Linguistic Emotion Triggers in Conflict

Eleonore Oversteegen

Tilburg University

Abstract

In the literature, conflict is defined as a clash of interests. Moreover, conflicts are accompanied by negative emotions, such as envy, disappointment, anger, sadness, etc. These emotions become part of the conflict: they may inspire a sender to express them, and they may fuel emotions or instill new emotions in the receiving party. Consequently, emotions in conflicts are like oxygen to a fire, and the communication may become a vicious circle between two parties, both experiencing increasing emotions. Emotion regulation within the conflicting parties could stabilize the situation. As a means to regulation, a linguistic approach would tackle the vicious circle at the linguistic expression of emotions. We know that language may express emotions both explicitly and implicitly, and that speakers may or may not be aware of communicated emotions. Hearers will, consciously or not, process them. It may be expected that a reduction in the expressions of negative emotions will lead to a decrease of negative emotion. In this paper, we will identify various categories of (Dutch) linguistic expressions that may serve to communicate, covertly and maybe unconsciously, negative emotions. Subsequently, we will demonstrate how the toxic effect of verbal communication in conflict can be tempered by reducing or neutralizing the "guilty" expressions used in communication. Reducing these "guilty" expressions is demonstrated to cause decrease of negative emotions in conflict - thus breaking the vicious circle.

Keywords: Linguistic, emotion regulation, conflict, common ground, presupposition

1. Framework

Petruchio: *Come on I' God's name; once more toward our father's. Good Lord, how bright and goodly shines the moon!*
Katharina: *The moon! The sun: it is not moonlight now.*
Petruchio: *I say it is the moon that shines so bright.*
Katharina: *I know it is the sun that shines so bright.*
Petruchio: *Now, by my mother's son, and that's myself, it shall be moon or star or what I list, or ere I journey to your father's house. Go on, and fetch our horses back again. Evermore cross'd and cross'd; nothing but cross'd!*
Hortensio: *Say as he says, or we shall never go.*
Katharina: *Forward, I pray, since we have come so far, and be it moon, or sun, or what you please.*

Conflicts may be very complex and layered. As it seems, the conflict between Petruchio and Katharina in Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* is solved as soon as she is willing to substitute "moon" for "sun". As it seems – since the conflict is not about sun or moon at all. Nevertheless, Katharina does attain her goal, which is traveling to her father's house, by her willingness to use the words that Petruchio uses. Words, as expressions of convictions or feelings, do matter in conflicts.

1.1 Conflict: an emotional spiral

Opposing interests are often considered to be the root of conflict. "Conflict … is conceptually defined as a form of intense interpersonal and /or intrapersonal dissonance (tension or antagonism) between two or more interdependent parties based on incompatible goals, needs, desires, values, beliefs/or attitudes." (Ting Toomey, 1985: p. 72). Consequently, a conflict may arise between two people wanting the same object, or disagreeing about the fastest route to some place, or about the choice for a type of car or a political party. Opposing interests in themselves do not define a conflict, however, for this entails an *expressed* struggle between two or more interdependent people who perceive they have incompatible goals (Cahn, 1992). Moreover, opposing interests could be expressed very rational and businesslike, whereas conflicts usually are accompanied by emotions. Emotions are envisaged as part of the conflict process (Guerero & La Valley, 2006; Barki and Hartwick (2004)). Many scientists have pointed out the strong parallels between the two phenomena. Both emotion and conflict can be defined in terms of cause (events interrupting, impeding, or enhancing goals versus perception of incompatible goals), affect (positive or negative feelings versus cooperative versus uncooperative orientation), physiology (arousal change versus

increased arousal), cognition (emotional labeling versus attributions), and behavior (action tendencies to approach or avoid versus direct versus indirect strategies), as argued in Guerero & La Valley (2006: 72). Moreover, the event that triggers conflict also triggers emotion; the experience of emotion may even lead to the awareness of conflict (Jones, 2000).

Whereas the onset of a conflict may be in incompatible goals, the continuation of it, however, is to a great extent due to emotions (cf. Nicotera's model of conflict-handling behavior (Nicotera, 1993)). Experienced emotions will lead to (verbal) behavior in one of the conflict partners (Aureli & Smucny, 2000) – and this behavior in turn may fuel the emotions in the other conflict partner (Cacioppo et al., 1993). "Conflict episodes are often filled with emotion, both in terms of the negative affect connected to the interruption of goals, **and** in terms of reactions to the partner's communication." (Guerrero & La Valley, 2006: 70). In other words, conflict may follow a viciously circular pattern, starting with incompatible goals and, in each cycle, leading to emotions in one of the conflict partners, and feeding on it (or not) in the (verbal) behavioral output.

Several psychologically founded models for the way humans handle emotions, inspired by the work of Richard Lazarus, were developed in the past decades. James Gross proposed a "coordinated process model of emotion regulation that describes the points in the emotion-generative process at which individuals influence their emotions" (Gross, 1999: 525). According to this model, the process of emotion generation has five points available for regulation: *selection of the situation; modification of the situation; deployment of attention; change of cognitions; and modulation of experiential, behavioral, or physiological responses* (Gross, 2002:282). Cognitive change can take on any direction: the emotional response can be suppressed, enlarged, or diminished, or even transformed into another emotion. The first possibility, *suppression*, appears to have a negative influence on well-being, whereas the other possibilities, referred to as *reappraisal*, have a positive influence (Gross, 2002: 285). In the context of conflict, suppression would not change emotions for the better, while reappraisal could work in a positive direction, towards solution. Consequently, we adopt Gross' cyclic model for emotion regulation, with reappraisal preceding the emotional response, for modeling the emotional development in a person during a conflict (see Figure 1), along with the awareness that "emotion regulation processes intervene at different stages in the emotion-generative process" (Yih, Uusberg, Taxer & Gross, 2019).

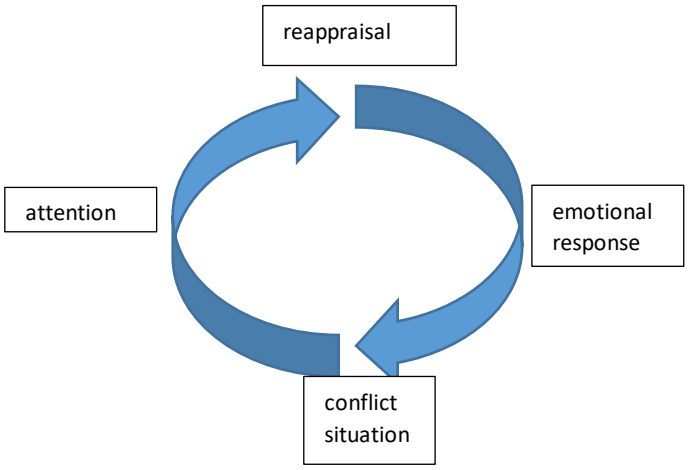

Figure 1 *The cycle of emotion regulation*

In conflicts, (at least) two communication partners are involved. Therefore, two cycles of emotion regulation are connected to each other. The connecting point, obviously, is manifested in their (verbally) *expressed* communication. Therefore, the label "situation" in the original model is replaced by a more specific label. Since we are modelling the emotional process in two partners engaged in a verbal conflict, we label it "expression". In each stage of the conflict, a verbal contribution by one of the conflict partners, the "expression", leads to an emotional reaction in the other conflict partner. The resulting emotion is expressed and, in turn, becomes the input of the cycle of emotion regulation in the first conflict partner, and so on.

Conflicts, ultimately, can go one of three ways: they can intensify (and probably end in emotion flooding (Guerrero, 2013)), or they may come to a solution, or they may be aborted, either accidently or intentionally. In the first case, any emotion regulation in the conflict partners is not successful in preventing the emotion from increasing. In the second case, emotion regulation in one or both partners is effective. Although conflicts may be very healthy in relationships (Coleman et all., 2014), the (socio-psychological) conflict literature has focused on solution. The content of the verbal contributions to the conflict obviously has impact on the course of the conflict. If the conflict partners insist on their own goals without paying sufficient attention to each other, no solution will be reached. Obviously, the course of a conflict may be influenced by many factors, such as non-verbal aspects of communication, (beliefs about) the nature of the relationship between the conflict partners, and the causes of conflict. However, the form of their verbal

contributions, the expressions, is a linguistic matter, and (verbal) communication in conflict can and have been analyzed per se (cf. the *competence-based model of interpersonal conflict* in Spitzberg, Canary, & Cupach (1994); Canary, Cupach, & Serpe (2001)). Figure 2 represents our model of the emotion processes in conflict:

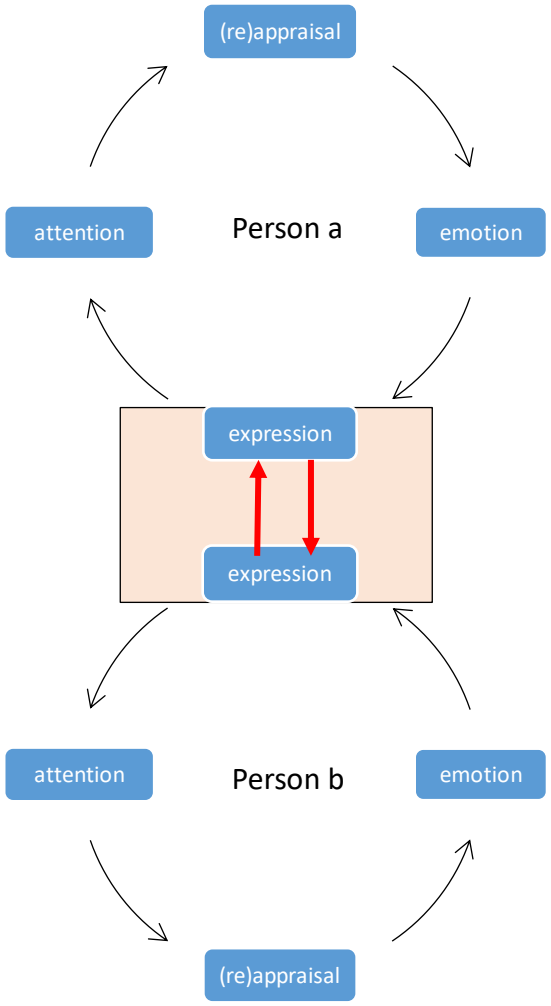

Figure 2. *Conflict as a process of in- or decreasing emotions*

The orange square in Figure 2 reflects the externalized part of the conflict: the exchange of communicative expressions. This is the point in the model where the conflict can be fuelled – or, alternatively, where the vicious cycle can be broken.

1.2. Conflict and communication

Since emotions are often charged in conflict, and even have a conflict constructing or increasing effect, verbal communication becomes a delicate undertaking for conflict partners aiming at resolution. "The ability to communicate competently is particularly challenged [in conflict], and issues of communication competence thereby become salient" (Canary, Cupach & Serpe 2001: 81). To start with, communication competence in conflict would imply avoiding emotion expressing or evoking language. Both would increase the level of negative emotions in the receiver, the latter immediately and the former by means of emotion contagion (Hatfield et al., 1993). Moreover, people reciprocate negative verbal behavior (Burgoon et al. 1995). Not surprisingly, rude comments, excessive interruptions, and deceptive statements, escalate conflicts (Donohue & Diez, 1985; Donohue, Weider-Hatfield, et al., 1985). More subtle is the influence of emotion on interpretation: while in general, subjects tend toward neutral or positive interpretations of ambiguous information, in an (induced) negative emotional state, they give far more negative interpretations (Mathews, 2012; Barazzone & Davey, 2009; Wenzel & Lystad, 2005). In terms of the model in Figure 2, the vicious cycle would then be fed. Consequently, there is a strong motivation for detecting the forms of language that can be held responsible for expressing and for evoking negative emotions.

1.2.1 Emotion expressing and emotion evoking language

There are expressions in each language that are evaluative in a negative way in themselves. James Pennebaker, at the end of the previous century, started a long-lasting investigation into the emotional meaning of language; what does certain language use tell us about a person and her emotions? In LIWC, the acronym for Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count, the more concrete fruits of this investigation are assembled: it gives us an inventory of English expressions with an (either positive or negative) emotional charge. Given the importance of non-emotion evoking language in conflict, it would be reasonable to expect that expressions registered in LIWC (or its parallel in another language) as expressions with a negative emotional value, are preferably not used in conflict.

Pennebaker is completely aware that LIWC is not exhaustive: there are many other ways in natural language for expressing negative emotions (Pennebaker, 2011; Foolen, 2012; Kross & Verduyn, 2018). Such expressions are not always easy to identify: the emotional meaning of the

use of certain pronouns (Pennebaker, 2011), for example, is not immediately related to their semantics. Neither is the effect of inserting little words like *maar*, *zelfs* and *pas* in the sentences below (Van der Wouden, 2002; Zeevat, 2004). In the odd sentences, negative emotion is involved. In the even sentences, there is no emotional load:

1. Kay heeft maar twee keer gewonnen
   (*Kay only won twice*)
2. Kay heeft twee keer gewonnen
   (Kay won twice)
3. Zelfs jij bent geslaagd voor je rij-examen
   (Even you passed your driving test)
4. Jij bent geslaagd voor je rij-examen
   (You passed your driving test)
5. Ida excuseerde zich gisteren pas
   (Ida apologized only yesterday)
6. Ida excuseerde zich gisteren
   (Ida apologized yesterday)

The negative emotion seemingly expressed by these little words can easily be canceled in another context:

7. Kay is maar twee keer te laat gekomen
   (Kay was late only twice)
8. Zelfs jij verslaapt je wel eens
   (Even you oversleep sometimes)
9. Ida werd pas moe om twaalf uur
   (Ida only got tired at twelve o'clock)

These examples show that negative emotion is not a straightforward part of the semantics of words like *maar, zelfs* or *pas*. Nor do they belong to the group of negative polarity items, given the diverse contexts that they may occur in. Moreover, these little words, belonging to the slippery class of particles, are only a few examples of expressions that may implicitly convey negative emotion (Foolen, 2012; Majid, 2012). "Language expresses all kinds of emotions, sentiments, and opinions at every level of communication, and not just in clearly evaluative words like *evil* or *beautiful"* (Maia & Santos, 2018:11).

According to recent insights, the negative emotion that may be encoded by such expressions is not necessarily consciously intended by the speaker. While cognitive linguistics envisages linguistic expression as evidence for the way cognition works, the role of emotion in theories on the acquisition, production and interpretation of language is increasing (Viglioccio, 2009; Lindquist et all, 2015; Majid, 2012; Feldman Barrett et all., 2007; Foolen, 2016). This development seems to allow for the use of (some forms of) language as a reflection of an emotion – not necessarily an intention. In that case, the speaker need not be conscious of the negative emotion she conveys. Following Bargh and Morsella, by shifting "the operational definition of the unconscious from the processing of stimuli of which one is not aware to the influences or effects of stimulus processing of which one is not aware" (Bargh & Morsella, 2008:74), we may imagine a speaker experiencing a certain emotion – though not conscious of expressing that emotion somehow (Seuren, 2015). This possibility brings even more clearly to the fore that prudence is required in expressing oneself while in conflict.

The literature on the topic proves that the hearer of expressed negative emotion in a conflict is apt at extracting this emotion and reacting accordingly (Canary, Cupach & Serpe 2001; Donohue & Diez, 1985; Donohue, Weider-Hatfield, et al., 1985, Young, 2004; Vangelisti & Young, 2006). Whether emotional contagion features in this reaction is not essential: if the hearer believes that the speaker has intentionally used the hurtful expression(s), the cycle of conflict will be reinforced.

Offering linguistic tools for breaking the vicious cycle of conflict is our intention. However, identifying the expressions responsible for evoking negative emotions (apart from those occurring in LICW) is not easy. Interpretation, of course, is context and interpreter dependent. Emotional hurt is primarily caused by an attack on one's personal or relational identity (Vangelisti, 1994), in whatever form. Therefore, so called 'hurtful messages' seem to be hard to define in linguistic terms (Vangelisti & Young, 2000). To be able to identify expressions causing or increasing negative emotions in conflict partners, some kind of common denominator would be helpful. In the search for such a commonality, it seems reasonable to employ a concept common to both emotions, a psychological phenomenon, and linguistics. In this paper, we will propose to employ the concept *common ground* (Clark, 1989; Levinson 1995, 2000; Stalnaker, 2002, Enfield, 2006) as a bridge between emotion and language expression.

1.3 Common Ground

Along with Clark, we will define the common ground between people engaged in conversation as "the sum of their mutual common, or joint knowledge, beliefs and suppositions" (Clark, 1996: 92)[1]. In any dialogue, the common ground is incrementally enriched by the verbal contributions of the dialogue partners (Clark, 1996; Stalnaker, 2002). In linguistics, common ground was applied in the referential realm, for explaining forms of referential expression, for distinguishing (discourse-) new and old information, and for beliefs. Information given by one of the partners, if uncontested, is added to the common ground by the other partner (Stalnaker, 2002; von Fintel, 2008).

Enfield (2006) enriches the concept as he argues for the role of common ground as an "open stockpile" both in the realm of knowledge and in the realm of *emotion* (Enfield, 2006). "The pursuit and exploitation of mutual knowledge, shared expectations, and other types of common ground not only serves the mutual management of referential information, but has important consequences in the realm of social, interpersonal affiliation", and partners in communication have to maintain "a common degree of interpersonal affiliation (trust, commitment, intimacy), proper to the status of the relationship, and (..) mutually calibrated at each step of an interaction's progression." (Enfield, 2006, p.399). In other words, the common ground is supposed to not only harbor facts, beliefs, and things (referential objects) but also attributions, opinions, and feelings. If communication partners succeed in mutually referring to and building up this multipurpose common ground, they will be both efficient, and strengthening their engagement. If communication partners might infer incongruences in their perception of the common ground, the opposite effect is expected. Such a discovery may lead to confusion and to disillusion or negative emotions (Bucholz, 2016; Enfield, 2009). Imagine one communication partner assuming that a joint outing to the zoo is canceled, and believing, incorrectly, that her communication partner assumes the same. Uttering a sentence that implies that she takes the cancelation for granted ("Are you sorry we're not going to the zoo today?") will cause disappointment in the second partner, because of the cancellation, but also anger for not being told. Unshared attributions that are supposed by a speaker to be shared may have a similar effect.

[1] We adopt Clark's definition of Common Ground reflexive: "p is common ground for members of C iff (i) the members of C have information that p and that (i)" (Clark, 1996:95)

Buchholz (2016) investigates such "incongruences" between a therapist and a patient, and he baptizes them "tears in the common ground". He argues that during the "talk-in-interaction" of psychotherapists and their patients, Typical Problematic Situations (TPS) appear, of which many can be detected by a micro-analytic perspective only (Buchholz, 2016: 134). The analytic approach that he proposes is intended to identify "small scale events that have the power to deteriorate otherwise "good" relationships or vice versa, to steer flat relationships to deeper emotional experience" (Buchholz, 2016: 135). A successful psychotherapeutical relation can be endangered by an "imbalanced" Common Ground, while the talk-in–interaction can tear the Common Ground to pieces. In general, tears in the common ground may seriously endanger communication.

Buchholz's approach is a situationistic one, in which factors of the situation are all important. That makes his choice for the (situationistic) Conversation Analysis as a language theory a logical one. In earlier psychotherapy process research (Buchholz & Kächele, 2013; Peräkylä, 2013; Peräkylä, Antaki, Vehviläinen, & Leudar, 2008), Conversation Analysis has been used successfully, for example to comprehend the fluctuation of empathy in verbal interaction (Buchholz, 2014; Wynn R. & Wynn M., 2006).

Our approach is a linguistic one, making use of semantic concepts and (non-situational) general definitions of the meanings of categories and expressions. Not incidentally, the linguistic categories and expressions that feature as potential causes for (negative) emotion in this investigation are defined in terms of Common Ground. In linguistics, several categories of expressions are defined in terms of common ground: the so-called *presupposition triggers*. Presuppositions are known as implicit propositions which have to be true in order for the sentence they occur in to make sense, or: have a truth value (Strawson, 1950). They can be 'triggered' by many different words, constructions, and categories (see 1.4 below). Presupposition triggers and common ground are closely related: in uttering a presupposition trigger, a communication partner demonstrates that she thinks 1. that the presupposition is true; 2. that her communication partner thinks that the presupposition is true. In other words, from her perspective the presupposed content belongs to common ground. If a speaker is correctly thinking so, the presupposition merely makes the communication more efficient. If not, the presupposition may be *accommodated* by the communication partner (Stalnaker, 2002; Von Fintel, 2008). This could be seen as a kind of repair: the partner adds the content of the presupposition to the common ground. She will do so only in case this content is uncontested. If the content of the presupposition is not acceptable to her for

some reason (like incompatibility with previous knowledge), the partners will end up with "incongruent common grounds". This, of course, is a contradiction in terms. If incongruent, the grounds are not common. Therefore we will adopt the image which Buchholz (2016) uses and speak in such cases of a *damaged common ground.* As argued above, this situation may evoke negative emotions in one of the communication partners – and fuel a conflict. The effect of presupposition triggers in a situation that does not license accommodation is thought of here as one of the "microprocesses that foster conflict escalation and de-escalation and the role of communication in curtailing destructive conflict cycles (Cupach & Metts, 1994; Donohue, 1991; Putnam & Jones, 1982a; Sillars, 1980b)" (in Putnam, 2013: 24).

1.4 Linguistic categories and Common Ground

In the linguistic literature, elaborate lists of presupposition triggers have been developed; on the list are, for example, aspectual verbs, definite and possessive noun phrases, (pseudo)- clefts, factive verbs, (modal and focus) particles, and intonation (Karttunen, 1974; Levinson, 1983; Beaver, 1997; Van der Sandt, 1988).[2]

Aspectual verbs indicate a phase of some eventuality. Examples are *continue,stop, finish, go on,* as in *Carina continued/stopped/finished/went on playing the piano.* In all these cases, the sentence would presuppose the proposition "Carina played the piano". Factive verbs behave similarly: *Carina knew/regretted/discovered/remembered that the shops would close at ten* presupposes that "the shops close at ten". Constructions determining the focus in a sentence can be presupposition triggers as well; (pseudo-)clefts have presuppositions attached to them. In *It was Carina who was playing the piano* the presupposition is: "someone was playing the piano" (ref…). Focus particles can do the same: *Even Carina sang along* presupposes that other people sang along as well (Rooth, 1992), because of the particle *even.*

Particles form a semantically complex category (Foolen, 1993), consisting of small words that may relate to the entire content of the sentence and give a subtle spin to the meaning of the sentence (Van der Wouden, 2002). For example, in the question "Ben je **toch** uitgegaan?" *(Did you go out after all?),* the speaker subtly makes clear that going out was against expectation or

[2] As an example of a definite description, that was used in a philosophical debate on the matter, quoting *the king of France* will suffice.

planning. In: "Ik heb **al** een heleboel klusjes gedaan" *(I already did all kind of chores)*, the speaker implicitly communicates that she is not the right candidate for another chore. These seemingly innocent words, of which Dutch has quite a few, somehow appeal to the common ground. In the literature, three different categories of particles have been distinguished: modal particles (for example **toch** in Dutch), focus particles (for example **zelfs** in Dutch), and discourse particles. They differ in terms of properties like scope, or frequency (König, 1991). As presupposition triggers the first two categories are subtle yet effective (Fischer, 2007; Karagjosova, 2004; Repp, 2013). It has both been argued that discourse particles do appeal to the common ground (Egg, 2013), and that it appeals to the communicative relation between speaker and hearer (Zeevat, 2004). In the sentence "Stikstof is een gas, **hè**?" (*Nitrogen is a gas, isn't it)*, the speaker (compellingly) expects the hearer to agree – whereas the speaker of "Stikstof is een gas, **hoor**!" *(Well, nitrogen is a gas)* expects or is aware that the hearer thinks differently (Van der Wouden, 2002; Van der Wouden & Caspers, 2010). These expectations, and the possibility of them being thwarted makes discourse particles relevant for our investigation.

1.5 Questions

In communication, presuppositions are processed and remembered. And they are not rare in communication: they are used all the time. There would be no reason to expect that presupposition triggers in general would fuel a conflict; the presupposition might be accommodated. If, however, the presupposed content is somehow negative or insulting for the communication partner and accommodation is not to be expected, the result does qualify as damaged common ground. Consequently, in those cases we expect to see an increase in negative emotion in the communication partner.

In search for a strategy for identifying expressions causing or increasing negative emotions in conflict partners, constructions linguistically analyzed as presupposing instead of expressing insulting content were identified as candidates. Using the model in Figure 2, we will first investigate the effect of *expression* by person **a** on *emotion* by person **b**. Focusing on subtly (and maybe even unintentionally used) insulting language, the implicit, presupposed part of the *expression* will be crucial. Consequently, we would want to know the answer to RQa, and, in order to strengthen the relation between expression and emotion, its pendant RQb:

RQa: Do common ground damaging presuppositions (by person **a**) lead to an increase of negative emotions (in person **b**)?

RQb: Does the elimination of common ground damaging presuppositions (by person **a**) lead to a decrease of negative emotions (in person **b**)?

2. Studies

The questions RQa and RQb were put to the test in two studies from different perspectives. The first study performed focuses on one of the halves in the model in Figure 2. In fact, it focuses on the effect of common ground damaging presuppositions and overt insults on the emotion regulation capacity of only one of the conflict partners: the sender of the message. We already know from experiments performed by James Pennebaker and Sandra Beall in and since 1986, that writing about negative emotions can have an emotion reducing effect. In their wake, many studies (200 and more, according to Pennebaker (2010)) have been performed on the beneficial effect of writing about emotional experiences.

What we do not know yet is whether "cleaning up" the language used to describe and (implicitly) express those negative emotions could have the power of reducing the negative emotions of the writer even more. In other words, do the words people use to express their emotions keep those emotions in place? Is it possible to influence the initial emotions of the expresser by altering the language she herself used to express them? Could emotion regulation work in such a subtle way? The question here is about the relation between language and emotion, where language and emotions stem from the same source. The language used to express the emotions is fed back to its source in a slightly altered way to reduce those emotions. This type of connection between language and emotion would be in line with recent insights (Feldman Barrett, Lindquist & Gendron; Lindquist, 2007; Lindquist, Satpute & Gendron, 2015). The model in Figure 2 would lead us to expect that altering the language expressed by **a** (or **b**) in such a way that both overt insults and common ground damaging expressions are eliminated, would reduce the negative emotion in **a** (or **b**). In this case, **a**=**b** in the research question above.

To find out whether this question can be answered affirmatively or not, a small pilot study was performed. Previous to the study, subjects were asked whether they were engaged in some conflict. Those who were, were asked to write a letter of approximately 400 words to the person

the conflict was with. The instructions told them to be honest about their emotions, without using foul language. After the letters were written, the authors filled in a questionnaire measuring their emotional condition (using scales from DEQ (Harmon-Jones et al.; 2016))

The resulting letters were randomly assigned to three categories: one control category, one category called *particles*, and one category called *emotions words and particles*. Letters in the first category were left unaltered, the letters in the second category were stripped of their modal particles, and the letters in the third categories were as well. In addition to that, all emotion words were replaced by neutral substitutes. This was done by following a well described protocol, employing a Dutch version of LIWC (Boot, Zijlstra & Geenen, 2016), and both online and physical lexica of synonyms. After about a week, the authors were presented with their own letters, in one of the three conditions created. This time, they didn't have to do anything but reading the letter and, again, filling in the DEQ-questionnaire about their emotional condition.

The dataset was small (N=12) and did hardly qualify for statistical testing. However, the descriptives of the mean differences in emotions between the two measure points suggest an effect of the manipulation – at least for the emotions anger and anxiety. The difference in these emotions is largest for the double manipulation, eliminating both particles and emotion words, and to a lesser extend for the elimination of particles only. In both cases, an Anova would not render the difference between the three groups significant; however, the size of the effect is large.

Table 1

Effect text manipulations on emotion

		N	Mean*	Std Deviation	*p*	η2
anger	particles	4	-1,7500	1,83333		
	e-words & particles	4	-2,2500	1,10135	0.289	.24
	control	4	-,7500	,56928		
anxiety	particles	4	-1,3333	,86066		
	e-words & particles	4	-1,5833	1,42400	0.363	.20
	control	4	-,5000	,79349		
relaxation	particles	4	-1,9167	1,44978		
	e-words & particles	4	-1,6667	1,51535	0.970	.01
	control	4	-1,7500	1,37100		

*95% Confidence Interval

These findings, interpreted in terms of the model in Figure 2, seem to confirm that reappraisal in one of the communication partners can be established by mitigating and/or detoxifying her own language use – directed towards the other partner. In turn, this reappraisal can evidently lead to

emotion regulation - and the vicious circle of conflict is broken. A small pilot study like the one reported does not allow for big conclusions. However, the results are intriguing and may deserve a bigger number of subjects for a replication of this study.

In the second study, the person uttering the common ground damaging expressions is not the same as the person whose negative emotions are hypothetically increased. So, in the research question above **a ≠ b**. This study compares explicit and implicit (presupposed) insulting assumptions. The implicit language, consisting of presupposition triggers, was further divided in weak and strong triggers (Glanzberg, 2003). Examples of the weak ones are iteratives and focus particles; examples of the strong ones are factive verbs and (pseudo-)clefts. Evidence for the truth of the cliché 'It's not what you say, but how you say it' with respect to the strength of hurtful expressions (Young, 2004) leads to the further expectation that explicit insulting assumptions will cause more negative emotion than implicit insulting assumptions will; and strong presupposition triggers, in turn, will cause more negative emotions than weak presupposition triggers will.

In the experiment testing the predictions, 160 subjects were instructed to imagine a certain (well described) situation, functioning as (part of) the common ground. They were told to identify with one of the parties in a WhatsApp conversation and, depending of the condition they were in, received a text with either an overtly insulting assumption ('*You didn't try to solve (the problem) yourself'*), or an insulting assumption encoded in a strong presupposition ('*Pity that you didn't try to solve (the problem) yourself'*), or an insulting assumption encoded in a weak presupposition ('*You only tried to solve (the problem) yourself'*), or a neutral assumption ('*You probably tried to solve (the problem) yourself'*).[3] The insulting assumption was not consistent with the created common ground and is called a false assumption in Table 2.

[3] The stimuli used can be found in Appendix 1.

Table 2

Emotion difference per assumption

	anger	**fear**	**guild**	**happiness**
false assumption: explicit	1.85**	1.12**	1.29**	-0.86**
false assumption: strong presupposition	1.65**	0.90**	0.96**	-0.69**
false assumption: weak presuppositions	1.50**	0.77**	1.06**	-0.60**
control group	-0.48*	-0.30*	0.17	0.11

*significant change between pre- and post- measures
**significant change between pre- and post- measures and significant difference from change in control group

Both before and after the WhatsApp manipulation, the emotions of the subjects were measured by self reporting in a survey using PANAS. The answers for the individual emotions were used to compute the scores for the four basic emotions: *anger, fear, guild, and happiness*. In Table 2, the difference scores for these four emotions are reported.[4] In contrast to the group receiving a neutral assumption, the control group, all three other groups show a significant increase in negative emotions and a significant decrease of positive emotions because of the false assumption. However, there is no significant difference between the forms of expression of the false assumption: implicit insulting language in the form of (either strong or weak) presuppositions causes the same degree of negative emotions and the same reduction of positive emotions as explicit insulting assumptions do.

The fact that an overt, insulting assumption causes a negative effect on receivers' emotions will not come as a surprise. We already knew that the content of presuppositions is processed and can be remembered, although accommodated information is harder to be recalled than satisfied information (Domaneschi & Di Paola 2018). Still, the demonstrability of negative emotional effects of contents of (both strong and weak) presuppositions is novel. This finding confirms the expectation that common ground damaging presuppositions of expressions (used by person a) lead

[4] That is: the emotion score after the experiment minus the emotion score before

to an increase of negative emotions (in person b). In terms of the model in Figure 2, these results mean that communication partner **a** may increase negative emotions in **b** by using implicit language, thus fueling an existing conflict.

The results imply, as a side effect, that presupposed content may affect emotion just as well as explicit language does. There is one condition, however: It must be the case that the relevant presuppositions are accommodated, and not merely processed for the sake of the conversation (Stalnaker, 2002); they must be believed as well (von Fintel, 2008). Emotional reactions only occur in receivers who find the manipulations sufficiently natural to be credible. If credibility is low, subjects are not (negatively) affected by common ground damaging presuppositions (Tholhuijsen, 2021)).

Although only two instantiations of the model in Figure 2 have been explored here, the results for studies guided by RQ may be considered encouraging. Given the insight that the communication competence in conflict would imply avoiding emotion expressing or evoking language, they confirm our strategy for identifying the more subtle expressions causing or increasing negative emotions. We identified (categories of) expressions in Dutch that may serve to communicate, covertly and maybe unconsciously, negative emotions. Furthermore, we demonstrated that removing or neutralizing these "guilty" expressions can reduce negative emotions in communication, and especially in conflict.[5]

3. Future research

Presuppositions can be envisaged as implicit language, appealing to the common ground. They are very common and economical in communication. However, in conflict this implicitness apparently may be risky. If our results can be taken as an indication that implicit language in general could be typically the kind of language further endangering communication in a conflict, there are many more candidates for investigation. For example, figurative language embodies a different challenge for communicators. Metaphorical language has been argued to employ concealed presuppositions (Steen, 2010), and it can lead to misunderstandings (Roberts & Kreuz, 1994). Speakers may or may not be aware of this effect (Gibbs, Leggitt & Turner, 2002). If a speaker uses a metaphor to

[5] In the studies reported here, a conflict context was either created by means of the experimental material, or it was a precondition for participation for the participants. In a study on the emotional effect of rhetorical questions, the conflict condition appeared to cause an increase of anger in the participants (Lenoir, 2021).

describe some experience, she appeals to the ability of the hearer to construct the intended mapping between the source domain (of the expression) and a goal domain (of the intended meaning). This mapping cannot be treated as a mathematical operation since there is room for interpretation, more than there is in literal language use (Lakoff & Johnson, 1988). One study already performed on metaphors in a conflict context, suggested that metaphorical language may cause an increase in some negative emotions, however only for subjects who have had a relevant conflict experience (Jeurissen, 2020). In other words, an arbitrary hearer would use the room for interpretation in a benevolent way, without assuming negative attributions being intended by the speaker while using the metaphor. For a hearer with an experience reminiscent of the current conflict, the room for interpretation is exploited less positively since the use of the metaphorical language causes negative emotions here.

Presupposition triggers and – possibly – metaphors are the first, and certainly not the last, on our list of linguistic phenomena to be addressed in conflict communication. They have a potency to trigger and/or increase negative emotions in the communicating partners. Because of this, they serve to fuel the vicious cycle of conflict, and consequently are impediments in communication.

Declarations

This study was performed in line with the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki. Approval was granted by the "Research Ethics and Data Management Committee" of Tilburg School of Humanities and Digital Science (Date 08-18-2020/No. REDC 2020.127). The datasets generated during and/or analyzed during the current study are not publicly available due to privacy protection but are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request. No funding was received to assist with the preparation of this manuscript.

Bibliography

Aureli, F., & Smucny, D. A. (2000). *The role of emotion in conflict and conflict resolution. Natural conflict resolution*, 199-224.

Barazzone, N., & Davey, G. C. L. (2009). Anger potentiates the reporting of threatening interpretations: An experimental study. *Journal of Anxiety Disorders*, 23, 489–495. doi:10.1016/j.janxdis.

Bargh, J.A. & Morsella, E. (2008). The Unconscious Mind. *Perspectives on psychological science* Vol. 3, no 1, 73-79.

Barki, H., & Hartwick, J. (2004). Conceptualizing the Construct of Interpersonal Conflict. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, Vol 15(3), 216-244

Beaver, D. (1997). Presupposition. In: Benthem, J. van, & ter Meulen, A. (eds.), *The Handbook of Logic and Language*, Amsterdam: Elsevier, 939–1008.

Boot, P., Zijlstra, H. & Geenen, R. (2016). *Dutch Journal of Applied Linguistics*, Volume 6, Issue 1, 65 – 76. https://doi-org.tilburguniversity.idm.oclc.org/10.1075/dujal.6.1.04boo

Buchholz, M. B. (2014). Patterns of empathy as embodied practice in clinical conversation—A musical dimension. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 5. http://dx.doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2014.00349

Buchholz, M. B. (2016). Conversational errors and common ground activities in psychotherapy: Insights from conversation analysis. *International Journal of Psychological Studies*, 8(3), 134- 153.

Buchholz, M. B., & Kächele, H. (2013). Conversation Analysis—A Powerful Tool for Psychoanalytic Practice and Psychotherapy Research. *Language and Psychoanalysis*, 2(2), 4-30.

Burgoon, J. K., Stern, L. A., & Dillman, L. (1995). Interpersonal adaptation: Dyadic interaction patterns. NewYork: Cambridge University Press. http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511720314

Cacioppo, J. T., Klein, D. J., Berntson, G. G., & Hartfield, E. 1993. The psychophysiology of emotion. In: Lewis, M. & J.M. Haviland, eds. *The Handbook of Emotions*. New York: Guilford Press, 119–142

Cahn, D. D. (1992). *Conflict in intimate relationships.* New York: Guilford.

Canary, D.J., Cupach, W.R. & Serpe, R.T. (2001). A Competence-based Approach to Examining Interpersonal Conflict; Test of a longitudinal Model. *Communications Research*, Vol.28, no 1, 79-104

Clark, Herbert H. 1996. *Using Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Coleman, P. T., Deutsch, M., & Marcus, E. C. (Eds.). (2014). *The handbook of conflict resolution: Theory and practice*. John Wiley & Sons

Cupach, W. R., & Metts, S. (1994). *Facework*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Donohue, W. & Diez, M.E. (1985). Directive use in negotiation interaction. *Communication Monographs, 52*, 305–318. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03637758509376114

Donohue, W. A. (1991). *Communication, marital dispute, and divorce mediation*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum

Donohue, W., Weider-Hatfield, D., Hamilton, M. & Diez, M. E. (1985). Relational distance in managing conflict. *Human Communication Research,* 3, 387–405

Egg, M. (2013). Discourse Particles, Common Ground and Felicity conditions. In: Gutzmann, D, and Hans-Martin Gärtner (eds.). *Beyond Expressives: Explorations in Use-Conditional Meaning*, 125-150.

Enfield, N. (2006). Social consequences of common ground. In: Enfield, N. & Levinson, S.C. (eds.). *Roots of Human Sociality:* Culture, *Cognition and Interaction*, 399-430.

Enfield, N.J. (2009). Relationship thinking and human pragmatics. *Journal of Pragmatics* 41: 60–78

Feldman Barrett, L., Lindquist, K. A. & Gendron, M. (2007). Cognitive-emotional interactions Language as context for the perception of emotion. *TRENDS in Cognitive Sciences* Vol.11 No.8

Fischer, K. (2007). *Grounding and common ground: Modal particles and their translation equivalents.* [research gate]

Foolen, 2012; Foolen, A. (2012). The relevance of emotion for language and linguistics. Moving ourselves, moving others. In: A. Foolen, U.M. Lüdtke, T.P. Racine and J. Zlatev (eds). *Motion and emotion in intersubjectivity, consciousness and language*, 349-369

Foolen, A. (1993). De betekenis van partikels. Een dokumentatie van de stand van het onderzoek met bijzondere aandacht voor maar. Diss. Nijmegen

Foolen, A. (2016). Expressives. In: Riemer, N. (ed.) *The Routledge Handbook of Semantics.* 473-490.

Gibbs Jr, R. W., Leggitt, J. S., & Turner, E. A. (2002). What's special about figurative language in emotional communication? In: Fussell, S.R. (ed.). *The verbal communication of emotions*. Psychology Press, 133-158.

Glanzberg, M., 2003. *Felicity and presupposition triggers. Workshop in Philosophy and Linguistics.* University of Michigan

Gross, J. J. (1999). Emotion regulation: Past, present, future. *Cognition & emotion*, 13(5), 551-573.

Gross, J. J. (2002). Emotion regulation: Affective, cognitive, and social consequences. *Psychophysiology*, 39, 281–291. DOI: 10.1017.S004857720139319

Gross, J. J. (2008). *Emotion regulation. Handbook of emotions*, 3(3), 497-513

Grosz, P. (2010). German doch: An element that triggers a contrast presupposition. *Proceedings of the Chicago Linguistic Society* Vol. 46, 163-177.

Guerrero, L.K. & La Valley, A.G. (2006). Conflict, Emotion and Communication. In: Oetzel, J.G. & Ting-Toomey, S. (eds), *The SAGE Handbook of Conflict Communication: Integrating Theory, Research, and Practice*, 69-96.

Guerrero, L.K. (2013). Emotion and Communication in Conflict interaction. In: John G. Oetzel, and Stella Ting-Toomey (eds.). *Handbook of Conflict Communication: Integrating Theory, Research, and Practice*, SAGE Publications, 105-131.

Harmon-Jones, C., Brock, B. & Harmon-Jones, E. (2016). The Discrete Emotions Questionnaire: A New Tool for Measuring State Self-Reported Emotions *PLoS ONE 11(8).*

Hatfield, E., Cacioppo, J.T., & Rapson, R.L. (1993). Emotional Contagion. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, Vol 2, no 3, 96-98.

Jennifer Yih, Andero Uusberg, Jamie L. Taxer & James J. Gross (2019) Better together: a unified perspective on appraisal and emotion regulation, *Cognition and Emotion*, 33:1, 41-47, https://doi.10.1080/02699931.2018.1504749

Jeurissen, L. (2021*). "Now, it's WAR!" The effect of Metaphorical Language Damaging to the Common Ground in Conflicts* (masterthesis, Tilburg University)

Jones, T. S. (2000). Emotional communication in conflict: Essence and impact. In W. Eadie & P. Nelson (Eds.), *The language of conflict and resolution*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 81–104

Karagjosova, E. (2004). The meaning and function of German modal particles. Freie Universität Berlin.

Karttunen, L. (1974). Presupposition and linguistic context. *Theoretical Linguistics*, 1, 181–194.

König, E. (1991). *The meaning of Focus Particles*. London

Kross, E. & Verduyn, P. (2018). Does Counting Emotion Words on Online Social Networks Provide a Window Into People's Subjective Experience of Emotion? A Case Study on Facebook. *Emotion*, Vol. 19, No. 1, 97–107. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/emo0000416

Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980) The Metaphorical Structure of the Human Conceptual System *Cognitive Science*, 4, 195

Lenoir, D.D.S. (2021). *Wat is dat nou weer voor een vraag? Onderzoek naar het effect van retorische vragen op emoties bij spreker en ontvanger.* (masterthesis, Tilburg University)

Levinson, S. C. (1983). *Pragmatics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Lindquist et all (2015), Lindquist, K. A., MacCormack, J. K., & Shablack, H. (2015). The role of language in emotion: Predictions from psychological constructionism. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 6, 444.

Lindquist, K.A., Satpute, A.B., & Gendron, M. (2015). Does Language Do More Than Communicate Emotion? *Current Directions in Psychological Science* Vol. 24(2). Pp 99–108

Maia, B. & Santos, D. (2018). Language, emotion, and the emotions: The multidisciplinary and linguistic background. *Language and Linguistic Compass,* Vol. 12, No. 6. doi/10.1111/lnc3.12280

Majid, A. (2012) Current Emotion Research in the Language Sciences Asifa Majid *Emotion Review Vol. 4, No. 4: 432–443*

Mathews, A. (2012). Effects of modifying the interpretation of emotional ambiguity. *Journal of Cognitive Psychology*, 24, 92–105. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/20445911.2011.584527

Nicotera, A.M. (1993). Beyond two dimensions, a Grounded Theory Model of Conflict-handling Behavior. *Management Communication Quarterly*, Vol.6, no.3. Pp 282-306.

Pennebaker, J. W., Francis, M. E., & Booth, R. J. (2001). Linguistic inquiry and word count: LIWC 2001. Mahway: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 71

Pennebaker, J.W. (2004). Writing to heal: A guided journal for recovering from trauma and emotional upheaval. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Press

Pennebaker, J.W. (2010) Expressive Writing in a Clinical Setting. *Independent Practitioner Psychophysiology*, 39(3), 281-291.

Peräkylä, A., Antaki, C., Vehviläinen, S., & Leudar, I. (2008). Analysing psychotherapy in practice. In A. Peräkylä, C. Antaki, S. Vehviläinen, & I. Leudar (Eds.), *Conversation Analysis and Psychotherapy*, 5-26.

Putnam, L. (2013). Definitions and approaches to conflict and communication. In: Oetzel, J.G. & Ting-Toomey, S. (eds.), *The sage handbook of conflict communication: Integrating theory, research, and practice.*

Putnam, L. L., & Jones, T. S. (1982). Reciprocity in negotiations: An analysis of bargaining interaction. *Communication Monographs*, 49, 171–191.

Repp, S. (2013). Common Ground, Illocutionary negation and VERUM. In: Gutzmann, D, and Hans-Martin Gärtner (eds.). *Beyond Expressives: Explorations in Use-Conditional Meaning.* P. 231-274

Roberts, R. M., & Kreuz, R. J. (1994). Why Do People Use Figurative Language? Psychological Science, 5(3), 159–163. https://doi-org.tilburguniversity.idm.oclc.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.1994.tb00653.x

Rooth, M. (1992). A theory of focus interpretation. *Natural language semantics*, 1(1), 75-116

Schellens, B. (2020). *Alweer een onderzoek naar Common Ground? Over onjuiste assumpties van de spreker en het emotionele effect daarvan bij de luisteraar.* (masterthesis, Tilburg University)

Schellens, B. (2021). Alweer een onderzoek naar Common Ground? Over onjuiste assumpties van de spreker en het emotionele effect daarvan bij de luisteraar (masterscriptie)

Seuren, Pieter A. M (2015) Unconscious elements in linguistic communication: Language and social reality. *Empedocles: European Journal for the Philosophy of Communication, Volume 6*, 2 pp. 185-194(10

Sillars, A. L. (1980a). Attributions and communication in roommate conflicts. *Communication Monographs*, 47, 180–200. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03637758009376031

Spitzberg, B. H., Canary, D. J., & Cupach, W. R. (1994). A competence-based approach to the study of interpersonal conflict. In D. D. Cahn (Ed.), *Conflict in personal relationships*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 183-202.

Stalnaker, R. (2002). Common Ground. Linguistics and Philosophy, 25, 701-721

Steen, 2010). Steen, G. (Ed.). (2010). A method for linguistic metaphor identification: From MIP to MIPVU (Vol. 14). John Benjamins Publishing.

Strawson, Peter F., 1950, "On referring", Mind, 59: 320–44.

Tholhuijsen, T.M.A. (2021). *Schendingen van de Affectieve Common Ground: Het Effect op Negatieve Emoties via Geloofwaardigheid*. (masterthesis, Tilburg University)

Ting-Toomey, S. (1985). Toward a theory of conflict and culture. In W. B. Gudykunst, L. P. Stewart, & S. Ting-Toomey (Eds.), *Communication, culture, and organizational processes*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 71–86.

Van der Sandt, Rob, 1988, *Context and Presupposition*, London: Croom Helm.

Van der Wouden, T. (2002). Partikels: naar een partikelwoordenboek voor het Nederlands. *Nederlandse taalkunde*, *7*(1), 20-43.

Van der Wouden, T. (2006). Partikels: woordjes die het Nederlands markeren. *Wat iedereen van het NEDERLANDS moet weten en waarom. Amsterdam, the Netherlands: Uitgeverij Bert Bakker*, 119-129.

Van der Wouden, T., & Caspers, J. (2010). Nederlandse partikelbeschrijving in internationaal perspectief: waar zijn we eigenlijk en waar moet het toch naar toe? *Internationale Neerlandistiek*, *48*(2), 52-62.

Van Doorn, T. *Changing Emotions by Using the Right Words.* (master thesis, Tilburg University)

Vangelisti, A. L. (1994). Messages that hurt. In W. R. Cupach & B. H. Spitzberg (Eds.), *The dark side of interpersonal communication* (pp. 53–82). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Vangelisti, A. L., & Young, S. L. (2000). When words hurt: The effects of perceived intentionality on interpersonal relationships. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 17, 393–424

Von Fintel, K. (2008). What is presupposition accommodation, again? *Philosophical perspectives*, 22, 137-170

Wenzel, A., & Lystad, C. (2005). Interpretation biases in angry and anxious individuals. Behaviour Research and Therapy, 43, 1045–1054. doi:10.1016/j.brat

Wynn, R., & Wynn, M. (2006). Empathy as an interactionally achieved phenomenon in psychotherapy. Characteristics of some conversational resources. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 38, 1385-1397.

Yih J, Uusberg A, Taxer J L, Gross J J (2019) Better together: a unified perspective on appraisal and emotion regulation, Cognition and Emotion 33(1):41-47 https://doi.10. 1080/02699931.2018.1504749

Young, S. (2004). Factors that influence recipients' appraisals of hurtful communication *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* Vol. 21(3), 291–303. DOI:10.1177/0265407504042833

Zeevat, H. (2004). Particles: Presupposition triggers, context markers or speech act markers. *Optimality theory and pragmatics*. Palgrave Macmillan, London, 91-111.

APPENDIX 1

False assumption			No false assumption
explicit	**through strong presupposition (factive verbs and clefts)**	**through weak presupposition (focus particles and iteratives)**	
Je laat het me laat weten *(You are informing me late)*	*Ik betreur het dat* je het me laat laat weten *(I regret it that you inform me late)*	Je laat het me *nu pas* weten *(You're informing me only now)*	Je laat het me meteen weten *(You are informing me right away)*
Je hebt een onschuldige verkoudheid *(You have an innocent cold)*	*Ik ben verbaasd* (dat je je ziek meldt bij) een onschuldige verkoudheid *(I am surprised by your calling in sick with an innocent cold)*	Het is *maar* een verkoudheid *(It is only a cold)*	Het zou kunnen dat het geen onschuldige verkoudheid is *(It could be that it is no innocent cold)*
Verkoudheid is geen reden om thuis te blijven *(A cold is no reason to stay home)*	Je weet dat verkoudheid geen reden is om thuis te blijven *(You know that a cold is no reason to stay home)*	Zelfs verkoudheid is een reden om thuis te blijven *(Even a cold is a reason to stay home...)*	Verkoudheid is een reden om thuis te blijven *(A cold is a reason to stay home)*
Je hebt niet geprobeerd om het zelf op te lossen *(You didn't try to solve it yourself)*	*Jammer dat* je niet geprobeerd hebt om het zelf op te lossen *(Pity you didn't try to solve it yourself)*	Heb je *wel* geprobeerd om het zelf op te lossen? *(Did you even try to solve it yourself?)*	Je hebt geprobeerd om het zelf op te lossen *(You tried to solve it yourself)*
Dat moet ik vaak voor je doen *(Often, I have to do that for you)*	*Ik ben het* vaak *die* dat voor je moet doen *(Often, it is me who has to do that for you)*	Dat moet ik *weer* doen *(I have to do that again)*	Dat doe je vaak *(You do that often)*
Jouw prioriteiten liggen elders *(Your priorities lie elsewhere)*	*Ik realiseer me dat* jouw prioriteiten elders liggen *(I realise that your priorities lie elsewhere)*	Je hebt je prioriteiten *zeker* bij de zaak liggen *(Your priorities are certainly with the office)*	Je hebt je prioriteiten bij de zaak liggen *(Your priorities are with the office)*