snippets

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Contents

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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.

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French both*: a gap in the theory of antipresupposition*

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Percus (2006) and Sauerland (2006) discuss the "anti-duality" of English universal quantifiers: *all* and *every* cannot be used with a restrictor which is presupposed to hold of exactly two individuals.

(1) a. * Philippe broke all his arms.
b. Philippe broke all his fingers.

Both of them argue that this contrast comes from an antipresupposition triggered by universal quantifiers: (1a) is infelicitous because the alternative (2) is favored, according to a "Maximize Presupposition" principle *à la* Heim (1991).

(2) Philippe broke both his arms.

The anti-duality of universal quantifiers and the analysis above straightforwardly extend to other languages that have a word for *both*: Dutch (*beide*), German (*beide*), Italian (*entrambi*), Portuguese (*ambos*), Russian (*oba*) and Spanish (*ambos*). Interestingly, French is an exception: French universal quantifiers do respect the anti-duality property – cf. French translations of (1) in (3) – but no lexical item is a suitable candidate to replace *both*.

(3) a. * Philippe s'est cassé tous les bras.
b. Philippe s'est cassé tous les doigts.

To capture these data at a minimal cost, we must renounce the standard notion of scale (a set of lexical alternatives) and embrace one of the following theoretical options:

1) Scales may involve complex phrases as well as lexical items. Then, *les deux* – i.e. "the two" – would be a respectable alternative to French universal quantifiers. Unfortunately, it would remain mysterious why phrases like *les dix* – i.e. "the ten" – do not participate to the same set of alternatives – as witness the felicitousness of example (3b).

2) Scales do not involve concrete linguistic material but rather *key concepts* – i.e. concepts which human beings manipulate "naturally" or which they find relevant across the board, depending on your favorite theory of cognition. One

should expect such concepts to be lexicalized in natural languages but, crucially, not necessarily in every language.

This discussion echoes a similar debate in the recent literature on implicatures (cf. Sauerland, 2004 and Spector, to appear) and calls for deeper cross-linguistic investigations.

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2.

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German plural negatives with Plural-Individual-Level Predicates

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Kratzer (1995:146) observes that in German plural negative indefinites can combine with a stage-level predicate as in (1), but not an individual-level predicate as in (2).

(1) a. ... weil keine Ärzte zugegen sind.
... since no physicians present are.
'... since no physicians are present.'

b. ... weil uns keine Freunde helfen. (Kratzer 1995:(47))
... since us no friends help.
'... since no friends are helping us.'

(2) a.* ... weil keine Ärzte altruistisch sind. (Kratzer 1995:(51))
... since no physicians altruistic are.
b.* ... weil das keine Kandidaten wissen. (Kratzer 1995:(52))
... since this no candidates know.

Kratzer provides the following explanation for (1): She assumes that stage-level predicates have an external event argument position and therefore the subject can be realized VP-internally. Individual-level predicates, expressing permanent properties, lack an event argument position, and therefore the subject must be realized VP-externally. Furthermore, she assumes with Bech (1955) that *keine* is the result of morphological merger of *nicht* and immediately following *eine*. If furthermore *nicht* is adjoined to VP, it then follows that this merger can only take place when the subject occurs in a VP-internal position. Therefore, *keine* cannot occur with individual-level predicates.

In this snippet, I consider group predicates that express permanent properties of pluralities such as "be related by blood" or "genetically identical." I use the term "Plural-Individual-Level Predicates" for these. (3) shows that these behave in several respects like other individual level predicates: (3a) must be interpreted generically, and they lead to ungrammaticality (or strong pragmatic oddity) with "when"-clauses ((3b)) and "there-be" existentials ((3c)).

(3) a. Royals are related by blood.
b. *When John is related by blood to Mary, he is her brother.
c. *There are royals related by blood.

Surprisingly, plural-individual-level predicates can occur with plural negative indefinites:

(4) a. ... weil keine Ärzte miteinander blutsverwandt sind.
... since no doctors with-one-another blood-related are.
'... since no doctors are related by blood'.

b. ... weil keine zwei Zebrafische genetisch identisch sind.
... since no two zebra fishes genetically identical are.
'... since no two zebra fishes are genetically identical'

The examples in (4) pose a problem for Kratzer's analysis of (1) and (2): Her analysis would lead one to assume that plural-individual-level predicates do allow VP-internal subjects; but then all of the other typical individual-level predicate properties illustrated in (3) must be independent of the syntax Kratzer proposes for individual-level predicates.

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3.

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Few *and* fewer

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It seems reasonable to assume a close relationship between the semantic representation of the positive form *few* and that of the comparative *fewer*. The following contrasts are then unexpected: Both (1a) and (1b) have distributive readings, according to which fewer than ten/few people drank ten bottles each. But (1a) also has a cumulative reading (Scha 1981; Krifka 1999; Landman 2000), under which there was a total of ten bottles consumed by some group numbering less than ten. Oddly, the equivalent reading is absent in (1b).

(1) a. Fewer than ten people drank ten bottles of wine.
b. Few people drank ten bottles of wine.

Even more clearly, (2a) (based on examples in Krifka 1999) has a cumulative reading: there is some group of employees numbering less than ten who together account for 90% of the relevant work. But (2b) lacks this reading, allowing only the unlikely distributive interpretation:

(2) a. Fewer than ten of our employees do 90% of all the work.
b. ??Few of our employees do 90% of all the work.

A perhaps related contrast is the following, which similarly involves reference to a period of years as a single unit:

(3) a. John finished his degree in fewer than five years
b.* John finished his degree in few years

Krifka (1999) uses the existence of cumulative readings in examples such as (4a) to support the position that numerical noun phrases are not generalized quantifiers but instead predicates that must be existentially bound. In this view, (4a) thus has the logical form in (4b), where X and Y are groups that can be interpreted cumulatively.

(4) a. Three boys ate seven apples
b. $\exists X[3\text{-boys}(X) \& \exists Y[7\text{-apples}(Y) \& \text{eat}(X,Y)]]$

Both *few* and *fewer than n* exhibit parallels to unmodified cardinal numbers; for example, all are licensed in *there*-insertion contexts and following certain determiners (*the three/few/fewer than three boys*). But with regards to cumulative interpretations, *fewer than n* patterns with cardinal numbers, while *few* does not.

Interestingly, the missing cumulative reading for *few* can be obtained by replacing it with *a few*. Thus (5a) allows a cumulative interpretation, and (5b) is felicitous, as is (5c) (the latter pattern of alternation between *few* and *a few* having been noted by Klima 1964). In each of these cases, the reading that obtains matches what we would expect from *few*.

(5) a. A few people drank ten bottles of wine.
b. A few of our employees do 90% of all the work.
c. John finished his degree in a few years.

To capture these facts, we might suggest that noun phrases formed with *fewer than n* and *a few*, like those formed with unmodified cardinal numbers, are able to introduce groups into the semantic representation that can be interpreted cumulatively, as in (6a,b). *Few*, by contrast, appears to require an entirely different logical form that does not allow cumulative interpretation, perhaps along the lines of (6c).

(6) a. $\exists X[<10\text{-people}(X) \& \exists Y[10\text{-bottles}(Y) \& \text{drink}(X,Y)]]$ (1a: fewer)
b. $\exists X[\text{few-people}(X) \& \exists Y[10\text{-bottles}(Y) \& \text{drink}(X,Y)]]$ (5a: a few)
c. $\text{few}[\{x:\text{person}(x) \& \exists Y[10\text{-bottles}(Y) \& \text{drink}(x,Y)]\}]$ (1b: few)

The question that follows is how these various logical forms could be derived from a single basic meaning for *few*.

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4.

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On the non-unified interpretation of bare plurals in existential sentences

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It has long been observed that bare plural associate NPs in an existential sentence such as (1) receive an 'existential' or 'cardinal' interpretation (cf. Milsark 1974):

(1) There are men in the garden.

It is also well-known that these same NPs may have a kind-referring interpretation in other environments, such as (2) (cf. Carlson 1977):

(2) Wombats are marsupials.

In order to account for these data, many authors have suggested that the predicate determines which of these interpretations the bare plural receives (cf. Carlson 1977; Kratzer 1995; Chierchia 1995). Predicates corresponding to the kind interpretation are individual-level and those corresponding to the existential interpretation are stage-level. Since individual-level predicates are barred from the coda position in existential sentences, as evidenced in (4), only the existential reading of bare NPs emerges there.

(3) There are firemen available.
(4) * There are firemen altruistic.

Sentences like (5-6) below, however, show that this cannot be all there is to say on this topic with respect to existential sentences. In particular, it must be explained how the NP in (5) gets the interpretation it does, and why this interpretation is different from that of the same NP in (6).

(5) There are even prime numbers.
(6) There are even prime numbers between zero and three.

Superficially, (5) and (6) differ in that (5) lacks a predicate expression in coda position. These sentences' interpretations also differ: The truth conditions of (5) require the existence of an instance of the kind *even prime number*. The truth conditions of (6) require the existence of *more than one even prime number between one and three*. Importantly, (5) requires only one instance to satisfy its truth conditions (and is true given the existence of the number 2), whereas (6) requires more than one (and for this reason is false). If the interpretation of a bare plural in an existential sentence is

determined by the coda predicate, which may only be a stage-level predicate, it is unclear why differing interpretations should obtain here, even in the absence of an expression in that position. The only way to account for the facts seems to be by assuming the existence of more than one existential construction. Though the exact implementation remains to be worked out, the idea would be that the kind interpretation of bare plurals plays a role in only one of these constructions, the construction without a coda.

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5.

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Two types of NPIs in Japanese

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This squib presents data which show that there are two types of Negative Polarity Items (NPIs) in relation to ellipsis in Japanese. One type can appear with a site where VP and NEG are elided, and the other cannot. I argue that a semantic classification regarding the negation feature of NPIs is required to account for the contrast.

1. Data

Some Japanese adverbial expressions such as *zenzen* 'at all', *it-teki-mo* 'a drop', and *amari* 'much', are NPIs when used with verbs, in that they must occur with negation as in (1).

(1) John-wa {zenzen/it-teki-mo/amari} sake-o {noma-nai / *nomu}.
-TOP at all/one-drop-FOC/much sake-ACC drink-NEG / *drink
'John doesn't drink sake {at all/a drop/much}.'

These NPIs, however, behave differently before an ellipsis site followed by the copula *da* as in (2b-i) and (2b-ii), which are preceded by the first conjunct (2a). *Zenzen* can precede an ellipsis site as in (2b-i), while *it-teki-mo* and *amari* cannot as in (2b-ii).

(2) a. John-wa sake-o nomu ga,
-TOP sake-ACC drink but
'John drinks sake, but'

b-i Mary-wa zenzen [*e*] da.
-TOP at all COP
'Mary ~~(doesn't drink sake)~~ at all.'

b-ii *Bill-wa {it-teki-mo/amari} [*e*] da.
-TOP one-drop-FOC/much COP
'[intended reading] Bill ~~(doesn't drink sake)~~ {a drop/much}.'

2. Semantic account for ellipsis licensing of *zenzen*

I propose that [+negation] is encoded in *zenzen*, but not in *it-teki-mo* or *amari*, and that NPI with [+negation] encoded can license ellipsis as in (2b-i). There are two advantages to this account. First, how *zenzen*, which is referred to as an emphatic NPI, makes a negative statement stronger can be explained. Since there are two [+negation], one with *zenzen* and the other with NEG *–nai*, negation is emphasized semantically. Second, why *zenzen* can license ellipsis can be accounted for. Due to the redundancy of [+negation] in a sentence, NEG can be elided along with VP *sake-o nomu* 'drink sake'

as in (2b-i). The reason why the VP also can be elided is that it is identical with its antecedent in (2a).

In contrast, [+negation] is not encoded in *it-teki-mo* or *amari*. There is no redundancy of [+negation], thus, NEG cannot be elided. The VP *sake-o nomu* 'drink sake' in (2b-ii) is identical with its antecedent in (2a). However, the VP cannot be elided leaving NEG stranded, because NEG is bound to verbs in Japanese. Thus, the VP has to stay for NEG: no ellipsis is allowed.

Although *it-teki-mo*, which is referred to as a minimizer, is also an emphatic NPI, the mechanism of emphasizing negation is different from that of *zenzen*. For *it-teki-mo*, the truth is interpreted by scalar inference. If it is stated that somebody does not drink a drop, since a drop is conventionally the minimum amount of liquid, we infer that s/he does not drink at all. By being less informative using the minimizer, the emphasis is pragmatically inferred for *it-teki-mo*. *Amari*, which is attenuating NPI in Israel's (2001) term, makes the negative statement weaker, therefore, we can assume that [+negation] is not encoded.

Reference

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