

# 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 Crnič 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 Huijsmans, 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

# A developmental asymmetry between the singular and plural

Lyn Tieu · Western Sydney University

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.7358/snippet-2019-037-tieu>

Semantic theories of the plural aim to capture the observation that plural morphology is often associated with a ‘more than one’ meaning; (1a), for example, usually conveys (1b). This multiplicity inference typically disappears in downward-entailing environments; (2a) is not equivalent to the negation of (1b), but rather is interpreted along the lines of (2b).

- (1) a. Elliott read books.  
b. Elliott read more than one book.
- (2) a. Elliott didn’t read books.  
b. Elliott didn’t read a (single) book.

According to Sauerland (2003), agreement features such as the singular feature express presuppositions that are interpreted in a  $\phi$  head that takes DP as its complement. The SINGULAR feature in particular expresses the presupposition that its complement refers to a single atomic entity, while the PLURAL feature is presuppositionless:

- (3)  $\llbracket \text{SINGULAR} \rrbracket(x)$  is defined only if  $\#x = 1$   
 $\llbracket \text{SINGULAR} \rrbracket(x) = x$  wherever it is defined
- (4)  $\llbracket \text{PLURAL} \rrbracket(x)$  is always defined  
 $\llbracket \text{PLURAL} \rrbracket(x) = x$  wherever it is defined

To capture the distribution of the plural, Sauerland invokes *Maximize Presupposition* (Heim 1991): between two alternative morphemes, the one with the stronger presupposition must be used whenever that presupposition is satisfied. Whenever the presupposition of the singular is satisfied, then, the singular, and not the plural, must be used.

Developmental studies have investigated plural meanings in children as young as 20 months using preferential looking paradigms; children are invited to, e.g., “Look at the blicket(s)!” when faced with a picture of a single novel entity and a picture of a plural novel entity (Kouider et al. 2006). Knowledge of the plural meaning reportedly emerges earlier than that of the singular (Davies et al. 2019), with 20–24-month-olds performing better than chance on plurals but not on the singular (Arias-Trejo et al. 2014; Davies et al. 2017). As Arias-Trejo et al. (2014) point out, a general bias for ‘plural’ displays containing more items (Carey 1978; Jolly and Plunkett 2008) cannot fully capture the data: children reportedly showed a significant *increase* in their looks to the plural target *beyond their baseline preference* in response to plural morphology, but did not shift from the baseline in response to the singular.

The developmental asymmetry between the singular and plural poses an interesting puzzle for semantic theories. In a way, Sauerland’s theory makes the presuppositional singular more complex than the non-presuppositional plural; perhaps children acquire the presuppositionless item before

the presuppositional one. On the other hand, without the presupposition, there is no competition between the two forms; prior to acquiring the singular presupposition, children might thus be expected to perform at chance on both.

An alternative explanation, raised by Arias-Trejo et al. (2014), is that children might view both displays as compatible with the singular, singling out an individual object from either display. As an anonymous reviewer points out, perhaps children treat the singular as entailing, rather than presupposing, a cardinality of one, leading them to distinguish the singular and plural in this respect. To determine children's initial interpretations of the singular and plural, it may prove fruitful to examine embedded environments, as has been done for slightly older children (e.g., Sauerland et al. 2005; Tieu et al. 2014; Renans et al. 2018).

## References

- Arias-Trejo, Natalia, Lisa M. Cantrell, Linda B. Smith, and Elda A. Alva Canto. 2014. Early comprehension of the Spanish plural. *Journal of Child Language* 41:1356–1372.
- Carey, Susan. 1978. Less may never mean more. In *Recent Advances in the Psychology of Language*, ed. R. Campbell and P. Smith, 109–132. New York: Plenum Press.
- Davies, Benjamin, Nan Xu Rattanasone, and Katherine Demuth. 2017. Two-year-olds' sensitivity to inflectional plural morphology: Allomorphic effects. *Language Learning and Development* 13:38–53.
- Davies, Benjamin, Nan Xu Rattanasone, Tamara Schembri, and Katherine Demuth. 2019. Preschoolers' developing comprehension of the plural: The effects of number and allomorphic variation. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology* 185:95–108.
- Heim, Irene. 1991. Artikel und Definitheit. In *Semantik: Ein internationales Handbuch der zeitgenössischen Forschung*, ed. Arnim von Stechow and Dieter Wunderlich, 487–535. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Jolly, Helen R., and Kim Plunkett. 2008. Inflectional bootstrapping in 2-year-olds. *Language and Speech* 51:45–59.
- Kouider, Sid, Justin Halberda, Justin Wood, and Susan Carey. 2006. Acquisition of English number marking: The singular-plural distinction. *Language Learning and Development* 2:1–25.
- Renans, Agata, Jacopo Romoli, Maria-Margarita Makri, Lyn Tieu, Hanna de Vries, Raffaella Folli, and George Tsoulas. 2018. The abundance inference of pluralised mass nouns is an implicature: Evidence from Greek. *Glossa: A Journal of General Linguistics* 3:103.
- Sauerland, Uli. 2003. A new semantics for number. In *Proceedings of the 13th Semantics and Linguistic Theory Conference (SALT 13)*, ed. Robert B. Young and Yuping Zhou, 258–275.
- Sauerland, Uli, Jan Andersen, and Kazuko Yatsushiro. 2005. The plural is semantically unmarked. In *Linguistic Evidence: Empirical, Theoretical, and Computational Perspectives*, ed. Stephan Kepser and Marga Reis, 413–434. Mouton de Gruyter.
- Tieu, Lyn, Cory Bill, Jacopo Romoli, and Stephen Crain. 2014. Plurality inferences are scalar implicatures: Evidence from acquisition. In *Proceedings of the 24th Semantics and Linguistic Theory Conference (SALT 24)*, ed. Todd Snider, Sarah D'Antonio, and Mia Weigand, 122–136.

Lyn Tieu  
[lyn.tieu@gmail.com](mailto:lyn.tieu@gmail.com)

Locked Bag 1797  
Penrith NSW 2751  
Australia