- The effect of linking assumptions and number of response options on inferred scalar
- implicature rate
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10 Abstract

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- $_{13}$  pragmatics; truth-value judgment task
- Word count: X

The effect of linking assumptions and number of response options on inferred scalar implicature rate

Introduction

The past 15 years have seen the rise and development of a bustling and exciting new 18 field at the intersection of linguistics, psychology, and philosophy: experimental pragmatics 19 (Bott & Noveck, 2004; Breheny, Katsos, & Williams, 2006; Degen & Tanenhaus, 2015; Geurts 20 & Pouscoulous, 2009; Grodner, Klein, Carbary, & Tanenhaus, 2010; Huang & Snedeker, 2009; 21 I. A. Noveck & Reboul, 2008) XXX ADD MORE. Experimental pragmatics is devoted to experimentally testing theories of how language is used in context. How do listeners draw 23 inferences about the – often underspecified – linguistic signal they receive from speakers? How do speakers choose between the many utterance alternatives they have at their disposal? 25 The most prominently studied phenomenon in experimental pragmatics is undoubtedly 26 scalar implicature. Scalar implicatures arise in virtue of a speaker producing the weaker of 27 two ordered scalemates (hornXXX; ???, ???; Grice, 1975). Examples are provided in (1) and (2). 29

30 1.

- *Utterance:* Some of her pets are cats.
- *Implicature:* Some, but not all, of her pets are cats.
- Scale:
- 34 2.
- Utterance: She owns a cat or a dog.
- *Implicature:* She owns a cat or a dog, but not both.
- Scale:
- A listener, upon observing the utterances in (1a) and (2a), typically infers that the speaker intended to convey the meanings in (1b) and (2b), respectively. Since Grice (1975),

- 40 the agreed-upon abstract rationalization the listener could give for their inference goes
- something like this: the speaker could have made a more informative statement by producing
- the stronger alternative (e.g., All of her pets are cats.). If the stronger alternative is true,
- they should have produced it to comply with the Cooperative Principle. They chose not to.
- I believe the speaker knows whether the stronger alternative is true. Hence, it must not be
- 45 true.
- Because the basic reconstruction of the inference is much more easily characterized for
- scalar implicatures than for other implicatures, scalar implicatures have served as a test bed
- 48 for many questions in experimental pragmatics, including, but not limited to:
- 1. Are scalar inferences default inferences, in the sense that they arise unless blocked by (marked) contexts (Degen, 2015; Horn, 1984; Levinson, 2000)?
- 2. Are scalar inferences default inferences, in the sense that they are computed
  automatically in online processing and only cancelled by context in a second effortful
  step if required by context) [Bott and Noveck (2004);Breheny et al. (2006);Degen and
  Tanenhaus (2016);Grodner et al. (2010);Huang and Snedeker (2009);Politzer-Ahles and
  Fiorentino (2013);Tomlinson2013]?
- 3. What are the (linguistic and extra-linguistic) factors that affect whether a scalar implicature is derived [Zondervan (2010);Degen and Tanenhaus (2015); Degen and Tanenhaus (2016); Degen (2015); Degen and Goodman (2014); Bergen and Grodner (2012); Breheny et al. (2006); Breheny, Ferguson, and Katsos (2013);Marneffe and Tonhauser (2016);De Neys and Schaeken (2007);Bonnefon, Feeney, and Villejoubert (2009);Chemla2011;Potts2015]?
- 4. How much diversity is there across implicature types, and within scalar implicatures across scale types, in whether or not an implicature is computed (Doran, Ward, Larson, McNabb, & Baker, 2012; Tiel, Miltenburg, Zevakhina, & Geurts, 2014)?

- 5. At what age do children acquire the ability to compute implicatures (Barner, Brooks, & Bale, 2011; Katsos & Bishop, 2011; Frank; Musolino, 2004; Noveck, 2001; Papafragou & Tantalou, 2004)?
- In addressing all of these questions, it has been crucial to obtain estimates of
  implicature rates. For 1., implicature rates from experimental tasks can be taken to
  inform whether scalar implicatures should be considered default inferences. For 2.,
  processing measures on responses that indicate implicatures can be compared to processing
  measures on responses that indicate literal interpretations. For 3., contextual effects can be
  examined by comparing implicature rates across contexts. For 4., implicature rates can be
  compared across scales (or across implicature types). For 5., implicature rates can be
  compared across age groups.

  A standard measure that has stood proxy for implicature rate across many studies is
  the proportion of "pragmatic" judgments in truth-value judgment paradigms [Bott and
- the proportion of "pragmatic" judgments in truth-value judgment paradigms [Bott and
  Noveck (2004);Noveck (2001);Noveck and Posada (2003);Chemla and Spector (2011);Geurts
  and Pouscoulous (2009);Degen and Tanenhaus (2015);De Neys and Schaeken
  (2007);Degen2014]. In these kinds of tasks, participants are provided a set of facts, either
  presented visually or via their own knowledge of the world. They are then asked to judge
  whether a sentence intended to describe those facts is true or false (or alternatively, whether
  it is right or wrong, or they are asked whether they agree or disagree with the sentence).
  The crucial condition for assessing implicature rates in these kinds of studies typically
  consists of a case where the facts are such that the stronger alternative is true and the target
  utterance is thus also true but underinformative. For instance, Bott and Noveck (2004)
  asked participants to judge sentences like "Some elephants are mammals", when world
  knowledge dictates that all elephants are mammals. Similarly, Degen and Tanenhaus (2015)

asked participants to judge sentences like "You got some of the gumballs" in situations where

the visual evidence indicated that the participant received all the gumballs from a gumball

machine. In these kinds of scenarios, the story goes, if a participant responds "FALSE", that

indicates that they computed a scalar implicature, eg to the effect of "Not all elephants are mammals" or "You didn't get all of the gumballs", which is (globally or contextually) false. If instead a participant responds "TRUE", that is taken to indicate that they interpreted the utterance literally as 'Some, and possibly all, elephants are mammals' or "You got some, and possibly all, of the gumballs".

Given the centrality of the theoretical notion of "implicature rate" to much of 97 experimental pragmatics, there is to date a surprising lack of discussion of the basic 98 assumption that it is adequately captured by the proportion of FALSE responses in 99 truth-value judgment tasks (but see (???); Geurts and Pouscoulous (2009); Degen and 100 Goodman (2014); Katsos and Bishop (2011)). Indeed, the scalar implicature acquisition 101 literature was shaken up when Katsos and Bishop (2011) showed that simply by introducing 102 an additional response option, children started looking much more pragmatic than had been 103 previously observed in a binary judgment paradigm. (???) allowed children to distribute 1, 104 2, or 3 strawberries to a puppet depending on "how good the puppet said it". The result was 105 that children gave on average fewer strawberries to the puppet when he produced 106 underinformative utterances compared to when he produced literally true and pragmatically 107 felicitous utterances, suggesting that children do, in fact, display pragmatic ability even at ages when they had previously appeared not to. 109

But this raises an important question: in truth-value judgment task, how do we know 110 whether an interpretation is literal or the result of an implicature computation? The binary 111 choice task typically used is appealing in part because it allows for a direct mapping from 112 response options – TRUE and FALSE – to interpretations – literal and pragmatic. That the seeming simplicity of this mapping is illusory becomes apparent once a third response option 114 is introduced, as in the Katsos and Bishop (2011) case. How is the researcher to interpret 115 the intermediate option? Katsos and Bishop (2011) grouped the intermediate option with 116 the negative endpoint of the scale for the purpose of categorizing judgments as literal 117 vs. pragmatic. But it seems just as plausible that they could have grouped it with the 118

positive endpoint of the scale and taken the hard line that only truly FALSE responses
constitute a full-fledged implicature. The point here is that there has been remarkably little
consideration of linking functions between behavioral measures and theoretical constructs
in experimental pragmatics, a problem in many subfields of psycholinguistics (???). We
argue that it is time to engage more seriously with these issues.

We begin by reporting an experiment that addresses the following question: do the 124 number of response options provided in a truth-value judgment task and the way that 125 responses are grouped into pragmatic ("SI") and literal ("no SI") change inferences about 126 scalar implicature rates? Note that this way of asking the question presupposes two things: 127 first, that whatever participants are doing in a truth-value judgment task, the behavioral 128 measure can be interpreted as providing a measure of **interpretation**. And second, that 129 listeners either do or do not compute an implicature on any given occasion. In the 130 Discussion we will discuss both of these issues. First, following Degen and Goodman (2014), 131 we will offer some remarks on why truth-value judgment tasks are better thought of as 132 measuring participants' estimates of speakers' **production** probabilities. This will suggest a 133 completely different class of linking functions. And second, we discuss an alternative 134 conception of scalar implicature as a probabilistic phenomeonen, a view that has recently 135 rose to prominence in the subfield of probabilistic pragmatics. This alternative conception of scalar implicature, we argue, affords developing and testing quantitative linking functions in 137 a rigorous and motivated way. 138

Consider a setup in which a listener is presented a card with a depiction of either one or two animals (see the figure below for an example). As in a standard truth-value judgment task, the listener then observes an underinformative utterance about this card (e.g., "There is a cat or a dog on the card") and is asked to provide a judgment on a scale from 2 to 5 response options, with endpoints "wrong" and "right". In the binary case, this reproduces the standard truth-value judgment task. XXX say briefly sth about wrong/right vs true/false and agree/disagree. The figure below exemplifies (some of) the researcher's

options for grouping responses. Under what we will call the "Strong link" assumption, only 146 the negative endpoint of the scale is interpreted as evidence for a scalar implicature having 147 been computed. Under the "Weak link" assumption, in contrast, any response that does not 148 correspond to the positive endpoint of the scale is interpreted as evidence for a scalar 149 implicature having been computed. Intermediate grouping schemes are also possible, but 150 these are the ones we will consider here. Note that for the binary case, the Weak and Strong 151 link return the same categorization scheme, but for any number of response options greater 152 than 2, the Weak and Strong link can in principle lead to differences in inferences about 153 implicature rate.

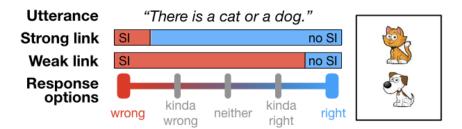


Figure 1. Strong and weak link from response options to researcher inference about scalar implicature rate, exemplified for the disjunctive utterance when the conjunction is true.

Let's examine an example. Assume three response options (wrong, neither, right).

Assume further that a third of participants each gave each of the three responses, i.e., the
distributions of responses is 1/3, 1/3, and 1/3. Under the Strong link, we infer that this task
yielded an implicature rate of 2/3. Under the Weak link, we infer that this task yielded an
implicature rate of 1/3. This is quite a drastic difference if we are for instance interested in
whether scalar implicatures are inference defaults and we would like to interpret an
implicature rate of above an arbitrary threshold (e.g., 50%) as evidence for such a claim.
Under the Strong link, we would conclude that scalar implicatures are not defaults. Under
the Weak link, we would conclude that they are.

In the experiment reported in the following section, we presented participants with

exactly this setup. Different groups of participants were presented with different numbers of

164

response options. We categorized their responses according to the Weak and the Strong link and tested whether number of response options and categorization scheme leads to different conclusions about implicature rates.

## 169 Experiment

## $^{70}$ Methods

Participants. 200 participants were recruited using Amazon Mechanical Turk (binary=50, ternary53, quaternary=43, quinary=54). No participant was excluded from the final analysis.

Procedure. The study was administered online through Amazon Mechanical Turk.

Participants were introduced to a set of cards with pictures of one or two animals (Figure 2).

They were told that a blindfolded fictional character called Bob is going to guess what

animals are on the card. On each trial, participants saw a card as well as a sentence

representing Bob's guess. For example, they saw a card with a cat on it and read the

sentence "There is a cat on the card." The study ended after 24 trials. At the end

participants optionally provided demographic information. We also asked participants if they

had any prior training in logic. You can access and view on the study's online repository.

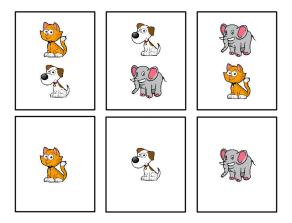


Figure 2. Cards used in the connective guessing game.

**Design and Materials.** The study had two main manipulaitons within participants: 182 the type of card and the type of guess. There were two types of cards. Cards with only one 183 animal on them and cards with two animals. Animals were chosen from the following set: 184 cat, dog, and elephant There were three types of guesses: simple (e.g. There is a cat). 185 conjunctive (e.g. There is a cat and a dog), and disjunctive (e.g. There is a cat or a dog). In 186 each trial, the animal labels used in the guess and the animal images on the card may have 187 no overlap (e.g. Image: cat, Guess: There is an elephant), a partial overlap (e.g. Image: cat, 188 Guess: There is a cat or a doq), or a total overlap (e.g. Image: cat and dog, Guess: There is 189 a cat or a dog). Crossing the number of animals on the card, the type of guess, and the 190 overlap between the guess and the card results in 12 different possible trial types. We chose 191 8 trial types (Figure 3), balancing the number of one-animal vs. two-animal cards, simple 192 vs. connective guesses, and expected true vs. false trials. Three trials were randomly selected 193 from each of the 8 trial-types, for a total of 24 trials. The order of these 24 trials was 194 randomized as well. 195

Participants could derive implicatures in two trial types. First, the trial type in which 196 two animals were present on the card (e.g. cat and dog) but Bob guessed only one of them 197 (e.g. "there is a cat"). Such trials can have a literal interpretation (cat and possibly more) or 198 an exhaustive interpretation (only cat). We refer to them as "exhaustive". The second trial 199 type with implicatures was the one in which two animals were on the card (e.g. cat and dog) 200 and Bob used a disjunction (e.g. cat or dog). These trials can have a literal (inclusive) 201 interpretation (e.g. cat or dog or both), or an exclusive interpretation (e.g. cat or dog, not 202 both). We refer to these trials as "scalar". The following four trial types were used as 203 experimental control: two trial types where there was no overlap between the guess (e.g. elephant) and the animal(s) on the card (e.g. cat, cat and dog); and two trial types 205 where the animal(s) on the card were correctly guessed. For example, if there was only a cat 206 on the card, Bob said "there is a cat" and if there was a cat and a dog, Bob said "there is a 207 cat and a dog". Since the fictional character was blindfolded and did not see the outcome of 208

the game, the ignorance inference commonly associated with disjunction was already
common ground in the experimental setting. If the character was seeing the cards or knew
what was on them, a disjunction would have violated the expectation that the speaker does
not know which alternative actually holds. Our study controls for the possibile effect of
ignorance violations on exclusivity and exhaustive inferences.

The study also had a between participant manipulation of the number of response options in the forced choice task. Participants were randomly assigned to one of four different conditions. The conditions differed with respect to the number of response options: binary (wrong vs. right), ternary (wrong, neither, right), quaternary (wrong, kinda wrong, kinda right, right), and quinary (wrong, kinda wrong, neither, kinda right, right). We wanted to see if the number of response options in the forced choice task would affect our estimate of the task's "implicature rate".

elephant	cat	cat and dog	cat or dog	
				<b>3</b>

Figure 3. Trial types represented by example cards and guesses.

## $_{221}$ Results

Here we present the proportion that participants chose the response options in each of
the 8 trial types of the binary, ternary, quaternary, and quinary tasks. Figure 4 shows the
proportion of "right" and "wrong" responses in the binary task. Starting from the leftmost
column, participants considered a guess "wrong" if the guessed animal was not on the card.

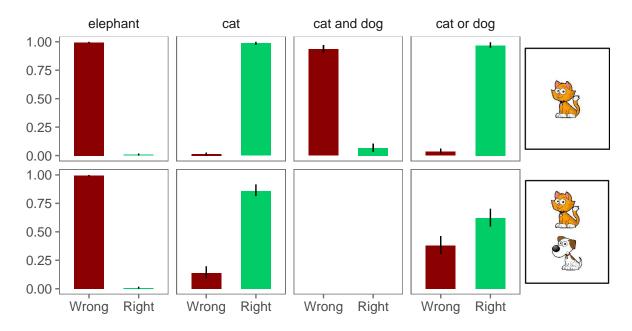


Figure 4. Proportion responses for the two-alternative (binary) forced choice judgments in the guessing game.

Moving to the second column, participants considered a guess "right" if the animal on the 226 card was mentioned. However, if only one of the two animals on the card was mentioned 227 (exhaustive trials), 14% of the times participants considered the guess "wrong". Moving to 228 the third column, if a conjunction of animals was guessed while only one animal was on the 229 card, participants considered the guess to be "wrong". If a conjunction of animals was 230 guessed and both animals were present on the card, all participants considered the guess to 231 be "right" as expected. Moving to the forth column, if a disjunction of animals was guessed 232 and only one of the animals was on the card, participants considered the guess to be "right" 233 almost all the time. However, if both animals were present (scalar trials), 38% of the times 234 participants considered the guess to be "wrong". 235

Figure 5 shows the proportion of "right", "neither", and "wrong" responses in the ternary task. Similar to the binary task, participants considered a guess wrong when the mentioned animal was not on the card. They considered the guess "right" when the 238 mentioned animal was on the card. However, in exhaustive trials when the fictional character 239 only guessed one of the two animals on the card, participants considered the guess "wrong" 240

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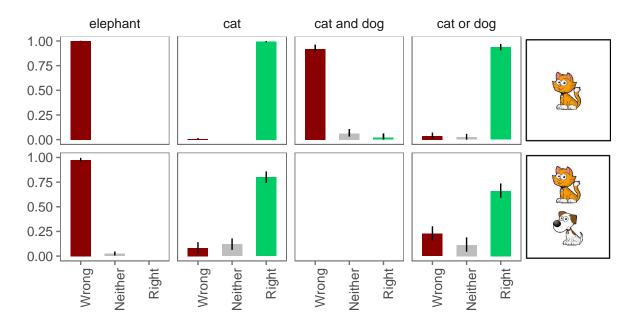


Figure 5. Proportion responses for the three-alternative (ternary) forced choice judgments in the guessing game.

241 8% of the time and neither wrong nor right 12% of the time. If a conjunction of animals was
242 guessed and only one animal was present on the card, participants considered the guess
243 "wrong". As expected, when a conjunction was used and both animals were present,
244 participants considered the guess "right". Similarly, participants considered the guess "right"
245 when a disjunction was used and only one of the animals was on the card. However, in scalar
246 trials that both animals were on the card and a disjunction was gueassed, participants
247 judged the guess "wrong" 23% of the time and "neither" 11% of the time.

Figure 6 shows the proportion of "right", "kinda right", "kinda wrong", and "wrong" responses in the quaternary task. Similar to the results seen previously, the control trials turned outas expected. Participants considered a guess "wrong" if the animal guessed was not on the card and "right" if it was the only animal on the card. If a conjunctin of animals was guessed and both animals were on the card the guess was "right". However, when only one of the animals on the card was guessed (exhaustive trials), participants judged the guess "wrong" 2% of the time, "kinda wrong" 5% of the time, and "kinda right" 66% of the times. Perhaps surprisingly, when a conjunction was used and only one of the animals was on the

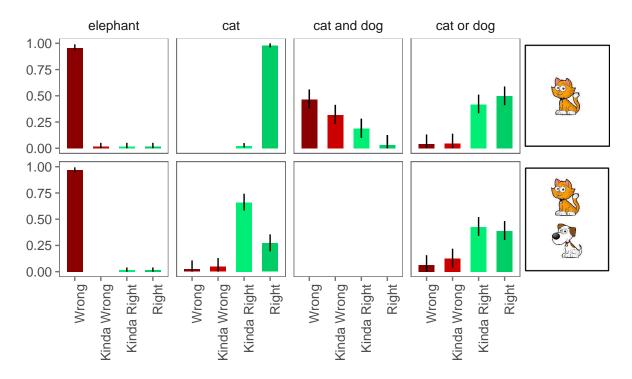


Figure 6. Proportion responses for the four-alternative (quaternary) forced choice judgments in the guessing game.

card, participants considered the guess "wrong" most of the time, but they often considered it "kinda wrong" or even "kinda right". This suggests that perhaps participants considered a notion of partially true or correct statement in our experimental setting. Disjunctive guesses with one or two animals on the card showed similar response patterns with participants choosing the "kinda right" and "right" options most of the time. When both animals were on the card with a disjunctive guess (scalar trials), participants judged the guess "wrong" 6% of the time, "kinda wrong" 12% of the time, and "kinda right" 43% of the times.

Finally, Figure 7 shows the proportion of "right", "kinda right", "neither", "kinda wrong", and "wrong" responses in the quinary task. Since the results for the control trials were identical to previous tasks, we do not repeat them here. In exhaustive trials where two animals were on the card and only one of them was guessed, participants chose "kinda right" the majority of times (72%). Again perhaps surprisingly, when only one animal was on the card and the guess was a conjunction, responses were equally split among "wrong", "kinda

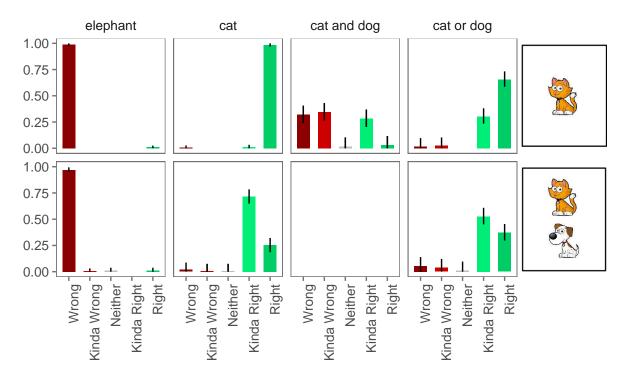


Figure 7. Proportion responses for the five-alternative (quinary) forced choice judgments in the guessing game.

wrong", and "kinda right" responses. With disjunctive guesses, partitipants were more likely to choose "right" and "kinda right" options. When only one animal was on the card, participants considered the disjunctive guess as "right" more often. When both animals were on the card (scalar trials), participants judged the disjunctive guess as "kinda right" 52% of the time.

Comparing the response patterns in binary to quinary tasks (Figures 4 to 7), we can
observe that in implicature trials, participants are less likely to choose the endpoints of the
scale (i.e. "wrong" and "right") as they are given more intermediate options. This raises the
possibilty that the strict "wrong/right" responses in the tasks with fewer options (binary and
ternary) were not accurately reflecting participant judgments of implicature trials and
pushed their judgments to the extreme ends. More generally, the data suggest that
participant judgments in contexts that give rise to implicatures fall within the intermrediate
level of the response scale and forced choice tasks with few options (especially binary tasks)

may risk depicting judgments more extreme than they actually are.

## 283 Analysis

Our primary goal in this study was to check whether the estimated "implicature rate" 284 in the experimental task is affected by the linking assumption and the number of response 285 options available in the task. Our analysis in this section focuses on these three elements. As 286 mentioned before, two trial types were predicted to include pragmatic implicatures. First, 287 trials where two animals were on the card but the fictional character guessed with a 288 disjunction (scalar); for example "cat or dog" when the card has both a cat and a dog on it. 289 Second, trials where there were two animals on the card but the character guessed only one 290 (exhaustive); for example "cat" when the card had a cat and a dog on it. We called such 291 trials "exhaustive". In our assessment of implicature rate, we focus on these two trial types. 292 We considered two linking assumptions. First we defined a weak (lenient) linking 293 assumption in which any response lower than the maximum point on the scale (i.e. "right") 294 is considered evidence for implicature computation. Second, we defined a strong (strict) 295 linking assumption that only considered the lowest point on the scale (i.e. "wrong") as 296 evidence for implicature computation. For each condition in our study (binary, ternary, 297 quaternary, and quinary) and each implicature trial type (exhaustive and scalar), we 298 computed a weak and a strong implicature rate. Figure 8 shows these computed rates. 299 Comparing the strong and weak rows on Figure 8, we see that a weak linking 300 assumption tends to estimate higher implicature rates, especially in tasks with more 301 response options. With a strong linking assumption, the binary and possibly ternary 302 judgment tasks derive higher implicature rates than quaternary and quinary tasks. With a 303 weak linking assumption, the pattern is reversed. Quaternary and quinary tasks estimate 304 higher rates than binary and ternary tasks. 305 We test this hypothesis formally using a binomial mixed effects model with the fixed 306 effect of response type and the random intercept for participants as well as random intercept 307

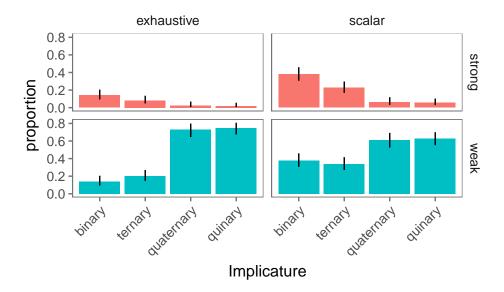


Figure 8. Implicature rate in exhaustive and scalar trials of the binary, ternary, quaternary, and quinary versions of the guessing game, computed once with a strong linking assumption and once with a weak linking assumption.

308 and slope for

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All the analytical decisions described here were pre-registered and you can access them
through the following link: https://aspredicted.org/tq3sz.pdf

• Was logical training a significant predictor of "implicature rate"?

312 Discussion

Alternative Linking Hypothesis: \* RSA: Response behavior across conditions
(utterance-card combinations) and dependent measures can be predicted by a linking
hypothesis that assumes that participants are behaving like soft-optimal RSA speakers and
provide a particular response (eg TRUE) to an utterance u if the RSA speaker probability of
u (given the card) is within a particular probability interval (eg, within the interval [theta,

• Differences between traditional approaches and RSA: 1. The traditional linking hypotheses are based on a binary implicature/literal theory of pragmatic reasoning but

RSA gives a continuous measure of pragmatic reasoning and allows for better predicting response behavior with multiple options.

A simple visual inspection of our results suggests that any variant of the Traditional 323 Linking Hypothesis will yield unsatisfying empirical coverage with regards to participants' 324 behavior in truth value judgment tasks. Recall that according to this hypothesis, scalar 325 implicature is conceptualized as a binary, categorical affair: an implicature is either 326 "calculated," or it isn't. This assumption has implications for how we approach analysis of 327 variation in behavior on a truth value judgment task; for example, why did the majority of respondents in the binary condition of our experiment answer "Right" to an utterance of cat 329 or dog when the card had a cat and a dog on it? 330 On the Traditional story, we are forced to say that a) not all participants calculated 331 the implicature; or that b) some participants who calculated the implicature did not choose 332 the anticipated response (i.e. "Wrong") due to some other cognitive reflex which "overrode" 333 the implicature; or some mixture of (b) and (c). We might similarly posit that one or both of 334 these factors underlie the variation in the ternary, quaterary, and quinary conditions 335 (e.g. why were participants roughly split between "Right" and "Kind of right" when the 336 utterance was cat or dog and the card had a cat and a dog?). There is an established cottage 337 industry of pragmatics research which approaches the problem of behavioral variation in 338 exactly these ways, exploring the factors which "license" implicature calculation or 339 "suppress" its anticipated behavioral expression (c.f. \_\_\_\_), but the best we can hope for on 340 this approach is an analysis which traces the general qualitative patterns in the data (and we 341 should stress that even in this respect, the industry has yet to fully deliver the goods!). The Alternative Linking Hypothesis contrasts with the Traditional Linking Hypothesis in that the former is rooted in a quantitative formalization of pragmatic competence which 344 provides us a continuous measure of pragmatic reasoning. [recap RSA model here? Maybe 345 show how it gets the right basic qualitative pattern, i.e.  $P_L(a \text{ and b} | \text{``a or b''}) < P_L(a |$ 346 "or");  $P_L(a \text{ and } b| \text{ "a or b"}) < P_L(b | \text{ "or"})$ 

Following Degen & Goodman (2014), we proceed on the assumption that behavior on 348 sentence verification tasks, such as truth value judgment tasks, is best modeled as a function 349 of an individual's mental representation of a cooperative interlocutor ( $S_1$  in the language of 350 RSA). For a given utterance u and an intended communicated meaning w,  $S_1(\mathbf{u} \mid \mathbf{w})$  outputs 351 a conditional probability of u given w. For example, in the binary condition of our 352 experiment where a participant evaluated cat or dog when there were both animals on the 353 card, the participant has access to the mental representation of  $S_1$  and hence to the  $S_1$ 354 conditional probability of hearing the utterance cat or dog given a dog and cat card  $S_1$  (cat 355 or  $dog \mid cat \text{ and } dog)$ . 356

One desideratum of a linking hypothesis given this view of pragmatic competence is to transform this probability value into a categorical output (e.g. "Right"/"Wrong" in the case of the binary condition). This can be achieved by positing that participants "filter out" low-probability utterances given an intended communicated meaning. We model a responder, R, who in the binary condition responds "Right" to an utterance u in world w just in case  $S_1(u \mid w)$  exceeds some probability threshold  $\theta$ :

R(u, w, 
$$\theta$$
) = "Right" iff  $S_1(u \mid w) > \theta$  = "Wrong" otherwise

In the experiment conditions where there are more than two choices, we model the range of possible behavioral responses for R with the introduction of intermediate probability thresholds. For example, in the ternary condition,  $R(u, w, \theta_1, \theta_2)$  is "Right" iff  $S_1(u \mid w) > \theta_1$  and "Neither" iff  $\theta_1 > S_1(u \mid w) > \theta_2$ . To fully generalize the model to our five experimental conditions, we say that R takes as its input an utterance u and a world state w and a number of threshold variables dependent on a variable c, corresponding to the experimental condition in which the participant finds herself (e.g. the range of possible responses available to R).

```
Given c = "ternary" R(u, w, \theta_1, \theta_2) = \text{``Right'' iff } S_1(u \mid w) > \theta_1 = \text{``Neither'' iff } \theta_1 > S_1(u \mid w) > \theta_2
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= "Wrong" otherwise
375
               Given c = "quatenary"
376
               R(u, w, \theta_1, \theta_2, \theta_3)
377
               = "Right" iff S_1(\mathbf{u} \mid \mathbf{w}) > \theta_1 = "Kinda Right" iff \theta_1 > S_1(\mathbf{u} \mid \mathbf{w}) > \theta_2
378
               = "Kinda Wrong" iff \theta_2 > S_1(\mathbf{u} \mid \mathbf{w}) > \theta_3 = "Wrong" otherwise
379
               Given c = "quinary"
380
               R(u, w, \theta_1, \theta_2, \theta_3, \theta_4)
381
               = "Right" iff S_1(\mathbf{u}\mid\mathbf{w})>\theta_1 = "Kinda Right" iff \theta_1>S_1(\mathbf{u}\mid\mathbf{w})>\theta_2 = "Neither" iff \theta_2
382
      > S_1(\mathbf{u} \mid \mathbf{w}) > \theta_3
383
               = "Kinda Wrong" iff \theta_3 > S_1(\mathbf{u} \mid \mathbf{w}) > \theta_4 = "Wrong" otherwise
384
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