



1.

Emmanuel Chemla – École Normale Supérieure, Paris
French both: a gap in the theory of antipresupposition

chemla@clipper.ens.fr

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.

References

- Heim, I. (1991) "Artikel und Definitheit." In *Semantik: Ein internationales Handbuch der zeitgenössischen Forschung*, ed. A. von Stechow and D. Wunderlich. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Percus, O. (2006) "Antipresuppositions." In *Theoretical and Empirical Studies of Reference and Anaphora: Toward the establishment of generative grammar as an empirical science*, ed. A. Ueyama, Report of the Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (B), Project No. 15320052, Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, 52-73.
- Sauerland, U. (2004) "Scalar implicatures in complex sentences." *Linguistics and Philosophy* 27, 367–391.
- Sauerland, U. (2006) "Implicated Presuppositions." Ms., ZAS Berlin.
- Spector, B. (to appear) "Scalar Implicatures: Exhaustivity and Gricean Reasoning." In *Questions in Dynamic Semantics*, ed. M. Aloni, A. Butler and P. Dekker, Current Research in the Semantics/Pragmatics Interface, Elsevier.