

# Satisfaction without provisos

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December 12, 2019

# Presupposition

## The empirical observation

We have linguistic devices that grammatically encode what we take for granted in making an utterance.

(1) Karlos brought his car.

$\leadsto$  Karlos has a car.

(presupposition)

# Presupposition

## The empirical observation

How do we identify presuppositions?

- ▶ Family-of-sentence tests (Chierchia and McConnell-Ginet, 1990)
- ▶ “hey, wait a minute!” test (von Stechow, 2004)

**Major research question:** what grammatical properties of an expression give rise to its presuppositions?

A **compositional** account answers two questions:

- ▶ How do we grammatically encode presuppositions in simple expressions (presupposition triggers)?
- ▶ How do presuppositions project in complex expressions?
  - The “projection problem” (Langendoen and Savin, 1971)

## Outline:

- ▶ Investigate an influential compositional framework for studying presupposition projection: “satisfaction theory” (Geurts, 1996).
  - Heim 1983
  - Compositionally derived conditions on dynamic update  
     $\leadsto$  presuppositions
  - The “proviso problem”
- ▶ Build a satisfaction account on top an alternative-semantics for indefinites (Charlow, 2014, 2019a,b)
  - which allows presupposition triggers to *take (exceptional) scope*.
  - Same theory gives rise to exceptional scope for both indefinites and presupposition triggers.
  - Investigate the proviso problem in this setting.
- ▶ Suggest how presupposition accommodation might work.

# Plan

## The satisfaction theory

- Rough sketch of how it works

- The proviso problem

## Alternative semantics and presupposition

- Basic grammar for indefinites

- Adding presupposition

- The proviso problem?

## Presupposition accommodation

# Plan

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# The satisfaction theory

## Rough sketch of how it works

- ▶ Basic ideas come from Heim 1983.
- ▶ Sentences denote *context change potentials*.

$$\begin{aligned} & \llbracket \Delta \ ; \ it's\ raining \rrbracket \\ &= \llbracket \Delta \rrbracket + \llbracket it's\ raining \rrbracket \\ \text{e.g., } &= \{w \in \mathcal{W} \mid \llbracket \Delta \rrbracket^w = \top\} \cap \{w \in \mathcal{W} \mid \mathbf{rain}\ w\} \end{aligned}$$

- What is +? Depends on your (more specific) theory.
  - Might amount to set intersection (for sets of worlds, sets of assignments, etc.).

# The satisfaction theory

## Rough sketch of how it works

- ▶ What if the sentence updating  $\Delta$  has a presupposition?

$$\llbracket \Delta \rrbracket + \llbracket \textit{Karlos brought his car} \rrbracket$$

- $\Delta$  “admits” *Karlos brought his car* only if  $\Delta$  entails that Karlos has a car.
  - “Stalnaker’s bridge” (von Fintel, 2008)
- ▶ Foregoing assumptions are meant to provide a way of determining what a sentence’s presuppositions *are*:
  - $S_1$  presupposes  $S_2$  iff every context  $\Delta$ , such that  $\llbracket \Delta \rrbracket + \llbracket S_1 \rrbracket$  is successful, entails  $S_2$ .
  - *Karlos brought his car*  $\leadsto$  *Karlos has a car*



# The satisfaction theory

## Rough sketch of how it works

- Explaining projection behavior: just a matter of using  $+$  in the right way.

(2) Karlos has a car, and he brought his car.

- $c + \llbracket (2) \rrbracket = (c + \llbracket K \text{ has a car} \rrbracket) + \llbracket K \text{ brought his car} \rrbracket$
- Update is successful iff each of the individual updates is successful.
- ... iff  $c$  entails *If Karlos has a car, then Karlos has a car.*  
 $\leadsto$  No presuppositions for (2).
- The second sentence's presupposition is *filtered*.

(3) If Karlos has a car, he brought his car.

- $c + \llbracket (3) \rrbracket$ :
  - $c_1 := c + \llbracket K \text{ has } c \rrbracket$
  - $c_2 := (c + \llbracket K \text{ has } c \rrbracket) + \llbracket K \text{ brought } c \rrbracket$
  - $= c - (c_1 - c_2)$
- Again, update is successful iff each of the individual updates is.  
 $\leadsto$  No presuppositions for (3).

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# The satisfaction theory

## The proviso problem

- Geurts 1996: there's a big problem!

(4) It's raining, and my car is too far away.

- Update successful iff each of the individual updates is.
  - $c + \llbracket \textit{it's raining, and my car is too far away} \rrbracket$   
 $= (c + \llbracket \textit{it's raining} \rrbracket) + \llbracket \textit{my car is too far away} \rrbracket$
- ...iff the context entails *if it's raining, I have a car*.
- $(4) \rightsquigarrow \textit{if it's raining, I have a car} \odot$

(5) If EWR is nearby, I can pick my sister up once she lands.

- Individual updates:
  - $c_1 := c + \llbracket \textit{EWR is nearby} \rrbracket$
  - $c_2 := (c + \llbracket \textit{EWR is nearby} \rrbracket) + \llbracket \textit{pick sister up} \rrbracket$
  - $= c - (c_1 - c_2)$
- $(5) \rightsquigarrow \textit{if EWR is nearby, I have a sister} \odot$

# The satisfaction theory

## The proviso problem

- ▶ According to the satisfaction theory, filtration is *automatic*.
- ▶ But sometimes it shouldn't happen.

# Plan

## The satisfaction theory

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## Alternative semantics and presupposition

Basic grammar for indefinites

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# Alternative semantics and presupposition

## Basic grammar for indefinites

- ▶ Let's build our satisfaction account by starting with a grammar in which indefinites systematically give rise to *alternatives*.
- ▶ Importing basic ideas from Charlow 2014.
- ▶ I'll add in a few extra things though:
  - intensionality (we want to compose contexts)
  - Quantifier Raising & Predicate Abstraction(Heim and Kratzer, 1998)
    - Just for expository purposes (see, e.g., Charlow, 2019a,b).
  - presupposition

# Alternative semantics and presupposition

## Basic grammar for indefinites

### ► Basic ingredients:

- $\llbracket a \text{ dolphin} \rrbracket = \{ \langle w, x \rangle \mid \mathbf{dolphin} \, wx \}$ 
  - Really,  $(\lambda w, x. \mathbf{dolphin} \, wx)$ .
  - Type  $s \rightarrow e \rightarrow t$  (shorthand:  $\mathbf{S}(e)$ ).
- $\llbracket swam \rrbracket = (\lambda y. \{ \langle w, \mathbf{swam} \, wy \rangle \mid w \in \mathcal{W} \})$ 
  - Really,  $(\lambda y, w, t. t = \mathbf{swam} \, wy)$ .
  - Type  $e \rightarrow s \rightarrow t \rightarrow t$  (shorthand:  $e \rightarrow \mathbf{S}(t)$ ).

### ► What we want:

$$\llbracket a \text{ dolphin swam} \rrbracket = \{ \langle w, \mathbf{swam} \, wx \rangle \mid \mathbf{dolphin} \, wx \}$$

- Type  $\mathbf{S}(t) = s \rightarrow t \rightarrow t$  (a “proposition”).
- If we want to know if  $\phi$  true at some world  $w$ , we just ask: “is  $\langle w, \top \rangle \in \phi$ ?”

# Alternative semantics and presupposition

## Basic grammar for indefinites

- ▶ To get there, we need to somehow compose something of type  $\mathbf{S}(e)$  (*a dolphin*) with something of type  $e \rightarrow \mathbf{S}(t)$  (*swam*).
- ▶ It would be nice if we could turn *a dolphin* into something of type  $(e \rightarrow \mathbf{S}(t)) \rightarrow \mathbf{S}(t)$ .
  - A *quantifier*: takes scope over functions into propositions, to return a proposition.
- ▶ Following Charlow (2019a,b), let's use an operator  $(\cdot)^{\mathbf{S}}_{\bowtie}$  ('bind') to do the trick.

$$(\cdot)^{\mathbf{S}}_{\bowtie} : \mathbf{S}(\alpha) \rightarrow (\alpha \rightarrow \mathbf{S}(\beta)) \rightarrow \mathbf{S}(\beta)$$

$$m^{\mathbf{S}}_{\bowtie} k = \{ \langle w, y \rangle \mid (\exists x. \langle w, x \rangle \in m \wedge \langle w, y \rangle \in kx) \}$$

$$\begin{aligned} & \{ \langle w, x \rangle \mid \mathbf{dolphin} \, wx \}^{\mathbf{S}}_{\bowtie} k \\ &= \{ \langle w, t \rangle \mid (\exists x. \mathbf{dolphin} \, wx \wedge \langle w, t \rangle \in kx) \} \end{aligned}$$



## Basic grammar for indefinites

$$\begin{array}{c}
 \{\langle w, \textbf{swam } wx \rangle \mid \textbf{dolphin } wx\} \\
 | = \\
 \{\langle w, t \rangle \mid (\exists x.\textbf{dolphin } wx \wedge \langle w, t \rangle \in \{\langle w, \textbf{swam } wx \rangle \mid w \in \mathcal{W}\})\} \\
 \diagdown \quad \diagup \\
 \{\langle w, x \rangle \mid \textbf{dolphin } wx\}^S \qquad (\lambda y.\{\langle w, \textbf{swam } wy \rangle \mid w \in \mathcal{W}\}) \\
 | \quad \textit{swam} \\
 \text{\texttt{S}} \\
 \{\langle w, x \rangle \mid \textbf{dolphin } wx\} \\
 \textit{a dolphin}
 \end{array}$$

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**Adding presupposition**

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# Alternative semantics and presupposition

## Adding presupposition

- ▶ So far, we've previewed a grammar for composing propositions of type  $\mathbf{S}(t) = s \rightarrow t \rightarrow t$ .
- ▶ Let's add in presupposition:
  - A new type,  $t_{\#}$ , inhabited by three truth values:
    - $\top : t_{\#}$  'true'
    - $\perp : t_{\#}$  'false'
    - $\# : t_{\#}$  'undefined'
  - Keep old type  $t$ , too ( $\top : t$  and  $\perp : t$ , but  $\# \not: t$ ).
- ▶ Next, some preliminaries: interpreting some useful constants (bear with me).

# Alternative semantics and presupposition

## Adding presupposition

- We need a new semantics for connectives!

$\wedge$	$\top$	$\perp$	$\#$	$\rightarrow$	$\top$	$\perp$	$\#$	$\neg$	
$\top$	$\top$	$\perp$	$\#$	$\top$	$\top$	$\perp$	$\#$	$\top$	$\perp$
$\perp$	$\perp$	$\perp$	$\#$	$\perp$	$\top$	$\top$	$\#$	$\perp$	$\top$
$\#$	$\#$	$\#$	$\#$	$\#$	$\#$	$\#$	$\#$	$\#$	$\#$

- $(\phi \wedge \#) = (\# \wedge \phi) = \#$ .
- $(\phi \rightarrow \#) = (\# \rightarrow \phi) = \#$ .
- $\neg \# = \#$ .
- Undefinedness automatically projects.

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<sup>1</sup>The “internal” logic of Bochvar 1939; a.k.a. “weak Kleene”.

# Alternative semantics and presupposition

## Adding presupposition

- We also need a new semantics for the existential quantifier!

$\{\llbracket \Phi \rrbracket_{\mathcal{M},g'} \mid g[x]g'\}$	$\llbracket \ulcorner (\exists x.\Phi) \urcorner \rrbracket_{\mathcal{M},g}$
$\{\top\}$	$\top$
$\{\perp\}$	$\perp$
$\{\#\}$	$\#$
$\{\top, \perp\}$	$\top$
$\{\top, \#\}$	$\top$
$\{\perp, \#\}$	$\perp$
$\{\top, \perp, \#\}$	$\top$

- - Undefined *only when the only potential witnesses lead to undefinedness*.
  - If there's any witness at all, make it true.
  - If there are no witnesses, but some potential ones lead to falsity, make it false.
  - Undefinedness is a last resort.

# Alternative semantics and presupposition

## Adding presupposition

- ▶ Last important piece: the  $\delta$ -operator (Beaver, 1999, 2001; Beaver and Krahmer, 2001; Coppock and Beaver, 2015, i.a.).
  - How it works:

$$\delta : t \rightarrow t_{\#}$$

$$\delta \top = \top$$

$$\delta \perp = \#$$

- Say you've got  $\top \phi \wedge \delta \psi$ :
  - true or false, depending on  $\phi$  (assuming it's defined)
  - defined or undefined, depending on  $\psi$
- Turns a truth condition into a definedness condition.

# Alternative semantics and presupposition

## Adding presupposition

- ▶ Those are all the basic pieces we need.
- ▶ Before, our propositions were of type  $\mathbf{S}(t)(= s \rightarrow t \rightarrow t)$ .
- ▶ Let's upgrade them to our new setting:

$$\{\langle w, \mathbf{swam} \, wx \rangle \mid \mathbf{dolphin} \, wx\} : \mathbf{P}(t) \\ = s \rightarrow t \rightarrow t_{\#}$$

Really,  $(\lambda w, t. (\exists x. \mathbf{dolphin} \, wx \wedge t = \mathbf{swam} \, wx)) : \mathbf{P}(t)$

- ▶ For any  $\phi : \mathbf{P}(t)$ ,
  - $\phi$  is *true* at  $w$  iff  $\langle w, \top \rangle \in \phi$ ;
  - $\phi$  is *false* at  $w$  iff  $\langle w, \top \rangle \notin \phi$ ;
  - $\phi$  is *undefined* at  $w$  iff it can't be said whether or not  $\langle w, \top \rangle \in \phi$  (i.e., if  $\phi \, w \top = \#$ ).
- ▶ Presuppositions of  $\phi$ : set of worlds at which  $\phi$  is defined.

# Alternative semantics and presupposition

## Adding presupposition

► New basic ingredients:

- $\llbracket a \text{ dolphin} \rrbracket = \{\langle w, x \rangle \mid \mathbf{dolphin} \ wx\}$ 
  - Really,  $(\lambda w, x. \mathbf{dolphin} \ wx) : \mathbf{P}(e)$ .
- $\llbracket swam \rrbracket = (\lambda y. \{\langle w, \mathbf{swam} \ wy \rangle \mid w \in \mathcal{W}\})$ 
  - Really,  $(\lambda y, w, t. t = \mathbf{swam} \ wy) : e \rightarrow \mathbf{P}(t)$ .
- $\llbracket the \ dolphin \rrbracket = \{\langle w, x \rangle \mid \delta(\mathbf{dolphin} \ wx)\}$ 
  - Really,  $(\lambda w, x. \delta(\mathbf{dolphin} \ wx)) : \mathbf{P}(e)$ .

► What we want:

$$\begin{aligned}\llbracket the \ dolphin \ swam \rrbracket &= \{\langle w, \mathbf{swam} \ wx \rangle \mid \delta(\mathbf{dolphin} \ wx)\} \\ &= (\lambda w, t. (\exists x. \delta(\mathbf{dolphin} \ wx) \wedge t = \mathbf{swam} \ wx))\end{aligned}$$

- $\langle w, \top \rangle \in \llbracket the \ dolphin \ swam \rrbracket$  iff a dolphin swam in  $w$ .
- If no dolphin in  $w$ , then we can't check this (i.e., we get #).
- The worlds  $w$  in which  $\langle w, \top \rangle$  can be checked for membership are all dolphin worlds... *existence presupposition*!



# Alternative semantics and presupposition

## Adding presupposition

- ▶ We'll invoke the type shift  $(\cdot)^{\mathbf{P}}$  to turn our *presupposition trigger* into a quantifier.

$$\begin{aligned}(\cdot)^{\mathbf{P}} &: \mathbf{P}(\alpha) \rightarrow (\alpha \rightarrow \mathbf{P}(\beta)) \rightarrow \mathbf{P}(\beta) \\ m^{\mathbf{P}} k &= \{ \langle w, y \rangle \mid (\exists x. \langle w, x \rangle \in m \wedge \langle w, y \rangle \in kx) \} \\ &\quad \{ \langle w, x \rangle \mid \delta(\mathbf{dolphin} wx) \}^{\mathbf{P}} k \\ &= \{ \langle w, t \rangle \mid (\exists x. \delta(\mathbf{dolphin} wx) \wedge \langle w, t \rangle \in kx) \}\end{aligned}$$

- ▶ Once fed its scope, the presupposition trigger creates a proposition with presuppositions.

## Adding presupposition

- ▶ *The dolphin swam:*

$$\begin{array}{c}
\{\langle w, \textbf{swam } wx \rangle \mid \delta(\textbf{dolphin } wx)\} \\
| = \\
\{\langle w, t \rangle \mid (\exists x. \delta(\textbf{dolphin } wx) \wedge \langle w, t \rangle \in \{\langle w, \textbf{swam } wx \rangle \mid w \in \mathcal{W}\})\} \\
\diagdown \quad \diagup \\
\{\langle w, x \rangle \mid \delta(\textbf{dolphin } wx)\}^S \qquad (\lambda y. \{\langle w, \textbf{swam } wy \rangle \mid w \in \mathcal{W}\}) \\
\quad | \quad S \qquad \textit{swam} \\
\{\langle w, x \rangle \mid \delta(\textbf{dolphin } wx)\} \\
\textit{the dolphin}
\end{array}$$

# Plan

## The satisfaction theory

- Rough sketch of how it works

- The proviso problem

## Alternative semantics and presupposition

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## Presupposition accommodation

# Alternative semantics and presupposition

## The proviso problem?

(2) If Karlos has a car, he brought his car .

► Basic pieces:

- $\llbracket \text{Karlos has a car} \rrbracket = \{ \langle w, \mathbf{have} wxk \rangle \mid \mathbf{car} wx \}$
- $\llbracket \text{Karlos brought his car} \rrbracket = \{ \langle w, \mathbf{brought} wxk \rangle \mid \delta(\mathbf{car} wx \wedge \mathbf{have} wxk) \}$
- *if*...

- A new connective,  $\lceil \Rightarrow \rceil$ :

$\Rightarrow$	$\top$	$\perp$	$\#$
$\top$	$\top$	$\perp$	$\#$
$\perp$	$\top$	$\top$	$\top$
$\#$	$\#$	$\#$	$\#$

- $(\perp \Rightarrow \#) = \top$
- Only checks definedness of the consequent if the antecedent is true.

- $\text{if} : \mathbf{P}(t) \rightarrow \mathbf{P}(t) \rightarrow \mathbf{P}(t)$   
 $\text{if} \phi \psi := \{ \langle w, \top \rangle \mid \langle w, \top \rangle \in \phi \Rightarrow \langle w, \top \rangle \in \psi \}$

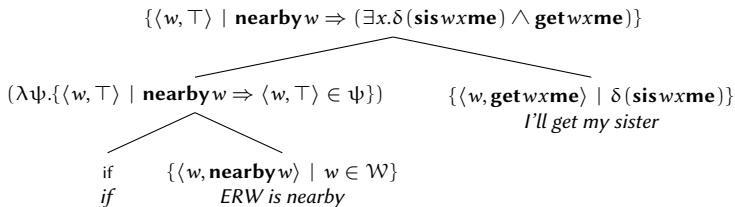
## Alternative semantics and presupposition

- ▶ *If Karlos has a car, he brought his car:*

# Alternative semantics and presupposition

## The proviso problem?

- ▶ *If EWR is nearby, I'll get my sister:*



- ▶  $\{\langle w, T \rangle \mid \text{nearby } w \Rightarrow (\exists x. \delta(\text{sis } wxme) \wedge \text{get } wxme)\}$
- ▶  $\langle w, T \rangle$  can be checked for membership in this set iff:
  - $\text{nearby } w \Rightarrow (\exists x. \text{sis } wxm)$
- ▶ Should presuppose *If EWR nearby, I have a sister.* ☹

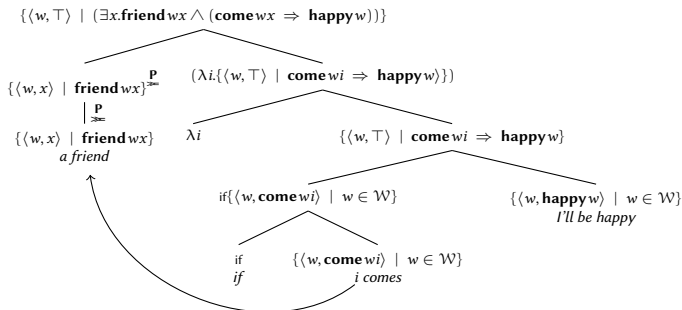
# Alternative semantics and presupposition

## The proviso problem?

- ▶ Our framework's analog of the proviso problem:
  - Filtration is built into the semantics of the conditional (and it should be—look at (2)!).
  - But then the presupposition of (5) is filtered, which we don't want.

## Alternative semantics and presupposition

- ▶ Quick detour: indefinites.
- ▶ What do we know about indefinites?
  - They take exceptional scope!
  - *If a friend of mine comes, I'll be happy*





# Alternative semantics and presupposition

## The proviso problem?

- ▶ But if the theory allows indefinites to do this...  
then it also allows presupposition triggers to do it!
- ▶ End of detour.



# Alternative semantics and presupposition

## The proviso problem?

- ▶ If we admit exceptional scope for indefinites, then we admit exceptional scope for presupposition triggers automatically.
- ▶ But once we do the latter, we may circumvent the proviso problem.

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## Presupposition accommodation

## Presupposition accommodation

- ▶ Lewis (1979) observes that presuppositions which are not satisfied by prior discourse are often *accommodated*.

(6) I lost my gloves.

- ▶ Heim (1983) further observes that examples in which presuppositions are *cancelled* might receive an analysis in terms of an interpretation strategy she calls “local accommodation”.

(7) The dolphin wasn't fast, because there is no dolphin!

- No existence presupposition.
- Basic idea: the presupposition is promoted to at-issue content, which is then targeted by the negation.

## Presupposition accommodation

- ▶ To describe sentences like (7), we could introduce an operator,  $\delta^{-1}$ , which promotes definedness conditions back to truth conditions.
  - $\delta^{-1}\# = \perp$
  - $\delta^{-1}\top = \top$  and  $\delta^{-1}\perp = \perp$ .

- ▶ In terms of it, we may define a new type shift:

$$\text{accom} : \mathbf{P}(\alpha) \rightarrow \mathbf{P}(\alpha)$$

$$\text{accom } m := (\lambda w, x. \delta^{-1}(mwx))$$

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{accom}\{\langle w, x \rangle \mid \delta(\mathbf{dolphin}wx)\} \\ &= \{\langle w, x \rangle \mid \delta^{-1}(\delta(\mathbf{dolphin}wx))\} \\ &= \{\langle w, x \rangle \mid \mathbf{dolphin}wx\} \end{aligned}$$

- From the meaning of a definite description, we get the meaning of the corresponding indefinite!

- ▶ If such a type shift could apply in (7), then (7) would be semantically equivalent to (8) (with the indefinite taking narrow scope).

(8) A dolphin wasn't fast, because there is no dolphin!

- ▶ If an analysis like this were viable, then it would allow us to view accommodation as simple model-theoretic operation.

# Conclusion

- ▶ We should really try to hold onto the satisfaction account of presupposition projection because it allows us to describe presupposition projection using nothing more than the tools semanticists are used to (and need anyway).
  - Truth conditions (sets of worlds)
  - Compositional view of the syntax-semantics interface
- ▶ It has been hindered by the proviso problem, but...
  - the problem is overcome if we state the account in terms of Charlow's independently motivated theory of indefinites.



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