More on Presuppositions

- What my group is doing...
- What I am doing...
- What could be done...

Research Objective

- develop a theoretically informed corpus-based account of the diachronic evolution of presuppositions and their triggers

- capture the information-theoretic contribution made by presuppositions and their triggers

Theoretical Background

- Diachronic extension of the **Maximize Presupposition** principle (Heim, 1991)

- **Avoid Pragmatic Overload** principle (Eckardt, 2009) as a potential upper bound

  ➤ presuppositional satisfaction/accommodation profiles for different triggers
  ➤ extraction of relevant features
  ➤ Average surprisal as an additional metric (Degaetano-Ortlieb et al., 2016)

Maximize PSP

- Observation: Different presupposition triggers are obligatory when their presuppositions are met in the context.

(1)   a. #A sun is shining.
        b.   The sun is shining.

(2)   a. #All of John's eyes are open.
        b.   Both of John's eyes are open.

(3)   a. #John thinks/believes that Paris is in France.
        b.   John knows that Paris is in France.

(4)   John came to the store.
        a. #Bill did.
        b.   Bill did, too.

(5)   Jenna went ice skating.
        a. #Today she went ice skating.
        b.   Today she went ice skatin, again.

Maximize PSP

- Maximize Presupposition (Heim, 1991): **Among a set of alternatives, use the felicitous sentence with the strongest presupposition.**

  ➤ Lexical scales of presuppositional strength;
  ➤ Alternatives are infelicitous in the same context;
  ➤ When the weaker item on the scale is used felicitously, it gives rise to an "antipresupposition" (Percus 2006) or "implicated presupposition" (Sauerland 2008).

Maximize PSP – Extensions

- Prediction:

    Situation: A speaker s utters a sentence S_1. S2 is an alternative sentence to S_1; S_2 asserts what S_1 asserts, but additionally presupposes p.

    ➢ Inference: S_2 is infelicitous, that is the constraints on its presupposition are not met.

    ➢ Additionaly: Competence & Authority Assumption (Chemla, 2008)

        ➢ Competence: The speaker is opinionated about the truth of the alternative sentence *p*.
        ➢ Authority: The speaker believes that she could convince her addressee that *p* is true by simply uttering a sentence presupposing *p*.

… then p becomes common belief

(20)   Context: John sees Mary at a party. He wants to discover whether his beautiful addressee is married, but he does not want to reveal that he would prefer her to be single. John may ask:

Didn't you come with your husband?

(21)   Context: There is a disagreement about the number 319; Mary is known to have very good mathematics skills. Someone just said that 319 is a prime number.

a.   *No, Mary knows that it's not.

b.   No, it's not.

c.   No, Mary believes that it's not.

Avoid Pragmatic Overload

- APO principle as an important motivation for meaning change:

  ➢ If too much pragmatic accomodation is required to understand the meaning of a particular construction, semantic reanalysis takes place.

  ➢ Redistribute meaning among constituents to free the respective constituent from its overload.

  ➢ Accomodating PSP failures results in changes to the way particular expressions are interpreted.

Average Surprisal / UID

- **Degetano et al. (2016):**

    Denser encodings for predictable, conventionalized units.

    But:

    ➢ PSP trigger is highly predictable and NOT to be omitted.

    ➢ Thus: Focus on interplay between trigger and info status of PSP it introduces.

    ➢ In case of newly introduced information, i.e. without preceding given associate, the constraint to obligatorily insert a distinct trigger should be lower.

Factives – The Classiscs

- Karttunen (1971):

With Sentential Subjects	With Sentential Objects
is { tragic, significant, relevant, odd }	forget (that)
bothers	regret
matters	resent
makes sense	realize
	make clear
	find out
	discover
	see
	notice

Factives – The Classiscs

- Kiparsky & Kiparsky (1968):

  Sentence with factive predicate presupposes the truth of its complement.

  Do they?

Factive verbs

a. Certain predicates with that-clause subjects:
   that S be odd/tragic (as opposed to *likely*)
   that S count/matter/suffice (as opposed to *happen*)
b. Certain emotive adjectives with complements:
   NP be happy/glad/furious that S (as opposed to *hopeful*)
   NP be sad/delighted/disappointed to VP (as opposed to *willing*)
c. Certain propositional attitude verbs:
   NP know/regret/forget/remember that S (as opposed to *believe*)
d. Verbs of discovery:
   NP discover/find out/notice/observe that S (as opposed to *suspect*)
   NP be discovered/found out/noticed/observed to VP (as opposed to *suspected*)
e. Certain verbs of communication: *acknowledge, admit, confess* (as opposed to *say*)

Half a century later in linguistic theory…

- Karttunen (2016):

  Affirmative assertions commit the speaker to the truth of the complement but negative sentences, questions and conditionals with coming-to-know verbs are non-committal.

  a. The police did not discover that any cars had been tampered with.
  b. If the police did not discover that any cars had been tampered with, the suspects should let go.
  c. Perhaps the police will discover that some cars had been tampered with but so far they haven't.

Example: *know*
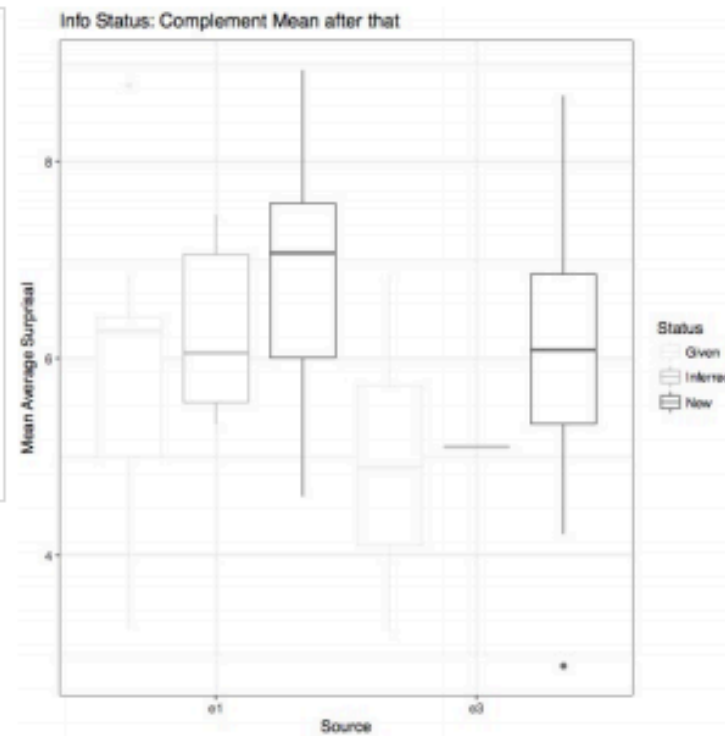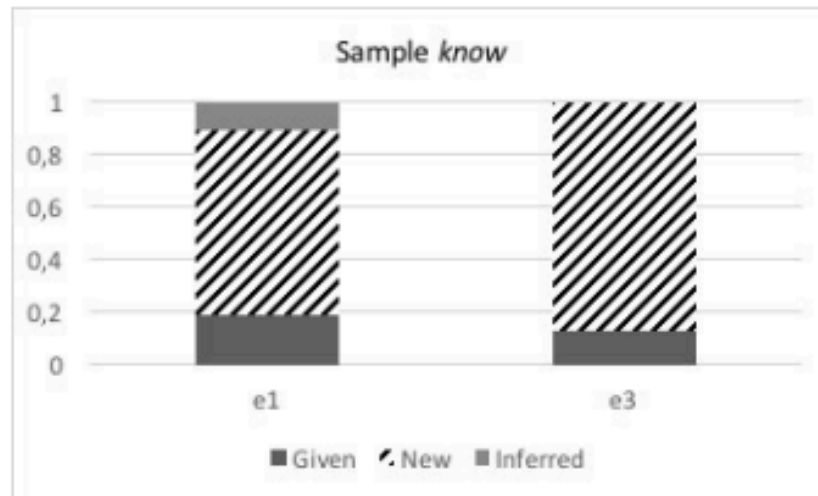
Additional Perspectives

- Psycholinguistic Perspectives

- Opinion Mining

Psycholinguistic Perspectives

- Global-first model (Chemla, 2013):

  ➤ Local accomodation is not the easy processing option for factive verbs.

Zoologists do not realise that elephants are birds.
Global: *[Elephants are birds] and not [zoologists believe so]* (false)
Local: *NOT [(Elephants are birds) AND (zoologists believe so)]* (true)

Chemla (2011)

Psycholinguistic Perspectives

- Abrusàn (2016):
  - ➢ Cognitive factives with non-presuppositional reading.
  - ➢ Semantics and pragmatics of focus interact non-trivially with the presupposition generation process of many triggers.
  - ➢ Focus sensitivity of triggering mechanism.

a. Now, if what you regret is having made the decision to shoot somebody, all this is going to sound a little foolish.
(Ian Percy, *The 7 Secrets to a Life of Meaning*, p. 91; books.google.de/books?isbn=8120724410)

b. If what you regret is something negatively affecting another human, then apologize. (https://uk.answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=201201080 40902AA4mGOs)

Opinion Mining

- Can we approach PSDs and their triggers using an approach that is informed by opinion mining?

  - ➤ Trigger
  - ➤ Opinion target
  - ➤ Opinion holder

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