Gestural co-suppositions within the transparency theory*

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Schlenker 2008 argues that the presupposition d of a (predicative or propositional) trigger \(dd'\) is just a normal entailment that ‘wants’ to be articulated as a separate conjunct, in accordance with (1). If possible, then, one should say … *it is raining and John knows it…* rather than … *John knows that it is raining….* (Grice 1981 develops a related intuition).

(1) **Be Articulate**

In any syntactic environment, express the meaning of an expression … \(dd'\)… as …(d and \(dd')\)... (unless independent pragmatic principles rule out the full conjunction).

*Be Articulate* is controlled by a Gricean principle of manner, *Be Brief*, which prohibits unnecessary prolixity, as in (2), and *takes precedence over Be Articulate* – ruling out, for instance, *If it is raining, it is raining and John knows it.*

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Given a context set $C$, a predicative or propositional occurrence of $d$ is infelicitous in a sentence that begins with $a (d$ and $if$ for any expression $g$ of the same type as $d$ and for any sentence completion $b'$, $C \models a (d$ and $g) b' \iff a d b'$.

In the end, $dd'$ is acceptable in a sentence $a dd' b$ just in case the attempt to be 'articulate' satisfies the boldfaced equivalence in (2), and thus violates Be Brief. Schlenker 2008 claims that the theory of presupposition projection reduces to the interaction between these two principles, and Schlenker 2007 proves that they derive the results of Heim 1983 for a fragment with generalized quantifiers, modulo some technical assumptions.

(1)-(2) are tailored to the case of 'articulated' competitors of the form $\ldots(d$ and $dd')\ldots$. We argue that (i) for gestural presuppositions (Schlenker 2015a,b), illustrated in (3)a, the 'articulated' competitor takes a different form, akin to $\ldots(d$ $d')\ldots$, where $d'$ is a post-verbal modifier; and that (ii) this explains why gestural presuppositions are conditional in nature. (Notation: the gesture co-occurs with the expression that immediately follows the picture).

(3) a. None of these 10 guys punished his son.

$\Rightarrow$ none of these 10 guys punished his son; but for each of them, if he had punished his son, slapping would have been involved

b. None of these 10 guys punished his son like this / by slapping him.

(3)a triggers a universal inference that for each of these 10 guys, if he had punished his son, slapping would have been involved. Given standard results about presupposition projection under none (Chemla 2009), this is explained if $x$ punished $x$’s son triggers a conditionalized presupposition (called a ‘cosupposition’ in Schlenker 2015b) that if $x$ punished $x$’s son, slapping was involved. But why this conditionalization?
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We suggest that this because the natural 'articulated' competitor comes with a post-verbal modifier, as in (3)b.

Schematically, in 'standard' cases, …dd′… competes with …(d and dd′)…, but here …Gd… (where G is a gesture co-occurring with the expression d – e.g. _punished…) competes with …d g …, where g is a post-verbal modifier with the same content as G (e.g. punished … like _this). If d′ g is conjunctively interpreted, dynamic semantics predicts that g is trivial in its local context (and violates Be Brief) just in case the local context c′ of d′ guarantees that c′[d′] entails g, i.e. c′ ⊨ d′ ⇒ g – hence the conditionalized presupposition we observe.

Within the Transparency theory, the post-posed nature of the modifier\(^1\) explains why the gestural presupposition is conditional, modulo the extension of (1)-(2) sketched in (4)a-b. (4)b rules out the articulated competitor …punished his son like _this… just in case no matter which further modifier is added, no matter how the sentence ends, the like-phrase can be eliminated without affecting the truth conditions. This means that the post-verbal modifier must be trivial after the verbal meaning has been computed.

Consider a sentence of the form a G_d′ b, where G is a gesture co-occurring with a (modifier-compatible) expression d′.

a. **Modified Be Articulate**: Say a (d′ g) b rather than a G_d′ b, unless this is in violation of (b).

b. **Modified Be Brief – Incremental Version**: Given a context set C, do not say a

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\(^1\) We follow Schlenker 2007, 2008 in framing the discussion in terms of linear order, but more structural notions could be used instead – as long as they are independently motivated. Languages in which the modifier can come pre-verbally (e.g. German) might well cause problems for a simple-minded analysis based on linear order alone.
(d’ g) b if g is incrementally trivial, in the sense that for any modifier g’, for any sentence completion b’, \( C \models (d' g) c' \iff a (d' c') b' \).

Assuming that the modifiers are intersective, (4)b is equivalent to the acceptability conditions predicted by (1)-(2) for a \((d' \text{ and } g d^*) b\), where \(d^*\) is an arbitrary assertive component:

\[
\text{(5) Predictions of (1)-(2) for the acceptability of } a (d' \text{ and } g d^*) b \\
\text{For any } g \text{ of the same type as } d, \text{ for any sentence completion } b', \\
C \models a (d' \text{ and } (g \text{ and } c')) b' \iff a (d' \text{ and } c') b'.
\]

As shown in Schlenker 2015b (Appendix I), (5) predicts the same result as a conditional presupposition \(d' \Rightarrow g\) in the propositional case and under \([\text{No NP}]\) – but slightly weaker inferences in other cases.

(One could ask - following suggestions by Kennedy and Szabolcsi - whether our analysis extends to verbs that encode manner modifications, as in (6)a, which might compete with (6)b.

\[
\text{(6) a. None}_{\text{Fr}} \text{ of these 10 guys drove / swam to the bridge.} \\
\text{b. None}_{\text{Fr}} \text{ of these 10 guys got to the bridge by driving / got to the bridge by swimming.}
\]

Extending \textit{Be Articulate} to (6)a would predict an inference that \textit{for each of these 10 guys, if he had gone to the bridge, he would have done so by driving / swimming}. It is unclear that this holds.)

\[\text{References}\]


