

Einführung in die Pragmatik und Diskurs

Ivana Kruijff-Korbayová
korbay@coli.uni-sb.de

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Homework 7: Presupposition Triggers Due on Tue 6.6.2006

When handing in your homework, please obey the general instructions, see <http://www.coli.uni-saarland.de/courses/pd/page.php?id=exercises>

Task

Find **one** example of a naturally occurring utterance (in German or in English) for each of the presupposition trigger classes listed below (cf. [1][Sec. 4.2, pp. 197-203 in the German version, pp. 181-184 in the English version]).

Presupposition triggers to work on:

- definite descriptions
- factive verbs
- implicative verbs
- change of state verbs
- iteratives
- verbs of judging
- temporal clauses
- cleft sentences
- comparisons and contrasts marked by particles
- counterfactual conditionals

For each of your examples, give a brief explanation:

- Write down the utterance containing the presupposition trigger and as much context as is necessary to understand the utterance; also state the source.
- Identify the presupposition trigger and what class it belongs to.
- Identify what presupposition the trigger gives rise to.
- Determine whether the presupposition is preserved in the larger context (i.e., beyond the expression/clause where it is triggered), or whether it is suspended or cancelled
 - If the presupposition is preserved, is the corresponding content (a) stated more-or-less explicitly in the preceding/following context, (b) part of (your) background knowledge, (c) something new (to you), but acceptable, i.e. not conflicting with (your) background knowledge ?
 - If the presupposition is not preserved in the larger context, why? It is because it is incompatible with (a) something in the preceding context, (b) (your) background knowledge, (c) for some other reason?

Tip: You can search texts on the internet using the Google search engine (<http://www.google.de/>); note that you can use the advanced search to make your query more precise. Even easier is searching in a corpus, where you can restrict your search to a particular part of speech and/or use regular expressions. Some corpora provide search tools that make the search even easier.

Note: Since one sentence may contain several presupposition triggers, it is possible that you list a sentence under several classes, and explain each of its multiple presuppositions.

Examples

- (1) Micha bedauert es, nicht barfuß in die Schule gegangen zu sein. [Source: http://www.hobby-barfuss.de/best_of/mich_01.htm]
 - i. Presupposition trigger: *die Schule*; definite description (class 1)
 - ii. Triggered presupposition: There exists a school to which Micha went.
 - iii. The presupposition holds in the larger context. It is not stated explicitly, but it is acceptable w.r.t. background knowledge that Micha went to a school.

- (2) Micha bedauert es, nicht barfuß in die Schule gegangen zu sein. [Source: http://www.hobby-barfuss.de/best_of/mich_01.htm]
- i. Presupposition trigger: *bedauern*; factive verb (class 2)
 - ii. Triggered presupposition: Micha did not go to school barefoot.
 - iii. The presupposition holds in the larger context. It is entailed by the following sentence: “Ich habe leider an meiner Schule nie jemand barfuß laufen gesehen und habe es mich selbst damals auch noch nicht getraut.” –this implies that Micha did not dare to go barefoot.
- (3) Wenn bei mir in der Schule andere barfuß gelaufen wären, wäre ich natürlich auch sofort dabei gewesen. [Source: http://www.hobby-barfuss.de/best_of/mich_01.htm]
- i. Presupposition trigger: counterfactual conditional (class 12)
 - ii. Triggered presupposition: Others in the speaker’s (=Micha’s) school were not walking barefoot.
 - iii. The presupposition holds in the larger context. It is implicated (although not entailed) by the following sentence: “Ich habe leider an meiner Schule nie jemand barfuß laufen gesehen ...”. Actually, the text does state an exception to this: “Nur auf einer Klassenfahrt zum Bodensee war ein Mädchen von uns fast immer barfuß.”, but presumably this does not invalidate the presupposition, because the girl did not walk barefoot at school but on a school-trip.

Literatur

- [1] Stephen C. Levinson. *Pragmatics*. Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics. Cambridge University Press, 1983.