

Pragmatics Homework #1: Presuppositions

Exam Number B018520

January 23, 2015

Part I

1. **Propositions b. and c. are presupposed**, while **proposition d. is entailed**, assuming

$$\forall x. \Diamond \text{scared}(x) \rightarrow \text{animate}(x)$$

My reasoning for **b.** is as follows: consider the negation test, i.e.

That John was assaulted did not scare Mary. (1)

as applied to an inanimate object, e.g.

That John was assaulted did not scare the table.¹ (2)

Sentence 2 implies a table capable of being scared. To support this, a context can be constructed which in my evaluation triggers accommodation of the table being animate, e.g.

Bursts of light erupted from Mickey's wand as he made the broomsticks dance; this did not scare the table.

My reasoning for **c.** stems primarily from the negation test as performed in (1): John's assault survives negation. The contrapositive test can be used to show **a.**'s entailment relationship with **d.**. Given

That John was assaulted did not cause fear in Mary.

Mary was also not scared by John's assault, assuming causing fear in and being scared are roughly synonymous.

2. **Proposition b. is presupposed; proposition c. is entailed.** The presupposition relationship of **a.** to **b.** can be demonstrated using a denial test: contrast

That's false; Carmen still works at the University of Edinburgh.

with

That's false; Carmen never worked at the University of Edinburgh.

Contraposition holds for **c.** and **a.**, demonstrating an entailment relationship:

¹The symbol # throughout this work is used to indicate my own evaluation.

It's not the case that Carmen is not working at the University of Edinburgh.

∴

It's not the case that Carmen is no longer working at the University of Edinburgh.

3. **Proposition b. is presupposed; proposition c. is entailed.** The presupposition relationship with **b.** can be demonstrated via the negation test: in

John managed to get the job.

John's finding it difficult to get the job survives. It should be noted, however, that this may be partially contingent on how strictly the use of "managed" is constrained by the difficulty of the task; this is to say, in my evaluation, this could plausibly be considered a case of implicature, e.g.

Did John manage to get the job?

Yes, he managed to get it, in fact, he found it quite easy.

Contraposition can again be used to demonstrate that **a.** entails **c.**, e.g.

It's not the case that John didn't get the job.

∴

It's not the case that John didn't manage to get the job.

Part II

4. **Proposition a. entails b.**, and vice-versa. Simply stated,

$$\neg \forall x. one(x) \rightarrow try(x, kill(Templeton, x))$$

is equivalent to

$$\exists x. one(x) \wedge \neg try(x, kill(Templeton, x))$$

following from the well-established equivalences

$$\neg \forall x. P(x) \equiv \exists x. \neg P(x)$$

and

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

5. **Proposition b. entails a.**
6. **Proposition a. presupposes b.**

Part III

8. (a)