

snippets

Issue 37 - December 2019
Special issue in honor of Uli Sauerland

Contents

| | | |
|-----|---|----|
| 1. | Andreea C. Nicolae, Patrick D. Elliott, and Yasutada Sudo <i>Introduction</i> | 1 |
| 2. | Dorothy Ahn <i>ASL IX to locus as a modifier</i> | 2 |
| 3. | Artemis Alexiadou <i>Decomposing scalar approximatives in Greek</i> | 4 |
| 4. | Anna Alsop, Lucas Champollion, and Ioana Grosu <i>A problem for Fox's (2007) account of free choice disjunction</i> | 7 |
| 5. | Anton Benz and Nicole Gotzner <i>Quantifier irgendein and local implicature</i> | 10 |
| 6. | Jonathan David Bobaljik and Susi Wurmbrand <i>Fake indexicals, binding, and the PCC</i> | 13 |
| 7. | Brian Buccola and Emmanuel Chemla <i>Alternatives of disjunctions: when a disjunct contains the antecedent of a pronoun</i> | 16 |
| 8. | Luka Crnić and Brian Buccola <i>Scoping NPIs out of DPs</i> | 19 |
| 9. | Chris Cummins <i>Some contexts requiring precise number meanings</i> | 22 |
| 10. | Patrick D. Elliott and Paul Marty <i>Exactly one theory of multiplicity inferences</i> | 24 |

| | | |
|-----|---|----|
| 11. | Anamaria Fălăuș and Andreea C. Nicolae | |
| | <i>Two coordinating particles are better than one: free choice items in Romanian</i> | 27 |
| 12. | Danny Fox | |
| | <i>Individual concepts and narrow scope illusions</i> | 30 |
| 13. | Danny Fox | |
| | <i>Degree concepts and narrow scope illusions</i> | 33 |
| 14. | Nicole Gotzner | |
| | <i>Disjunction, conjunction, and exhaustivity</i> | 35 |
| 15. | Martin Hackl | |
| | <i>On Haddock's puzzle and the role of presupposition in reference resolution</i> | 37 |
| 16. | Andreas Haida | |
| | <i>Symmetry, density, and formal alternatives</i> | 40 |
| 17. | Nina Haslinger and Viola Schmitt | |
| | <i>Strengthened disjunction or non-classical conjunction?</i> | 43 |
| 18. | Fabian Heck and Anke Himmelreich | |
| | <i>Two observations about reconstruction</i> | 46 |
| 19. | Aron Hirsch | |
| | <i>Modal adverbs and constraints on type-flexibility</i> | 49 |
| 20. | Natalia Ivlieva and Alexander Podobryaev | |
| | <i>On variable agreement and scope reconstruction in Russian</i> | 52 |
| 21. | Hadil Karawani | |
| | <i>The past is rewritten</i> | 54 |
| 22. | Manfred Krifka and Fereshteh Modarresi | |
| | <i>Persian ezafe and proportional quantifiers</i> | 56 |
| 23. | Paul Marty | |
| | <i>Maximize Presupposition! and presupposition satisfaction</i> | 59 |
| 24. | Lisa Matthewson, Sihwei Chen, Marianne Huijismans, Marcin Morzycki, Daniel Reisinger, and Hotze Rullmann | |
| | <i>Restricting the English past tense</i> | 61 |
| 25. | Clemens Mayr | |
| | <i>On a seemingly nonexistent cumulative reading</i> | 65 |
| 26. | Marie-Christine Meyer | |
| | <i>Scalar Implicatures in complex contexts</i> | 67 |
| 27. | Moreno Mitrović | |
| | <i>Null disjunction in disguise</i> | 70 |
| 28. | Andreea C. Nicolae and Yasutada Sudo | |
| | <i>The exhaustive relevance of complex conjunctions</i> | 72 |
| 29. | Rick Nouwen | |
| | <i>Scalar vagueness regulation and locative reference</i> | 75 |

| | | |
|-----|--|-----|
| 30. | Robert Pasternak | |
| | <i>Unifying partitive and adjective-modifying percent</i> | 77 |
| 31. | Hazel Pearson and Frank Sode | |
| | <i>'Not in my wildest dreams': a part time minimizer?</i> | 80 |
| 32. | Orin Percus | |
| | <i>Uli and our generation: some reminiscences</i> | 82 |
| 33. | Jacopo Romoli | |
| | <i>Why them?</i> | 84 |
| 34. | Fabienne Salfner | |
| | <i>The rise and fall of non-conservatives</i> | 87 |
| 35. | Petra B. Schumacher | |
| | <i>Vagueness and context-sensitivity of absolute gradable adjectives</i> | 90 |
| 36. | Stephanie Solt | |
| | <i>More or less an approximator</i> | 93 |
| 37. | Giorgos Spathas | |
| | <i>Plural anaphoric reference and non-conservativity</i> | 95 |
| 38. | Benjamin Spector | |
| | <i>An argument for the trivalent approach to presupposition projection</i> | 97 |
| 39. | Bob van Tiel | |
| | <i>'The case against fuzzy logic revisited' revisited</i> | 100 |
| 40. | Lyn Tieu | |
| | <i>A developmental asymmetry between the singular and plural</i> | 103 |
| 41. | Tue Trinh | |
| | <i>A tense question</i> | 106 |
| 42. | Hubert Truckenbrodt | |
| | <i>On remind-me presuppositions and embedded question acts</i> | 108 |
| 43. | Michael Wagner | |
| | <i>Disjuncts must be mutually excludable</i> | 111 |
| 44. | E. Cameron Wilson | |
| | <i>Constraints on non-conservative readings in English</i> | 114 |
| 45. | Susi Wurmbrand | |
| | <i>Indexical shift meets ECM</i> | 117 |

On a seemingly nonexistent cumulative reading

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DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.7358/snip-2019-037-mayr>

The sentence in (1) is true if every kid hugged some mother and every mother was hugged by some kid, where the hugged ones need not stand in the mother-of relation to the huggers. Such truth-conditions are called *cumulative*.

(1) The kids hugged the mothers.

The plural DPs denote the maximal pluralities containing all the relevant atomic individuals, i.e., the kids or the mothers (Link 1983). To apply the relation denoted by *hug* to such pluralities, assume that (1) has an LF like (2a) where a ****-operator is attached to the verb (Krifka 1986; Schwarzschild 1996; Sauerland 1998; Sternefeld 1998; Beck and Sauerland 2000) with a semantics as in (2b). Here lower case variables stand for atomic individuals and capital ones for pluralities. This yields precisely the cumulative truth-conditions discussed above.

- (2) a. [the kids [****hugged [the mothers]]]
b. $[[**]] = \lambda f_{\langle e, \langle e, t \rangle \rangle} . \lambda Y_e . \lambda X_e . \forall x \preceq X . \exists y \preceq Y [f(y)(x) = 1]$
 $\wedge \forall y \preceq Y . \exists x \preceq X [f(y)(x) = 1]$

Consider next the discourse in (3). A's utterance does not have the cumulative truth-conditions of (1). If it did, B's reply should be infelicitous as it would contradict A's utterance and assert that the kids did not hug their own mothers. Rather, (3A) is obligatorily reflexive.

- (3) A: The kids hugged their mothers.
B: No, they hugged each other's mothers.

However, with an LF like (4) such a cumulative reading could obtain for (3A). On the assumption that $[[\mathbf{pro}_3]] = [[\mathbf{the\ kids}]]$, with the kids and the mothers standing in a one-to-one relation, $[[\mathbf{the\ mothers\ of\ pro}_3]] = [[\mathbf{the\ mothers}]]$. Winter (2000) already points out this prediction but does not address the question of whether it is empirically supported.

- (4) [the kids [****hugged [the mothers of \mathbf{pro}_3]]]

Uli Sauerland (p.c.) reports that the addition of the numerals in (5) makes a cumulative interpretation relatively possible compared to (3A). (A reviewer wonders whether *their* in (3A) is actually *their own* making it obligatorily reflexive. The cumulative interpretation of (5) suggests otherwise. Notice that *The kids hugged their own three mothers* is not equivalent to (5).)

- (5) The three kids hugged their three mothers.

This might suggest that what is going on with (3A) is some kind of pragmatic blocking. For (3A), the reciprocal alternative in (6) exists, which is only true in case each kid hugged a mother different from their own. One might thus think that the possibility of (6) blocks the use of (3A) in such a reciprocal situation, effectively limiting (3A) to reflexive situations.

(6) The kids hugged each other's mothers.

For (5), no such alternative exists. In particular, (7) does not have the reciprocal interpretation made true by the cumulative interpretation of (5). Unlike (5), (7) requires that every kid has three mothers.

(7) The three kids hugged each other's three mothers.

A number of questions remain. (Here I also thank two reviewers for their suggestions.) First, I predict (3A) to be true in a situation where every kid hugged her own mother and some kids hugged other mothers as well, as long as one did not. Is this supported? Second, it is not obvious that (6) can be an alternative to (3A). Taken at face value, the former is more complex than the latter, in conflict with the structural theory of alternatives in [Katzir 2007](#). The answer somewhat depends on the representation for *their*. Third and relatedly, one would then like to know why (6) is not an alternative to (1).

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