snippets

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Quantifier *irgendein* and local implicatures

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This snippet focuses on a puzzle concerning the alternatives associated with the German existential quantifiers *einige* ('some') and *irgendeine* ('any') under embedding. In particular, we show that the two quantifiers trigger different implicatures in upward-entailing (UE) and downward-entailing (DE) contexts; see (1) and (2) respectively. In short, *einige* and *irgendeine* trigger the same *not all* implicature when embedded under 'every' (UE), but behave differently from each other when embedded under 'none' (DE). Whereas *einige* triggers a local implicature in DE contexts, *irgendeine* is interpreted as 'none'.

(1) Jedes der Mädchen fand *einige/irgendeine* ihrer Murmeln.
every of.the girls found *some/any* of.her marbles
'Each of the girls found some of her marbles.'
$\rightsquigarrow$ Each of the girls found *some but not all* of her marbles.

(2) Keines der Mädchen fand *einige/irgendeine* ihrer Murmeln.
none of.the girls found *some/any* of.her marbles
'None of the girls found some/any of her marbles.'
$\overset{?}{\rightsquigarrow}$ None of the girls found *some but not all* of her marbles.

In *grammatical* accounts (Fox 2007; Chierchia 2013), an embedded occurrence of a scalar element may trigger local calculation of alternatives and their negation. If *einige*/*irgendeine* trigger a local implicature, then the readings in (1) and (2) result. What counts as an alternative to these kinds of sentences is a central issue for all such theories that have emerged from the neo–Gricean account of implicatures (Horn 1989; Sauerland 2004).

Gotzner and Benz (2018) have developed an experimental paradigm in which participants systematically derived the embedded implicature in the case of *einige* 'some' being embedded under *alle* 'all'. In an interactive version of this paradigm (Benz et al. 2018), we collected a large corpus of production and interpretation data on German sentences of the form 'Q of the girls found Q' of their marbles'. Q and Q' could be, among others, *einige* 'some', *alle*/*jedes* 'all'/'every', *keines* 'none', and *irgendeine* 'any' (for details see https://osf.io/qs2vj/).

In (3) percentages of responses indicating a local *some but not all* reading for interpretation (%int) and production (%prod) are shown. As can be seen, when *einige* and *irgendeine* are embedded under *alle* (A-E and A-I respectively), the interpretation that each girl found some but not all marbles arises consistently for both quantifiers. In the case of embedding under *keine* 'no', however, interpretations diverge: *einige* embedded under *keine* (N-E) is predominantly interpreted as 'some but not all', whereas *irgendeine* embedded under *keine* (N-I) never gives rise to a local implicature. Instead, the sentence with *irgendeine* is interpreted as 'no girl found anything'.

(3)

	N-E	N-I	A-E	A-I
#int/#prod	35/15	98/77	76/50	4/7
%int	77	1	91	100
%prod	100	0	96	100

#int: abs. number of interpreted utterance tokens.
#prod: abs. number of produced utterance tokens,

The data give rise to the following puzzle about alternatives: if one assumes with Buccola and Haida (2017) that 'all' is an alternative to *irgendeine*, then this explains why A-E and A-I trigger the same local implicature, but it leaves unexplained why N-E and N-I behave differently. If, alternatively, one assumes that *irgendeine* does not activate the 'all' alternative, then the observations about N-E and N-I follow, but the embedded implicature of A-I remains unexplained. One may argue that the *not all* implicature of A-I is the result of *irgendeine* being singular. Note, however, that participants only saw pictures in which girls had either none or at least 2 out of 4 marbles. Hence, the *all found one* interpretation for A-I was contextually blocked.

Another suggestion is that the *not all* inference from *einige* has become conventionalized, whereas the *not all* inference from *irgendeine* is a true implicature that is blocked in DE contexts. Contrary to this assumption, Benz et al. (2018) show cases in which *einige* in UE contexts fails to produce the expected implicature. Solving the puzzle of alternatives associated with German *irgendeine* may also require further investigation of its distribution and NPI behaviour, which seems to differ from that of English *any*.

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