned or embedded in an attitude context
- **is triggered** by a lexical item or a grammatical construction in the utterance.

2. Data & generalization
2.1 An amazing contrast

(7)a. C'est faux que Jean ne fume plus.
It is not the case that John doesn't smoke anymore.
b. Est-ce que Jean ne fume plus ?
Doesn't John smoke anymore ?
c. Marie croit que Jean ne fume plus.
Mary believes that John doesn't smoke anymore.

- Assertion: variable, sensitive to the embedding.
- Presupposition: John used to smoke

2. Data & generalization

2.1 An amazing contrast

What is the semantic contribution of *plus* with respect to *pas*, in our context? Nothing.

*(8) Il ne fera **plus** cette erreur.*

- presupposition: Il a fait cette erreur.
- assertion: Il ne fera pas cette erreur.

*(4) Jean a fait une erreur. Il ne la fera **plus**.*

= *Jean a fait une erreur. Il a fait cette erreur. Il ne fera pas cette erreur.*

2. Data & generalization
2.1 An amazing contrast

Why must one use a presuppositional trigger in this context, since precisely in this context, the presupposition doesn't convey any new information?

2. Data & generalization
2.2 A new observation

• An important litterature on *too*

a) Obligatoriness of *too*

Green1968, Kaplan1984

… and of other additives particles (Krifka1999)

(9) a. Jo had fish and Mo did too.

b. Jo had fish and Mo did.*

(9')a. Pierre a fait ses devoirs. Marie les a faits aussi.

b. Pierre a fait ses devoirs. Marie les a faits.*

2. Data & generalization
2.2 A new observation

• An important litterature on *too.*

b) The presuppositional content of *too* can't be accommodated.

Kripke 1990, van der Sandt & Geurts 2001

(10) JOHN had dinner in New York last night too.

- * out of the blue
- presupposes that somebody (different from John) had dinner in N-Y last night. The presupposition is trivially true.

2. Data & generalization
2.2 A new observation

- Re-analyze the presupposed content of *too* as including a pronoun, and assume that pronouns don't have enough semantic content to be accommodated (van der Sandt & Geurts 2001).

(11) *NP VP too.*
assertion: NP VP
presupposition: he VP and he ≠ NP

- *Difficulty to be accommodated ≠ obligatoriness*

(12) *a. ?? John is ill too.*

b. John is not ill anymore.

2. Data & generalization
2.2 A new observation

- Zeevat's paper "Particles: Presupposition Triggers, Contexts Markers or Speech Act markers"*.*
- He analyzes a class of markers including *again*, but not *not anymore*.
- He identifies obligatoriness of using presupposition trigger and difficulty to accommodate.
- But he underlines something important:

"These particles have rather minimal meaning apart from their presuppositional properties"

2. Data & generalization
2.2 A new observation

(13) Mary has failed again.

Again doesn't add anything in the asserted content, but only adds a presuppositional content.

(14) Mary regrets being a linguist.

The semantic contribution of *regret* affects both the asserted content and the presupposed content of (14).

Assertion: Mary regrets to be a linguist

Presupposition: Mary is a linguist

2. Data & generalization
2.3 Generalization

(R3) Consider two sentences, S1 and S2, which only differ with their presuppositional content φ. We assume that in a context where φ has been asserted, the use of S2 is obligatory.

• The generalization applies not only with <*pas, plus*> but also with <*savoir si, savoir que*>, <S, cleft S>, …

• *Too* and *again* are particular cases, where the alternative is between <ø, too> and <ø, again>. We compare S and 'S again' or 'S too'.

2. Data & generalization
2.3 Generalization

- **Additive particles**

(15) Léa a fait une bêtise. Elle ne la (# ø / re-)fera pas.
Lea did a silly thing. She won't (ø / re-)do it

(16) Jean est malade, Marie est malade (# ø / aussi)
John is sick, Mary is sick (ø / too)

(17) Il était là hier, il est (# ø / encore) là.
He was there yesterday, he is (ø/ still) there.

2. Data & generalization
2.3 Generalization

- ***Savoir que / savoir si***

(18) *[Léa est partie en Afrique.] Jean ne le dit à personne, bien qu'il sache (# si / qu') elle est partie là-bas.*

[Lea's gone to Africa.] John tells no one, even though he knows (whether / that) she's gone there.

2. Data & generalization
2.3 Generalization

- **Cleft *vs* non cleft sentences**

Prosody interferes.

(19) a. Quelqu'un a préparé le dîner. C'est Jean qui l'a fait.

Someone fixed the dinner. It is John who did it.

a'. ? Quelqu'un a préparé le dîner. Jean l'a fait.

? Someone fixed the dinner. John did it.

b. Quelqu'un a préparé le dîner. Ce n'est pas Jean qui l'a fait.

Someone fixed the dinner. It is not John who did it.

b'. # Quelqu'un a préparé le dîner. Jean ne l'a pas fait.

 # Someone fixed the dinner. John didn't do it.

2. Data & generalization
2.3 Generalization

• The important point is that we systematically compare two sentences, which have the same asserted content, but not the same presupposed content.

<pas, plus> , <savoir si, savoir que>, <ø, aussi>,

<S, cleft S>

• Antipresupposition (Percus 2006)

• Implicated presupposition (Heim 1991, Sauerland 2003)

3. Antipresupposition

- Heim 1991

(20) *a. # A wife of John's is intelligent.*

b. The wife of John's is intelligent.

(21) *a. # A father of the victim arrived at the scene.*

b. The father of the victim arrived at the scene.

- Just like the pair <*some, all*> gives rise to the famous gricean quantity based implicature, the pair <*a, the*> forms a scalar alternative pair, but **when taking presupposition into account**.
- (20a) and (21a) are unfelicitous because they trigger an antipresupposition incompatible with background knowledge.

3. Antipresupposition

Scalar implicatures

(22) a. Some student failed.
b. All students failed.

• (22a) implicates the negation of (22b).

• An implicature is not an entailment, it may **be cancelled**.

(22) c. Some student failed, I think that even all students failed.

⇒ Scale with asserted contents: *some* < *all*

3. Antipresupposition

Implicatures computed from presupposed contents

(23) *a. A son of John's is intelligent.*

b.The son of John's is intelligent.

- (23a) antipresupposes (23b)
- An antipresupposition, like a presupposition, survives to negation…
- An antipresupposition may be cancelled.
- An antipresupposition is triggered by a lexical form, which is compared with a presupposition trigger.

$\Rightarrow$ scale with presupposed contents: *a* < *the*

a is an antipresupposition trigger / *the* is a presupposition trigger

3. Antipresupposition

• Percus 2006

"Some sentences impose the condition that the interlocutors *not* take the truth of a certain proposition for granted:

- either it will have to be taken for granted that the proposition in question is false,

- or it will have to be an open issue whether the proposition is true or not.

In these cases, we might say that the sentence **antipresupposes** the proposition in question."

3. Antipresupposition

(24) Mary thinks that Jane is pregnant.

antipresupposes via <*think, know*>:

Jane is pregnant.

(25) John is repairing a chair in Mary's living room.

antipresupposes via <*a, the*>:

Mary has exactly one chair in her living room.

(26) John assigned the same exercise to all of Mary's students.

antipresupposes via <*all, both*>:

Mary has exactly two students.

3. Antipresupposition

• Presupposition: every world in the Common Ground (CG) have a certain property (Domain Condition)

• Antipresupposition: not every world in the CG have a certain property.

• The intuition: what renders a sentence with *thinks*, *a*, or *all* infelicitous precisely has something to do with **the felicity of parallel sentences** with *knows*, *the,* or *both*.

3. Antipresupposition

• The possibility of using a sentence with *knows*, *the,* or *both* **blocks** the possibility of using a sentence with *thinks*, *a*, or *all*.

•Antipresuppositions result from competition.

(i) Which expressions are associated with alternatives?

(ii) What property an alternative sentence has to have in order to prevent us from uttering the original sentence?

4. Maximize presupposition revisited

4.1 Maximize presupposition

Sauerland, Schlenker, Percus.

'Maximize presupposition' accounts for antipresuppositions essentially by saying that sentences will be blocked in situations where other sentences **that presuppose more (but do not differ in any other way)** would communicate the same thing.

4. Maximize presupposition revisited

Maximize presupposition

i. Alternatives are only defined for lexical items. For any lexical item, the alternatives consist of all **'presuppositionally stronger'** items of the same syntactic category.

ii. Do not use φ if a member of its Alternative-Family ψ is felicitous and contextually equivalent to φ.

4. Maximize presupposition revisited

4.1 Maximize presupposition

The rule predicts that the sentence (20) will be unfelicitous.

(20) # A wife of John's is intelligent.

It also predicts that the discourse (27) will be unfelicitous.

(27) # Jean a fait des bêtises. Il n'en fera pas.

4. Maximize presupposition revisited
4.1 Maximize presupposition

D = S1. S2

A (for assertion): Jean ne fera pas de bêtise
P (for presupposition): Jean a fait des bêtises

S2 : *Jean ne fera pas de bêtise*. A
S2': *Jean ne fera plus de bêtise*. A+P

S2' is 'presuppositionally stronger' than S2
S2' → S2 but not (S2 → S2')

S2 antipresupposes P, and P=S1.
Thus D seems contradictory. It conveys P (via S1) and ¬P (via the antipresupposition triggered by S2).

On the contrary, (S1. S2') is felicitous, since S2 doesn't convey any antipresupposition.

4. Maximize presupposition revisited
4.2 Extension to other cases in dialogue

(28) *A: Est-ce que Marie est venue ?*
B: Oui.
*A: Et Jean ? / * Jean ?* (cf Engdalh)

(29) *A : Marie est venue.*
*B : Est-ce que Jean est venu (*Ø / aussi / lui) ?*
(29') *A : Marie est venue.*
*B : Jean est venu (*Ø / aussi / lui) ?*

Neither *et*, nor *lui* are presupposition triggers.

4. Maximize presupposition revisited
4.2 Extension to other cases in dialogue

Neither *et*, nor *lui* are presupposition triggers.
But they convey **non asserted contents**.

Et is here a discourse connective, which conveys a conventional implicature (cf also *but*…)

Lui plays a role at the discourse level. It is analyzed in SDRT as a topic introducer, which instanciates a rhetorical relation between segments in discourse.

4. Maximize presupposition revisited

Maximize Presupposition can be viewed as a subcase of a more general rule, which could be

(R4) Maximize non assertive content
Sentences will be blocked in situations where other sentences which convey the same asserted content but more **other content** would communicate the same thing.

Besides assertive contents and presupposed contents, there are at least implicative contents and expressive contents (Potts).

Conclusion

- The emergence of new concepts such as antipresupposition.
- The importance of different levels / types of semantic content.
- When scales interfere, the absence of marking isn't neutral, it is informative, it is even the most informative, because it entails the negation of all the others.

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Additive particles

Krifka,1999

[add [...F...]] : […F…] (F≠F' […F'…])

assertion presupposition

-F' ranges over alternatives of F that are semantically of the same type as F.

-F stands for the expression in focus, marked by an accent, called the associated constituent.

Ex: *aussi, non plus, encore, de nouveau, toujours...*

too, neither, again, still...

Presupposition as a rhetorical relation

(31) a. Jean est allé il y a deux ans au Canada. C'est pourquoi il n'ira plus là-bas.

b. John went to Canada two years ago. That's why he won't go there anymore?

(31') b. # Jean est allé il y a deux ans au Canada. C'est pourquoi il n'ira pas là-bas.

b' John went to Canada two years ago. That's why he won't go there

Contra SDRT, presupposition is not a rhetorical relation.

Presupposition and Contrast (for ex.) don't affect the same type of content.

Exception: enumeration

(30) Jean est malade, Marie est malade, Paul est malade, tout le monde est malade alors !

John is sick, Marie is sick, Paul is sick, everybody is sick then!

(31) Il était là hier, il est là aujourd'hui.

He was there yesterday, he is there today.

Exception: enumeration

The prosody associated with the enumeration is analyzed as a presupposition trigger.

John is sick + contour “Enumeration”

∃x(x=j & *sick*(x)) “cataphoric presupposition”

Enumeration forces the second sentence ’Mary is sick’ to be linked to the context, in a way similar (if not identical) to what ’too’ would do. So, the trigger *too* does not bring strictly more presuppositions, and is therefore not required any more.