snippets

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Contents

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 publish issues roughly twice a year, and all issues will remain 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 snippetsjournal@gmail.com. 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. We will provide a response within 3 months of the moment when we acknowledge receipt of a submission. At the same time, we do not guarantee more than a simple yes/no response to the submitter. We will not require revisions (barring exceptional cases). We allow resubmission (once) of the same piece.

1.

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States and temporal interpretation in non-SOT languages

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It has been argued that in non-SOT languages a past-tense can sometimes support a simultaneous reading in indirect discourse (Barensten 1996, Sharvit 2003, 2008, Altshuler 2004). Consider Sharvit's (2008) Hebrew example (27) given under (1) below:

(1) Yosef   amar   Se-Miriam hayta   hara
   Yosef say:PAST that-Miriam be:PAST pregnant.

According to Sharvit, (1) is ambiguous between a simultaneous and back-shifted reading, where Yosef said, respectively, *Miriam is pregnant* and *Miriam was pregnant.* While I agree with Sharvit that the (alleged) pregnancy may overlap (in part) the saying time, I disagree that (1) has a simultaneous reading.

    Suppose Miriam got fired and ten months later the following conversation took place:

(2)   Rachel: Isn't it illegal to fire pregnant women.
        Yosef: It is, but Miriam just got pregnant/is **now** pregnant; she was not before/ten months ago.

In this situation, Yosef's reply cannot be reported by (1), which demonstrates that a simultaneous reading is impossible for Hebrew past-under-past. The following discourse demonstrates this point further:

(3) a.   Dan cilcel   Suv ve-Suv   ba-delet   aval af exad lo   ana
        Dan ring:PAST again and-again in.the-door but NEG one NEG answer:PAST
        'Dan rang the door over and over again but nobody answered.'

    b.   hu amar   le-iSto   Se-Rina kanir'e (#hayta)
        he say:PAST to-wife.his that-Rina probably (#be:PAST)
        yeSena/ lo (#hayta)   ba-bayit
        asleep/ NEG (#be:PAST) in.the-home
        'He said to his wife that Rina was probably asleep/not at home'

(3a) suggests that Rina's (possible) situation of being asleep or not at home overlaps Dan's saying time. In other words, the embedded clause in (3b) must have a simultaneous reading; the fact that its verb cannot come in past-tense demonstrates that past-tense may only give rise to a back-shifted reading.

    I conclude that the embedded past in (1) can only have the back-shifted reading. However, the pregnancy may have continued at Yosef's saying time. This, I argue, is due to its distributive property, which has to do with the situation and its subparts (Bennett & Partee 1978, Dowty 1979, 1986, Taylor 1977, Bach 1981, Hinrichs 1985).

It has been stipulated that states are true in every subinterval, while events are only true in one. This explains the following entailments noted by Reinhart (1986) and Dowty (1986):

(4) Mary ate the apple. $\rightarrow$ Mary is not eating it now.

(5) I was at home. $\sim \rightarrow$ I am not at home now.

The event reported in (4) is non-distributive and cannot obtain after (or before) its reference-time, while the state depicted in (5) is distributive and may continue beyond its reference-time and crucially, overlap its evaluation-time.

Being distributive, the pregnancy reported in (1), which must have obtained before the time Yosef uttered *Miriam hayta hara* 'Miriam was pregnant', may have continued to overlap it.

This analysis suggests an extra layer of ambiguity in SOT languages. E.g., the English sentence *John said that Mary was pregnant* (which can report scenarios of the kind in (2)) is ambiguous between a simultaneous reading, where the pregnancy overlapped John's time of saying, and the back-shifted reading, where it preceded it completely or overlapped it in part.

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2.

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A modification of the "Hey, Wait a Minute" test

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Von Fintel (2004) notes that if a sentence S entails that P, one cannot generally respond to S with "Hey, wait a minute. I didn't know that P" (1a). However, one may respond thus if P is a speaker presupposition of S (1b). He concludes that the ability to occur in the frame, 'Hey, wait a minute. I didn't know …' is diagnostic of speaker presupposition. Call this the HWAM test.

(1) Mary's aunt is visiting today.
    a. # Hey, wait a minute. I didn't know Mary's aunt is visiting today.
    b. Hey, wait a minute. I didn't know Mary has an aunt.

    Speaker presupposition and semantic presupposition part company in conditionals. (2) carries a speaker presupposition that Mary has a boyfriend, but its semantic presupposition is that if Mary made a reservation, she has a boyfriend (Karttunen 1974). The felicity of (2a) and infelicity of (2b) verify that the HWAM test targets speaker presupposition, not semantic presupposition.

(2) If Mary made a reservation, she will have dinner with her boyfriend tonight.
    a. Hey, wait a minute. I didn't know Mary has a boyfriend.
    b. # Hey, wait a minute. I didn't know that if Mary made a reservation, she has a boyfriend.

    Since a speaker presupposition may asymmetrically entail a semantic presupposition, (2a), it may be difficult to tell whether the HWAM test has diagnosed a speaker presupposition that is also a semantic presupposition, as in (3b), or one that is only a speaker presupposition, as in (2a). We propose a modification of the HWAM test that offers an answer to this question. A rational speaker cannot express uncertainty about a semantic presupposition before asserting a sentence carrying it (3c). However, speakers may retreat from a speaker presupposition that is not a semantic presupposition, while reaffirming what they originally said (4c).

(3) a. Mary will have dinner with her boyfriend tonight.
    b. Hey, wait a minute. I didn't know Mary has a boyfriend.
    c. # Well, I don't know whether she does or not. But she will have dinner with her boyfriend tonight.

(4) a. If Mary made a reservation, she will have dinner with her boyfriend tonight.
    b. Hey, wait a minute. I didn't know Mary has a boyfriend.
    c. Well, I don't know whether she does or not. (But she only eats out when she is seeing someone. So) if she made a reservation, she will have dinner with her boyfriend tonight.

Note that, more generally, this test distinguishes speaker presuppositions from entailments. Semantic presuppositions constitute one kind of entailment, but there are also others such as the backgrounded content that we find with non-restrictive relatives. Roberts (submitted) argues that these should not be considered as presuppositions, even though they pass the HWAM test (5b). On the other hand, adding our continuation yields an infelicitous discourse (5c). That is, since non-restrictive relatives are entailments they behave together with semantic presuppositions according to our test.

(5) a. Mary, who is a linguist, will do fieldwork this summer.
    b. Hey, wait a minute. I didn't know Mary is a linguist.
    c. # Well, I don't know whether she is or not. But Mary, who is a linguist, will do fieldwork this summer.

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3.

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Complementizer deletion in Kansai Japanese revisited: a prosodic account

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Saito 1987 observes that Kansai dialect of Japanese allows C-deletion (1).

(1) John-ga   [CP Koobe-ni   iku **(te)**]   yuuta.
      John-NOM   Kobe-to   go   C   said
      'John said (that) he was going to Kobe.'   (Saito 1987: 313)

Now, consider (2a-d).

(2) a.   John-ga   Koobe-ni iku **te**, soide Mary-ga   Tookyo-ni iku **te**, yuuta.
            John-NOM Kobe-to   go C   and   Mary-NOM Tokyo-to   go C said
            'John said that he was going to Kobe, and Mary said that she was going to
            Tokyo.'
      b. * John-ga Koobe-ni iku **te**, soide Mary-ga Tookyo-ni iku [C *e*], yuuta
      c. * John-ga Koobe-ni iku [C *e*], soide Mary-ga Tookyo-ni iku **te**, yuuta.
      d. * John-ga Koobe-ni iku [C *e*], soide Mary-ga Tookyo-ni iku [C *e*], yuuta.
                                                                              (Saito 1987: 317)

    Saito adopts Stowell's 1981 government analysis of null Cs. If (2b) resulted from eliding the verb in the first conjunct, its unacceptability would be mysterious because the null C would be governed by the final verb (1a). However, the unacceptability follows if (2b) results from Right Node Raising since the trace of Right Node Raising cannot be a proper governor (Torrego 1984).

    This snippet proposes another way of looking at these data. There is a simple generalization that can be made regarding these data, and it is prosodic: a null C cannot precede an intonational boundary. In general, in gapping sentences, intonational boundaries occur, on the one hand, between the first conjunct and the second conjunct, and, on the other hand, between the "shared material" concluding the second conjunct (the string-final verb in (3)) and the remaining material in the second conjunct. That gapping sentences are associated with this prosodic structure was observed by Kuno 1973, and Kuno's observation is supported by examples (4, 5) from An 2007. The two readings in (4) correlate with the position of a pause surrounding the adjunct: if the adjunct is parsed with the subject, it yields the high reading; if the adjunct phrase is parsed with the object, it yields the low reading. Since the gapping sentence in (5) only allows the high reading, this indicates that *okorinagara* is not grouped together with the object and the verb.

(3) a. Takesi-ga   zassi-o,   Kaori-ga   hon-o   katta.
       Takesi-NOM magazine-ACC   Kaori-NOM book-ACC bought
        'Takesi (bought) a magazine, Kaori bought a book.'
    b.   [IntPh Takesi-ga zassi-o] [IntPh Kaori-ga hon-o] [IntPh katta].

(4) Mary-wa ***warainagara*** situmonsiteiru gakusei-o nagutta.
    Mary-TOP with.a.smile ask.a.question student-ACC hit
    'With a smile on her face, Mary hit the student who asked a question.'
    'Mary hit the student who asked a question with a smile on his face.'

(An 2007: 174)

(5) Mary-wa ***warainagara***, (sosite) Jane-wa ***okorinagara,***
    Mary-TOP with.a.smile and   Jane-TOP angrily
    situmonsiteiru gakusei-o nagutta.
    ask.a.question student-ACC hit
    'With a smile, Mary (hit the student who was asking a question) and with a frown,
    Jane hit the student who was asking a question.'   (An 2007: 175)

Given that Minimalist research has avoided the notion of government, which Saito's analysis crucially uses, a new analysis of the paradigm seems welcome. The fact that the generalization is prosodic suggests that a notion like government isn't crucial. For example, if as Bošković and Lasnik 2003 propose, a null C must undergo PF-Merger to an adjacent [+V] element, one can maintain that (2b) is excluded because intonational boundaries block PF-merger (Bošković 2001). As for the null C in the first conjunct of (2c-d), if a [+V] element does follow it, then it isn't pronounced, and one might speculate that this causes a problem with PF-Merger.

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4.

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A phonological condition that targets discontinuous syntactic units: **ma/mon suppletion in French**

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It is usually thought that the feminine possessive pronouns *ma, ta*, *sa* – versions of 'my', 'your' which select for a feminine NP argument – take the form *mon, ton, son* if and only if they are followed by a word that starts with a vowel (Tranel 1996; see also Grévisse 1986 p. 159). We argue that this rule is in fact triggered by *a phonological condition that applies to discontinuous syntactic units*. This suggests (i) that phonology has access to abstract syntactic information, and (ii) that there might be phonological arguments for discontinuous syntactic units.

The standard pattern is illustrated in 0.

(1) a. **ma f**emme   a'. **mon é**pouse   'my wife'
     b. **mon a**dorable femme   b'. **mon a**dorable épouse   'my adorable wife'
     c. **ma t**rès adorable femme c'. **ma t**rès adorable épouse 'my very adorable wife'
     d. **ma g**entille femme   d'. **ma g**entille épouse   'my charming wife'
     e. **mon a**ssez gentille femme e'. **mon a**ssez gentille épouse 'my fairly charming wife'

While (1) shows that *ma/mon* suppletion is triggered on phonological grounds, other examples suggest that the rule cannot be stated in purely linear terms:

(2) Feminine *mon* followed by a consonant   Feminine *ma* followed by a vowel
     a. Marie a été **mon / *ma**, puis <u>son</u> **é**pouse. a'. Marie a été **ma / *mon**, et ensuite <u>sa</u> **f**emme.
        Marie has been my, then his wife.   *Marie has been my, and then his wife.*

     b. Marie sera soit **mon /*ma** soit <u>ton</u> **é**pouse. b'. Marie sera **ma / *mon** ou <u>ta</u> **f**emme.
        Marie will-be either my or your wife.   *Marie will-be my or your wife*

In this case, the choice of *mon* vs. *ma* is governed by the initial vowel (in bold) of its argument NP, even though this is not the vowel that immediately follows the possessive. (When the underlined possessive is replaced with *leur* ('their'), the grammaticality judgments do not change, which shows that phonological parallelism between the two possessives *mon* and *ton* is not what is at stake.)

Five theories could be considered ((3)). Theory I is stipulative: it must postulate that a syntactic feature directly encode a phonological property of an entire NP. Theory II apparently has no independent support. Theories III, IV and V, however, could be integrated into some standard accounts of Right-Node Raising in syntax.

(3) **Theory I:** The rule is not purely phonological: an NP that starts with a vowel has a special diacritic, +v; suppletion is selection: feminine *mon* selects a +v NP, feminine *ma* selects a –v NP.
     mon^{+v} puis ton épouse^{+v}, ma^{-v} puis ta femme^{-v}

Theory II: The rule is purely phonological, but it accesses a representation in which some elements (represented as subcripts) have been deleted.

mon _{puis ton} épouse

Theory III: The rule is phonological, but it accesses a representation with ellipsis.

mon ~~épouse~~ puis ton épouse

Theory IV: The rule is phonological, but it accesses a representation with movement – possibly *via* across the board extraposition out of a conjunction.

[mon t puis ton t] épouse

Theory V: The rule is phonological, but it accesses a representation with discontinuous constituents (McCawley 1982).

mon   puis   ton   épouse
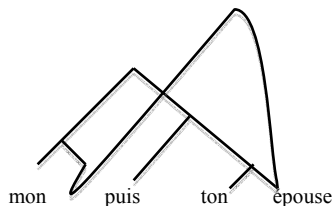
Theories III and IV won't easily extend to the case of parentheticals. While the examples in 0 are marked, they give rise to clear contrasts; and some acceptable forms are found in naturalistic contexts. Theory III is not applicable here: ellipsis is implausible because the NP appears to be interpreted only once. A version of Theory IV could postulate in 0 a rightward movement of the NP [= *ton t_{obligation}, si j'ose dire, obligation]* or leftward movement of the possessive [= *ton, si j'ose dire, t_{ton} obligation*]; but it's not clear what triggers this movement. Theories I, II and V could handle these facts: without further addition for Theory I; with the assumption that the parenthetical is at some level ignored by the phonology for Theory II; and with the assumption that parentheticals may be attached higher than their surface position for Theory V (McCawley 1982).

(4) a. Il est de **ton/*?ta**, si j'ose dire, **obligation** de me prêter assistance.
   It is of your, if I dare say, duty to lend me assistence.

   b. C'est à cette époque que j'ai réalisé **mon/*?ma,** disons-le, **ho**mosexualité.
   It is in that period that I became aware of my, let us say it, homosexuality.
   (With spelling changes, from http://meio-school.bbgraf.com/personnels-de-l-ecole-f59/yosuke-habara-fini-t162.htm)

   c.   J'ai des doutes sur **mon/*?ma**, disons, **em**ployabilité.
   I have doubts about my, let-say, employability.
   (From http://vj.legiteam.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=14851&start=20&postdays=0&postorder=asc&highlight=&sid=b06b04c78fd1fc27be6cdbe7cf7f0889)

Each theory faces challenges. We have already mentioned weaknesses of Theories I-IV. For its part, Theory V would have to posit that a phonological rule is sensitive to sisterhood rather than linear adjacency – which requires some theoretical elaboration.

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5.

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Association of floated quantifiers with expressions other than the local grammatical subjects in John Updike's **Rabbit, Run**

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The conventional wisdom about quantifier float in "standard" varieties of English is that a floated quantifier that immediately precedes a VP can be associated only with the subject of that VP (see Bobaljik 2003). This unanimously held view, however, is contradicted by the following two sentences, found in John Updike's novel, *Rabbit, Run*, to the extent that Updike's idiolect can be regarded as one of the "standard" varieties of English.

(1)   Alcohol and cards Rabbit both associates with a depressing kind of sin, sin with bad breath, … (p. 16)
(2)   The houses, many of them no longer lived in by the people whose faces he all knew, are like the houses in a town you see from the train, … (p. 229)

The page references are to Updike (1964). In (1), the quantifier *both* is associated with the topicalized expression *alcohol and cards*, and in (2), the quantifier *all* is associated with *whose faces*, a preposed phrase containing a relative pronoun. These sentences indicate that Updike's idiolect allowed a floated quantifier that immediately precedes a VP to be associated with an expression that has been preposed to a position preceding the subject.

   The existence of sentences of this type is predicted by a theory that combines the view, due to Sportiche (1988), that the location of a floated quantifier marks the location of a trace left behind by the noun phrase that the floated quantifier is associated with and the view, due to Chomsky (1986), that an expression that is preposed out of a VP leaves a trace in a position that is left-adjoined to that VP. Such a theory, however, would probably have to be augmented by an account of why floated quantifiers cannot mark the locations of CP-initial intermediate traces, since it seems unlikely that a sentence like **Alcohol and cards she believes both that Rabbit associates with a depressing kind of sin* would have been possible even in Updike's idiolect.

   On the other hand, the phenomenon under discussion is unexpected in theories such as Dowty and Brodie's (1984), in which floated quantifiers in English are viewed as adjuncts that do not have any syntactic relationship with the noun phrases they seem to be semantically associated with. However, it is certainly possible to modify this latter theory in such a way that sentences like (1) and (2) will no longer be problematic.

   Thus, at the moment, the existence of sentences like (1) and (2) cannot be said to favor one or the other of the two major theoretical approaches to quantifier float that have been offered in the literature. However it does place further constraints on the

possible form that a theory of quantifier float can take, ruling out, for instance, theories that categorically state that quantifier float can be licensed by A-movement but not by A'-movement.

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