

snippets

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E-mail: snippets@unimi.it

EDITORIAL STATEMENT

1. Purpose.

The aim of *Snippets* is to publish specific remarks that motivate research or that make theoretical points germane to current work. The ideal contribution is the ideal footnote: a side remark that taken on its own is not worth lengthy development but that needs to be said. One encounters many short comments of this kind in the literature of the seventies. We feel that there no longer is a forum for them. We want *Snippets* to help fill that gap.

2. Content.

We will publish notes that contribute to the study of syntax and semantics in generative grammar. The notes are to be brief, self-contained and explicit. They may do any of the following things:

- point out an empirical phenomenon that goes against accepted generalizations or that shows that some aspect of a theory is problematic;
- point out unnoticed minimal pairs that fall outside the scope of any existing theory;
- point out an empirical phenomenon that confirms the predictions of a theory in an area where the theory has not been tested;
- explicitly describe technical inconsistencies in a theory or in a set of frequently adopted assumptions;
- explicitly describe unnoticed assumptions that underlie a theory or assumptions that a theory needs to be supplemented with in order to make desired predictions;
- call attention to little-known or forgotten literature in which issues of immediate relevance are discussed.

We also encourage submissions that connect psycholinguistic data to theoretical issues. A proposal for a pilot experiment in language acquisition or language processing could make for an excellent snippet.

The earliest Linguistic Inquiry squibs exemplify the kind of note we would like to publish. Some of them posed unobserved puzzles. For instance, a squib by Postal and Ross in LI 1:1 ("A Problem of Adverb Preposing") noted that whether or not we can construe a sentence-initial temporal adverb with an embedded verb depends on the tense of the matrix verb. A squib by Perlmutter and Ross in LI 1:3 ("Relative Clauses with Split Antecedents"), challenging the prevailing analyses of coordination and extraposition, noted that conjoined clauses neither of which contain a plural noun phrase can appear next to an "extraposed" relative that can only describe groups. Other squibs drew attention to particular theoretical assumptions. For instance, a squib by Bresnan in LI 1:2 ("A Grammatical Fiction") outlined an alternative account of the derivation of sentences containing believe and force, and asked whether there were principled reasons for dismissing any of the underlying assumptions (among them that semantic interpretation is sensitive to details of a syntactic derivation). A squib by Zwicky in LI 1:2 ("Class Complements in Phonology") asked to what extent phonological rules refer to complements of classes. None of these squibs was more than a couple of paragraphs; all of them limited themselves to a precise question or observation.

3. Submission details.

Snippets is an electronic journal. We will solicit submissions twice a year: the submission deadlines are April 1 and October 1. The submissions that we accept will be posted on the journal website approximately 3 months after each deadline, and all accepted submissions will remain permanently on the website.

Snippets is intended as a service to the linguistics community. Consequently, authors are advised that, when they submit to *Snippets*, we understand them as allowing their submission to be reproduced if published. At the same time, the rights for the notes themselves will remain with the authors. As a result, citation of *Snippets* material will have to indicate the author's name and the specific source of the material.

We will accept electronic submissions at the address snippets@unimi.it. Electronic submissions may take the form of (a) the text of an e-mail message, or (b) an attached file. The attached file should be a simple text file, a Word file (Mac or Windows), or a Rich Text Format (RTF) file. All submissions must state the name and affiliation of the author(s), and a (postal or electronic) return address.

Submissions are to be a maximum of 500 words (including examples), with an additional half page allowed for diagrams, tables and references. Given that we envision the submissions themselves as footnotes, the submissions may not contain footnotes of their own. The ideal submission is one paragraph; a submission of five lines is perfectly acceptable. We will not consider abstracts.

4. Editorial policy.

Submissions will be reviewed by our editorial board, and review will be name-blind both ways. While we guarantee a response within 3 months of the submission deadline, we will only provide a yes/no response to the submitter. We will not request revisions (barring exceptional cases). We allow resubmission (once) of the same piece.

1.

Gabi Danon – Bar-Ilan University

Quantification over partitions

gabidanon@bigfoot.com

Zamparelli (2004) notes that the quantifier every may appear with a plural noun in the presence of a cardinal or few, but only if the noun denotation may be placed along a spatial or temporal sequence:

- (1) a. Every three days/miles/margheritas, John drinks a bloody Mary.
b. *Every two houses are identical.

Modifying an analysis from Kayne (2002), Zamparelli proposes that this is due to the presence of an abstract singular noun TIME or LENGTH, which agrees with the quantifier in grammatical number while being measured by the plural measure phrase.

The quantifier kol in Modern Hebrew corresponds to the English quantifiers every and all. In its every interpretation, the distribution of kol is similar to that of every, with one notable exception: with Card+N, the choice of noun is not semantically restricted. Furthermore, the quantified phrase can serve as an argument and is not necessarily a frequency adjunct:

- (2) a. kol štey safot nivdalot zo mi-zo be-mašehu.
every two languages differ this from-this in-something
'Every two languages differ somehow.'
b. kol šney yeladim yaxinu uga.
Every two children make.fut cake
'Every two children will bake a cake.'

It looks unlikely that Zamparelli's approach could apply to Hebrew, as there seems to be no basis for positing an abstract nominal head measured by Card+N if the overt noun cannot be analyzed as providing a measure.

It is important to note the way in which such quantified plurals are interpreted. A sentence containing kol+Card+N can be interpreted in two ways, which I will refer to as *exhaustive* and *partitioning* quantification. Sentence (2a), which has the exhaustive reading, quantifies over every possible combination of 2 languages. Sentence (2b), on the other hand, has the partitioning reading: the set of boys is assumed to be partitioned into non-overlapping sets of 2, and the universal quantification is over sets in this partition; thus, in a context with 10 boys, (2b) only entails that there will be 5 cakes. The exhaustive interpretation is more common with logical or mathematical statements; otherwise, the partitioning interpretation is usually the more natural one.

Given this, it is unsurprising that – in Hebrew just as for English – every+Card+N is used mainly with nouns denoting sets that are linearly ordered. For such nouns, a natural partition is more readily available than for nouns that denote an unordered set. For instance, for the noun *days*, there are only two ways of partitioning its denotation such that each set in the partition contains 2 consecutive days. For a noun like *boy*, on the other hand, a ‘natural’ partition exists only under special contextually-dependent conditions.

Thus, at least in Hebrew it is possible to derive the tendency for plural quantification with *every* to be limited to certain semantic classes of nouns, without relying on a stipulation of an abstract singular noun. It might be the case that, more generally across languages, there is no syntactic requirement that every agree with a singular noun, and its cooccurrence restrictions follow from semantic considerations alone.

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2.

Elissa Flagg -- *York University*

Not just constituent negation

eflagg@yorku.ca

Interrogatives like (1) are ambiguous between a constituent negation reading and a sentential negation reading for some English speakers.

(1) Did you not shut the window?

On the constituent negation reading, (1) asks if the addressee left the window open (i.e. *not* adjoins to the verb phrase). The sentential negation reading is equivalent in meaning to (2), asking if it is not the case that the addressee shut the window (i.e. *not* takes sentential scope).

(2) Didn't you shut the window?

Some speakers, however, report that the sentential negation reading of (1) akin to (2) is absent (cf. Potsdam 1995, Bresnan 2001, Frampton 2001). It is tempting to conclude that in some English dialects (or idiolects), *not* is restricted to constituent negation in polar interrogatives, and that sentential negation can only be expressed as in (2), but this seemingly straightforward interpretation of the native speaker judgments is incorrect. In fact, the availability of the sentential negation interpretation for *not* emerges in (3), even for speakers who reject the possibility in a sentence like (1).

(3) Did you or did you not shut the window?

The constituent negation reading for (3), i.e. 'did you or did you leave the window open?', is incoherent. The only coherent interpretation of (3) is the sentential negation reading shared with (4), i.e. 'is it or is it not the case that you shut the window?'

(4) Did you or didn't you shut the window?

If the sentential negation interpretation of *not* were truly unavailable, then only the incoherent constituent negation interpretation of (3) should be available for speakers who reject the sentential negation reading in (1). Yet the judgments are the exact opposite of this prediction – the sentential negation reading is the only acceptable interpretation for (3), even for speakers who deny that (1) shares an interpretation with (2). For such speakers, the constituent negation reading of (1) may be so salient that it obscures the availability of the sentential negation reading to the extent that they reject it completely, but the availability of the sentential negation reading does emerge in

examples like (3), in which the disjunctive structure disfavours constituent negation. Therefore, (3) illustrates that any claim that interrogatives like (1) are incompatible with a syntactic representation that includes a sentential negation projection is problematic.

With respect to the empirical facts about English negation, (3) provides evidence that not in polar interrogatives is not just constituent negation. More generally, the contrasting intuitions reported with respect to the availability of a sentential negation reading for (1) illustrate that native speaker judgments do not always provide reliable data for assessing the availability of multiple structural representations and associated interpretations for a given clause type.

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3.

Sky Sang-Geun Lee – *University of Wisconsin-Madison*

Japanese/Korean possessive verbal nouns as inherently intensional

slee16@wisc.edu

Inspired by Grimshaw (1990), who claims that English argument-taking derived nominals (DNs) should be analyzed as denoting a complex event with the same aspectual properties as their verbal counterparts, researchers like Jung (1997) and Miyamoto (1999) classify Japanese/Korean possessive verbal nouns (VNs) into the same group denoting a complex event. They do this mainly based on the fact that both types of nominals show the same distinctive pattern of the aspectual modifiers -- the culminatory modifier ‘in’ is compatible with telics while the durational modifier ‘for’ is with atelics, as in (1):

- (1) a. [_{NP} Mina-uy hansikan-tongan-uy/*hansikan-nay-uy hwanca-uy kwanchal] (atelic VN)
Mina-Gen one hour-for-Gen/one hour-in-Gen patient-Gen observation
‘Mina’s observation of the patient for an hour/*in an hour’
- b. [_{NP} Mina-uy *hansikan-tongan-uy/hansikan-nay-uy tali-uy phakoy] (telic VN)
Mina-Gen one hour-for-Gen/one hour-in-Gen bridge-Gen destruction
‘Mina’s destruction of the bridge *for an hour/in an hour’
- c. [_{NP} Mina-uy *hansikan-tongan-uy/hansikan-nay-uy kichayek-ey-uy tochak] (telic VN)
Mina-Gen one hour-for-Gen/one hour-in-Gen train station-at-Gen arrival
‘Mina’s arrival at the station *for an hour/in an hour’

There is, however, a distinction between English argument-taking DNs and Japanese/Korean possessive VNs: the former are compatible with extensional verbs like *see*, which take as complements entities (or events) that exist (or occur) in the actual world (cf. Higginbotham 1983), while the latter are not:

- (2) a. *Nami-nun [cekkwun-uy tosi-uy phakoy]-lul poassta. (Korean)
Nami-Top enemy-Gen city-Gen destruction-Acc saw
‘Nami saw the enemy’s destruction of the city.’
- b. *Nami-wa [teki-no toshi-no hakai]-o mita. (Japanese)
Nami-Top enemy-Gen city-Gen destruction-Acc saw
‘Nami saw the enemy’s destruction of the city.’

Rather, it turns out that Japanese/Korean possessive VNs are compatible with intensional verbs that do not necessarily take actual-world entities (or events) as their complements. This is shown in (3), where the Japanese example is taken from Matsumoto (1996):

- (3) a. Nami-nun [pro tali-uy phakoy]-lul uenhayssta/helakhayssta/sitohayssta.
-

- Nami-Top bridge -Gen destruction-Acc wished/permitted/attempted
 ‘Nami wished/permitted/attempted to destroy a bridge.’ (Korean)
- b. Nami-wa kare-ni keesatsusho-made [pro *shuttoo*]-o *nozondeiru/meejita*.
 Nami-Top he-Dat police station-as far as appearance-Acc desires/ordered
 ‘Nami desires/ordered him to appear at the police station.’ (Japanese)

The data above suggest that Japanese/Korean possessive VNs are inherently intensional, but that English argument-taking DNs are extensional, which has been rarely recognized up to now, even by Jung (1997) and Miyamoto (1999).

This difference could be related to a parameter in word formation: English argument-taking DNs are derived from verb roots by adding a nominalizing suffix while Japanese/Korean possessive VNs are roots by themselves (cf. Grimshaw 1990, Takano 2003). Possibly, the perfective aspect of Latinate nominalizing suffixes (e.g., *-ion*) in English contributes to the semantics of extensionality (cf. Bonomi 1995, Snyder 1998). In contrast, one might suppose that the aspectual properties intrinsic to Japanese/Korean possessive VNs as roots – whether they characterize a *process* or a *transition* from one state to another (cf. Pustejovsky 1991) – remain undetermined with respect to perfectivity. This “undeterminedness” gives rise to a hypothetical future, eventually contributing to intensionality.

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4.

Linton Wang – *National Chung Cheng University, Taiwan*

Eric McCreedy – *Osaka University*

The indefiniteness effect

kikiwang@phil.ccu.edu.tw mccreedy@lang.u-osaka.ac.jp

It is well known that the existential 'there-be' construction (cf. Milsark 1977 and Keenan 1987) and the possessive 'have' construction (cf. Bach 1967 and Partee 1999) both exhibit what is called the 'definiteness effect.' One might expect the existence of a counterpart 'indefiniteness effect' that disallows indefinites in certain contexts. No such effect has yet been reported. We suggest that the construction 'what is wrong with ___' exhibits such an effect, in that 'what is wrong with ___' is compatible with definite DPs but not with indefinite DPs. This fact is exhibited in (1).

- (1) a. What is wrong with John/the student/every student/him
(the three students/most students/you/his students)?
b. *What is wrong with a student (/three students/no more than three students/
at least three students/no students)?

The readers can test the 'what is wrong with ___' construction with other definite DPs, such as complex demonstratives, to confirm our characterization of the phenomenon. It should be noted, though, that the effect we point out is limited to indefinites that receive a true 'indefinite' interpretation. For instance, the infelicity of indefinites in the 'what is wrong with ___' construction does not extend to generically or referentially interpreted indefinites. For example, the indefinite in (2) receives a salient felicitous generic reading.

- (2) What is wrong with a professor going to his class drunk?

A similar indefiniteness effect also shows up in related constructions like 'what do you think about ___', 'are you ok with ___', etc.

To the knowledge of the authors, no theory of the definiteness effect accounts for the indefiniteness effect properly. While the notion of symmetric determiners may classify the indefinite determiners properly (cf. Keenan 1987), we do not see how 'being symmetric' plays a role in an explanation of the indefiniteness effect: why should symmetry matter here? Similarly, we do not see how the presuppositional account of the definiteness effect (cf. Diesing 1992) can account for our observation. We also find it hopeless to account for the indefiniteness effect by exploiting the 'triviality' and 'contradiction' account for the definiteness effect (cf. Barwise & Cooper 1981), since the examples in (1) are not declarative sentences and so triviality or contradiction of assertion is not an issue.

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