

# Einführung in die Pragmatik und Texttheorie

## Übungsblatt 2: Präsuppositionen

**Question 1.** Warum behauptete Frege, dass die Präsupposition eines Satzes nicht Teil seiner konventionellen Bedeutung sein könne? Geben Sie ein Beispiel, das dies zeigt.

**Solution** If presuppositions were part of conventional meaning, then the following sentence

(1) *Kepler did not die in misery.*

would have the following meaning:

(2)  $\neg$  (Kepler died in misery  $\wedge$  Kepler designates somebody)

where “Kepler designates somebody” is the presupposition. By De Morgan Law, we know that

$$\neg(p \wedge q) \equiv \neg p \vee \neg q$$

so that (2) is equivalent to

(3)  $\neg$  (Kepler died in misery)  $\vee$   $\neg$  (Kepler designates somebody)

Now (3) is true if the presupposition “Kepler designates somebody” is false. So if presuppositions were part of conventional meaning, sentences such as (1) would be true whenever their presupposition is false – which is obviously wrong.

**Question 2.** Welche semantische Darstellung würde Russel folgenden Sätzen zuweisen?

(4) *Der König von Frankreich ist weise.* **Solution**

$$\exists x(Kx \wedge \neg \exists y((y \neq x) \wedge Ky) \wedge Wx)$$

(5) *Der König von Frankreich ist nicht weise, weil es keinen König von Frankreich gibt.* **Solution**

$$\neg \exists x(Kx \wedge \neg \exists y((y \neq x) \wedge Ky) \wedge Wx)$$

Was ist der Wahrheitswert von (b) in einem Modell, in dem es tatsächlich keinen König von Frankreich gibt?

**Solution** True.

**Question 3.** Geben Sie die Präsuppositionen folgender Sätze an:

- (6) *Jan schaffte es, rechtzeitig aufzuhören.*  
**Solution** Presup: Jan probierte es, rechtzeitig aufzuhören
- (7) *Jan schaffte es nicht, rechtzeitig aufzuhören.*  
**Solution** Presup: Jan probierte es, rechtzeitig aufzuhören
- (8) *Der Chef fing die zwei Diebe ein.*  
**Solution** Presup: Es gibt zwei Diebe.
- (9) *The police ordered the minors to stop drinking.*  
**Solution** Presup: The minors were drinking.
- (10) *Please take me out to the ball game again.*  
**Solution** Presup: The hearer has taken the speaker to the ball before.
- (11) *Valerie regretted not receiving a new T-bird for Labor Day.*  
**Solution** Presup: Valerie has not received a new T-bird for Labor Day.
- (12) *That her pet turtle ran away made Emily very sad.*  
**Solution** Presup: Emily's pet turtle ran away.
- (13) *The administration forgot that the professors support the students.*  
**Solution** Presup: The professors support the students.
- (14) *It is strange that the US invaded Cambodia in 1970.*  
**Solution** Presup: The US invaded Cambodia in 1970.
- (15) *Isn't it strange that the US invaded Cambodia in 1970?*  
**Solution** Presup: The US invaded Cambodia in 1970.
- (16) *Disa wants more popcorn.*  
**Solution** Presup: Disa has had some popcorn.
- (17) *Why don't pigs have wings?*  
**Solution** Presup: Pigs do not have wings.
- (18) *Who discovered Amerika in 1492?*  
**Solution** Presup: Someone discovered Amerika in 1492.

**Question 4.** Geben Sie eine logische Schlussfolgerung des folgenden Satzes an:

- (19) *Der Chef fing die zwei Diebe ein.* **Solution**  
Logische Schlussfolgerung: Der Chef fing einen Dieb ein.

**Question 5.** Was ist der Unterschied zwischen Präsuppositionen und logische Schlussfolgerungen, und zwischen Präsuppositionen und Konversationelle Implikaturen? Geben sie auch Beispiele.

**Solution** The difference between presuppositions and entailments is that presuppositions survive in contexts where semantic entailments do not, and presuppositions are cancellable/defeasible while entailments are not. Examples:

(20) *John saw Mary's sister.*

Both presupposes and entails "Mary has a sister".

- (21) a. *John didn't see Mary's sister.*  
b. *John perhaps saw Mary's sister.*  
c. *Did John see Mary's sister?*

All of the sentences in (a,b,c) presuppose but do not entail "Mary has a sister".

- (22) a. *Mary is a single child, so John didn't see Mary's sister.*  
b. *Mary is a single child, so John perhaps saw somebody else than Mary's sister.*  
c. *Mary is a single child, so how could John see Mary's sister?*

In each (a,b,c), the second clause presupposes "Mary has a sister", but this presupposition is cancelled in the context of the preceding clause, because the preceding clause asserts that Mary is a single child (= has no siblings), and therefore does not have a sister or a brother.

**Solution** Presuppositions and conversational implicatures are both defeasible. The differences between them are:

- CI's are cancellable (on the basis of the cooperative principle and the 4 maxims of conversation), whereas presuppositions are not (rather, they are given by a convention)
- CI's are non-conventional (because they are not part of the conventional meaning of the sentence), whereas presuppositions are conventional
- CI's are non-detachable (they are attached to the semantic content rather than the linguistic form of what is said), whereas presuppositions are detachable (they are attached to a particular linguistic form)

**Question 6.** Geben Sie zwei Beispiele, in denen die Präsuppositionen eines Satzes durch einen Konflikt mit dem Kontext gelöscht werden.

**Solution** Example 1.

- (a) *Jon climbed for many hours before he reached the top.*

Presup: Jon reached the top.

(b) *Jon gave up before he reached the top.*

Does not presuppose: Jon reached the top. The presupposition is cancelled because incompatible with the sentence and our knowledge about the meaning of “give up”.

Example 2.

(a) *Jon wasn't aware that Mary was there.*

Presup: the speaker knew that Mary was there.

(b) *I wasn't aware that Mary was there.*

Does not presuppose: the speaker knew that Mary was there . The presupposition is cancelled because incompatible with the sentence meaning. “I” refers to the speaker so that (b) means: “the speaker wasn't aware that Mary was there” which is inconsistent with ‘the speaker knew that Mary was there’.

**Question 7.** Nennen Sie die Präsuppositionen folgender Sätze und erklären Sie, warum diese Präsuppositionen gelten.

- (23) *Jan bereut es nicht, eine Doktorarbeit gemacht zu haben, weil er in der Tat keine Doktorarbeit gemacht hat.* Solution

Does not presuppose anything. Although “Jan bereut es nicht, eine Doktorarbeit gemacht zu haben” presupposes that “Jan hat eine Doktorarbeit gemacht”. The presupposition is explicitly **cancelled** by the rest of the sentence (“weil er in der Tat keine Doktorarbeit gemacht hat”) and therefore does not survive/is not projected.

- (24) *Wenn Jan Sprachwissenschaft studiert, wird er es bereuen.* Solution

Does not presuppose anything. The presupposition of “bereuen” (namely “Jan hat Sprachwissenschaft studiert”), is **filtered** by the “wenn”-context: in a sentence of the form *wenn p, q*, and if *q* presupposes *r* and *r* is entailed by *p*, then *r* does not survive.

- (25) *Wenn Jan nach Neuseeland geht, wird er es bereuen, Sprachwissenschaft studiert zu haben.* Solution

Presupposes: “Jan hat Sprachwissenschaft studiert” because (i) sentences of the form *x wird P bereuen* presuppose *x hat P* and (ii) there is no filtering going on since “Jan geht nach Neuseeland” does not entail “Jan hat Sprachwissenschaft studiert”.

**Question 8.** Nennen Sie die Typen von Predikaten (mit Beispiele) folgend Karttunen, und Überlegen Sie die Unterschieden zwischen die Predikattypen, von die Perspektiv von Projektion des Präsuppositionen.

Solution

**Plugs** predicates that block off all the presuppositions of the complement sentence (e.g., *say, mention, ask, tell*)

Example: *John mentioned that Maria got married.* does not presuppose that Maria got married.

**Holes** predicates that let all the presuppositions of the complement sentence become presuppositions of the matrix sentence (e.g., *know, regret, understand, be possible, perhaps, not*)

Example: *John regrets that Maria got married.* presupposes that Maria got married.

**Filters** predicates that under certain conditions cancel some of the presuppositions of the complement (e.g., *if-then*, *either-or*, *and*)  
Examples:

*If Maria got married then Maria's husband eats beans every night.*

Does not presuppose that Maria has a husband, because this potential presupposition of the subordinate “then”-clause is filtered out by the main “if”-clause; this is because “Maria got married” entails “Maria has a husband.”

*If Maria is a vegetarian then Maria's husband eats beans every night.*

Presupposes that Maria has a husband; this presupposition is triggered by the subordinate “then”-clause and is projected (=not filtered out) by the main “if”-clause; this is because “Maria is a vegetarian” does not entail “Maria has a husband.”

**Question 9.** Welche Lesarten sagen die Theorien von (i) Heim und (ii) van der Sandt für den folgenden Satz voraus und warum.

(26) *Wenn Jan eine asiatische Freundin hat, wird seine Freundin unglücklich sein.*

**Solution**

(i) according to Heim:

Wenn Jan eine asiatische Freundin hat, wird diese Freundin unglücklich sein.

In Heim's approach, presuppositions can be accommodated locally or globally. “seine Freundin” triggers the presupposition that there is an entity “Freundin von Jan”. This presupposition is accommodated locally, because “asiatische Freundin” entails “Freundin”, and therefore “seine Freundin” is interpreted as referring to the asiatic girlfriend of Jan introduced in the antecedent of the conditional. There is thus no assumption in the global context that Jan has a girlfriend.

(ii) according to van der Sandt:

**Reading 1:** Wenn Jan eine asiatische Freundin hat, wird diese Freundin unglücklich sein.

“seine Freundin” triggers the presupposition that there is an entity “Freundin von Jan”. This presupposition can be either bound

or accommodated (it can be accommodated in the local context, the global context, or any intermediate context). In Reading 1, the presupposition is bound. The referent of “seine Freundin” is identified with the referent of “eine asiatische Freundin”. There is therefore no entity “Freundin von Jan” in the global context.

**Reading 2:** Jan hat eine Freundin und wenn er eine asiatische Freundin hat, wird diese Freundin unglücklich sein.

“seine Freundin” triggers the presupposition that there is an entity “Freundin von Jan”. This presupposition can be either bound or accommodated. In Reading 2, the presupposition is accommodated. It can be accommodated in the local context, the global context, or any intermediate context. Accommodation in the global context is preferred over accommodation in any higher context. Since there is no information in the global context that would prevent accommodation there, a new entity “Freundin von Jan” is added to the global context. This entity is a different one from the entity introduced by “eine asiatische Freundin” in the antecedent of the conditional.

**Question 10.** Überlegen Sie (auch mit Beispiele) wie Präsuppositionen mit Anaphern verglichen werden können.

**Solution** The idea of comparing presuppositions with pronouns comes from Van der Sandt. He noticed that the sentences in (27), which contain the presupposition trigger “Jo’s children” are semantically equivalent with the sentences in (28) which contain the anaphoric pronoun “they”. Both “Jo’s children” in (27), and “they” in (28), refer to the discourse entity “children of Jo” introduced in “Jo has children.”

- (27) a. *Jo has children and Jo’s children are tall.*  
b. *If Jo has children, then Jo’s children are tall.*  
c. *Either Jo has no children or Jo’s children are tall .*
- (28) a. *Jo has children and they are tall.*  
b. *If Jo has children, then they are tall.*  
c. *Either Jo has no children or they are tall.*

On the other hand, presuppositions differ from pronominal anaphors in that presuppositions can be accommodated, while the referents of pronouns cannot. That’s why the sentences in (29) are OK (the presupposition that Jo has children is accommodated in the global context), but the ones in (30) are not (there are no discourse entities for the pronouns to refer to).

- (29) a. *Baldness is hereditary and Jo's children are bold.*  
 b. *If baldness is hereditary, then Jo's children are bold.*  
 c. *Either baldness is not hereditary or Jo's children are bold .*
- (30) a. *??? Baldness is hereditary and they are bold.*  
 b. *??? If baldness is hereditary, then they are bold.*  
 c. *??? Either baldness is not hereditary or they are bold .*

**Question 11.** Geben Sie Beispiele, wo die Constraints von “Consistency” und/oder “Informativity” eine Rolle spielen und überlegen Sie die Lesarten folgend die Theorie von van der Sandt.

**Solution** **Consistency**

- (31) Mary will either get divorced or get married on Friday.

Getting divorced presupposes being married (=non-single), and getting married presupposes being either single or divorced. Assuming that a person cannot be single and non-single at the same time, accommodation of both “marry is non-single” and “Mary is single” would violate consistency (the resulting interpretation is inconsistent with WKL).

**Local Consistency:** Accommodating one of the presuppositions would violate local consistency:

- (a) *Mary is non-single and either she will get divorced or she is single and she will get married.*  
 (b) *Mary is single and either she is non-single and will get divorced or she will get married.*

**Informativity**

- (32) If John is married, his wife is happy.

does not have the reading where the presupposition “John has a wife” would be globally accommodated. Because if it were globally accommodated, then the antecedent of the conditional would become uninformative, because “John has a wife” entails “John is married”.

**Question 12.** Markieren Sie die Sätze, die einen deictischen Ausdruck enthalten. Unterschreiben Sie alle deictische Ausdrücke. (Hint: Deictic expressions are those that require you to know the circumstances —participants, time, place, etc. —of the utterance in order to be able to understand it.)



- (33)
- a. *I saw you standing there.*
  - b. *Dogs are animals.*
  - c. *Yesterday all my troubles seemed so far away.*
  - d. *Abraham Lincoln was the 16<sup>th</sup> president of the US.*
  - e. *He was born in a log cabin.*
  - f. *It was then that she pulled him towards her.*
  - g. *Both authors of this book were born in May.*
  - h. *The Declaration of Independence was signed in 1776.*
  - i. *Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939.*
  - j. *Once you're inside, the treasure will be found on your right.*