snippets

Issue 39 - July 2020

Contents

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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 brief, self-contained and explicit. One encounters short comments of this kind in earlier literature in linguistics. 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 challenges accepted generalizations or influential theoretical proposals;

- 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 remark we would like to publish. Some of them posed unobserved puzzles. For instance, a squib by Postal and Ross in *Linguistic Inquiry* 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 contains 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 solicit submissions twice a year. The submissions that we accept will be posted on the journal website approximately 3 months after each deadline, and all accepted submissions will remain permanently 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 published snippets 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), a Rich Text Format (RTF) file, or a PDF. The files must be anonymous, but must be accompanied with information about the authors: name, affiliation, and (postal or electronic) address. Submissions can be of any length below 500 words (including examples), with an additional half page allowed for diagrams, tables, and references. The submissions may not contain footnotes or general acknowledgments, except acknowledgements of funding sources, which must be credited in a line following the references. Authors who wish to acknowledge language consultants are allowed but not required to do so. We will not consider abstracts.

4. Editorial policy

Submissions will be reviewed by our editorial board and review board, and review will be name-blind both ways. While we guarantee a response within 3 months of the submission deadline, we will not necessarily provide more than a yes/no response to the submitter. We allow resubmission (once) of the same piece.

This statement reproduces with minor modifications the editorial statement in Issue 1 of Snippets (January 2000), edited by Carlo Cecchetto, Caterina Donati and Orin Percus.

Exclusivity in unconditionals

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Under Rawlins's (2008, 2013) analysis of unconditionals, alternative (1a) and constituent (1b) unconditionals involve a question-denoting adjunct that gives rise to two presuppositions. The *exhaustivity* presupposition requires that the alternatives of the adjunct (e.g., *that Taylor brings beer* and *that Max brings beer* for (1a)) exhaust the context set, ensuring that at least one of these alternatives is true. The *exclusivity* presupposition requires that the alternatives mutually exclude each other. Thus, for Rawlins, the unconditionals in (1) presuppose that at least one of the relevant people will bring beer (exhaustivity), but not more than one will (exclusivity).

(1) a. Whether Taylor or Max brings beer, the party will be a success.
     b. Whoever brings beer, the party will be a success.

The claim that alternative unconditionals come with an exclusivity presupposition is based on example (2), to be evaluated in Context 1 (Rawlins 2013:137). In this context, it is possible that both Alfonso and Joanna will bring a salad (#exclusivity). For Rawlins, the fact that the exclusivity presupposition is not satisfied leads to the infelicitousness of (2). Although not explicitly shown in Rawlins (2008, 2013), constituent unconditionals are expected to be infelicitous in Context 1 as well, given that they come with the same presupposition.

> *Context 1*: [Planning a potluck, discussing food needs.] Suppose that one more salad would not be enough food, but two would. We know that either Alfonso or Joanna might bring a salad, and that possibly both will (#exclusivity), and this fact has just been under discussion.

(2) #Whether Alfonso or Joanna brings a salad, we will not have enough food.

We claim that (2) is degraded in Context 1 due to two issues, neither of which is exclusivity per se. First, due to "might", it is not certain that someone will bring a salad (#exhaustivity), which on its own should lead to infelicitousness. Second, given that exclusivity is explicitly allowed not to hold, the truth of the consequent is not entailed, which results in the falsity of the unconditional. To disentangle these effects from exclusivity, we presented 9 speakers with the unconditionals in (1) in the modified context given below. Eight speakers judged them to be both felicitous and true. This is evidence that unconditionals do not come with an exclusivity presupposition.

> *Context 2*: [At a party, discussing beer needs.] Suppose we need just <u>one</u> more person to bring beer for the party to be a success (✓consequent entailment). We know that either Taylor or Max <u>will</u> bring beer (✓exhaustivity), and it is possible that <u>both</u> of them will (#exclusivity).

Thus, we show that out of the two presuppositions previously associated with unconditionals — exhaustivity and exclusivity — only exhaustivity should be retained. This finding is important for

the current debate on the semantic nature of unconditionals. It directly challenges the analysis of unconditionals in Rawlins 2008, 2013, where a question operator triggers an exclusivity presupposition in unconditionals just like it does in questions, and more generally, any question-based analysis that would require that the relevant alternatives mutually exclude each other. The lack of exclusivity effects we observe is particularly problematic for alternative unconditionals, given that alternative questions are widely assumed to denote a set of mutually exclusive propositions (Biezma and Rawlins 2012). Our paper therefore lends indirect support to recent non-question-based approaches to unconditionals that do not predict general exclusivity effects in unconditionals (Balusu to appear, Lohiniva 2019, Szabolcsi 2019, Gonzalez and Lohiniva 2020).

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Interrogative flip and indexical shift are distinct phenomena

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Interrogative Flip (IF) is perspectival shift from the speaker in root declaratives to the addressee in matrix information-seeking questions (Tenny 2006) that affects, for example, high adverbials, experiencer predicates, and evidentials (see overviews in Korotkova 2016, Zu 2018). Some proposals treat IF as a variety of indexical shift (McCready 2007; Lim 2010; Murray 2012, 2017), a view that dovetails with perspectival accounts of indexicals (Bittner 2014, Hunter 2013, Roberts 2015). Those proposals predict that indexicals would shift in questions, at least in languages with indexical shift. Below I show that this prediction is incorrect. There are no known cases of indexical shift to the addressee in matrix questions, and approaches that treat interrogative flip and indexical shift on a par fail to predict this novel empirical generalization.

Consider Turkish (Turkic: Turkey). The language has both (a) interrogative flip (Meriçli 2016), illustrated with the contrast in (1) for the indirect evidential *miş*, realized below as *muş*, and (b) indexical shift in attitudes (Özyıldız 2012), illustrated in (2) for 'I'. However, Turkish indexicals do not shift in matrix questions (3), illustrated with a personal indexical in (3) ('here' behaves the same way; Korotkova 2016:225-226).

(1) a. Bura-da   nane yetişi-yor-**muş**.
         here-LOC mint grow-IPFV-**IND**
         'Given ✓my / #your evidence, mint grows here.'

     b. Bura-da   nane yetişi-yor   mu-y-**muş**?
         here-LOC mint grow-IPFV Q-COP-**IND**
         'Given #my / ✓your evidence, does mint grow here?'

(2) *Beste and I are talking about kale*
     Beste [sev-er-**im**   ] di-yor
     Beste [like-HAB-**1SG**] say-IPFV
     (i) ✓NON-SHIFTED, speaker's 'I': 'Beste says that I (speaker) like it.'
     (ii) ✓SHIFTED, attitude holder's 'I': 'Beste says that she (Beste) likes it.'

(3) sev-er   mi-**y-im**?
     like-HAB Q-**COP-1SG**
     (i) ✓NON-SHIFTED, speaker's 'I': 'Do I like it?'
     (ii) #SHIFTED, addressee's 'I': 'Do you like it?'

Several approaches to IF predict (3ii) to be felicitous. For example, Speas and Tenny 2003:330 lists shifted indexicality under the general perspectival umbrella, thus predicting indexical shift in questions. McCready 2007 explicitly argues that indexical pronouns shift in questions in the same way as evidentials do. It should be noted that second-person uses of Japanese *boku* 'I', discussed by McCready, do not instantiate genuine IF as they are not limited to questions and appear across clause types when talking to, or about, male children (Ide 1997:52). However, the account in

McCready 2007 predicts the existence of indexical pronouns that undergo IF. Finally, Lim (2010) and Murray (2012, 2017) independently analyze the individual argument of evidentials as an indexical pronoun whose reference can be shifted by the same mechanism that shifts indexicals in attitudes. This, again, incorrectly predicts that bona fide indexicals in indexical-shifting languages like Turkish would undergo IF.

What explains indexical non-shift in matrix questions? Perspectival expressions that undergo IF might still be Kaplanian indexicals, but anchored to a designated context coordinate (not the same as 'I') that selectively shifts in questions. However, this analytical option is problematic. First, some expressions that undergo IF, most notably predicates of personal taste and epistemic modals, have been shown not to be Kaplanian indexicals (MacFarlane 2014). Second, according to a prominent view advocated in Deal to appear and much of the previous literature, indexical shift is highly constrained syntactically and does not occur in matrix clauses. Perspectival shift, on the other hand, is more flexible and has been viewed as pragmatic at least in some cases (Mitchell 1986, Harris and Potts 2009, Roberts 2019).

To sum up, even though indexical non-shift in matrix questions has been left practically unaddressed in the literature on interrogative flip, the pattern is consistent with independent assumptions about the nature of indexical shift and perspective in language. The novel data in (3ii) show that accounts treating indexicality and perspective on a par overgenerate.

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Competing for oddness

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Sentences like (1) are odd:

(1)   #Some Italians come from a warm country.

On an influential account of this oddness (Magri 2009, 2011), sentences of the form [*some Ps Q*] trigger an *obligatory* and *indefeasible* scalar implicature that a more informative statement is not the case; e.g. that not all Ps are Q. Since all Italians come from the same country, the pragmatically enriched statement *some but not all Italians come from a warm country* contradicts common knowledge. The obligatory nature of this implicature renders it impossible to resolve the conflict between the truth of the more informative statement and the implicature, and so oddness ensues.

   Cases like (2) below invite an explanation along the same lines:

(2)   #Some dogs have four legs.

But, what could the more informative obligatory implicature-triggering statement be? We point out that this question has no clear answer. Consider:

(3)   a.   All dogs have four legs.   *all Ps Q*
       b.   GEN dogs have four legs.   GEN *Ps Q*
       c.   Dogs have four legs.   *Ps Q*
       d.   Many dogs have four legs.   *many Ps Q*
       e.   Most dogs have four legs.   *most Ps Q*
       f.   A dog has four legs.   *a P Qs*

The more informative statement could not be (3a) because it is false, and thus cannot be a suitable pragmatic competitor for (2).

   A promising direction is to relate the oddness of (3a) to corresponding generic statements like *Dogs have four legs*. Suppose such statements involve a covert generic quantifier (Krifka et al. 1995), (3b). LFs like [GEN *Ps Q*], however, are not necessarily more informative than [*some Ps Q*]: (4a), but not (4b), can be true in the context of a newly founded club with no members yet.

(4)   a.   Members of this club help each other in emergencies.
       b.   Some members of this club help each other in emergencies.

What about an instance of kind predication like (3c)? This also cannot be: we would wrongly predict (5a) to be odd by virtue of the competitor (5b).

(5)   a.   Some birds fly.

      b. Birds fly.

The same explanation applies to alternatives with quantifiers such as *many* and *most*, as in (3d) and (3e): if they constituted suitable competitors, (6a)/(7a) should be odd given the truth of the more informative statements in (6b)/(7b), contrary to our intuition.

(6)   a. Some books are paperbacks.

        b. {Many/most} books are paperbacks.

(7)   a. Some barns are red.

        b. {Many/most} barns are red.

Finally, considering a non-weaker competing alternative like (3f) predicts that, given the availability of (8a), (8b) should be odd as well, contrary to fact.

(8)   a. A dog barks.

        b. Some dogs bark.

So an explanation of (2)'s oddness in terms of an offending more informative alternative is not as straightforward as it would seem at first sight, irrespective of whether this alternative statement is regarded as being lexically (e.g. Horn 1972), structurally (e.g. Katzir 2007) or conceptually (e.g. Chemla 2007) related to the utterance.

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Might generics

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The logical form of a generic sentence such as *Dogs bark* is usually analyzed, à la Lewis 1975, in terms of an (unpronounced) two place operator GEN and its arguments, the restrictor $dogs(x)$ and the matrix $bark(x)$: GEN $x[dogs(x)][bark(x)]$. (Our focus here is on simple characterizing generic sentences with bare plurals and stative predicates.) See Carlson and Pelletier 1995 for an overview of this standard tripartite analysis, and discussion of various complications. The semantics of GEN is more controversial. But a promising approach assigns a generic sentence the truth-conditions of a quantified modal conditional, $\forall x(dogs(x) > bark(x))$, where the modality is "normalcy" and $>$ is a variably strict conditional. See Delgrande 1987, Asher and Morreau 1995, and Pelletier and Asher 1997.

But how do generics interact with other modals? I'll offer one observation about an interaction with *might* that presents a challenge for standard theories.

Wild mushrooms are a mixed bag — some are poisonous and some are harmless. So it is not the case that if something is a wild mushroom then normally it is poisonous, but it is also not true that if something is a wild mushroom then normally it isn't poisonous. There is no generic truth here. Thus, the following are both false:

(1)   Wild mushrooms are poisonous.

(2)   Wild mushrooms aren't poisonous.

Of course, there are tricky cases with *striking property* or *existential readings* (Cohen 2004), but the standard analysis predicts that there are pairs such as (1) and (2) that — in the right context with the right disambiguation — are both false. Now consider the following "*might*-generic":

(3)   Wild mushrooms might be poisonous.

In the situation we are considering (3) is true. But does *might* have a wide-scope or narrow-scope reading with respect to GEN?

Clearly (3) can't express that the corresponding generic is epistemically possible — we know that the corresponding generic (1) is false (in the relevant context). That is, the *might* here doesn't scope over the corresponding generic.

Instead, it seems to express the *dual* of the GEN operator in a way that is reminiscent of what Lewis (1973) said about *might*-counterfactuals: "if *A* then might *B*" is equivalent to "not: if *A* then would not-*B*". But the challenge for the dual analysis is to compositionally implement the "Lewisian equivalencies" whereby (3) is equivalent to (4).

(4)   It is not the case that wild mushrooms aren't poisonous.

The challenge, then, is to provide such an account in terms of the denotation of *might* and GEN.

Note that it would not do to analyze (3) as saying that if something is a wild mushroom, then it would normally be such that it is *possible* that it is poisonous. This treatment is analogous to the contentious "would-be-possible" readings of *might*-counterfactuals (Lewis 1986: 63-4). But then duality fails. Moreover, since *might* is epistemic, (3) comes out as false given that some wild mushrooms are easy-to-identify as non-poisonous (cf. Lewis 1973: 80-1). So this, unfortunately, gets the logic wrong.

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NP ellipsis bleeds allomorphy in Hungarian

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In Hungarian, the (otherwise) obligatory accusative suffix *-(V)t* (1a) is optionally realized as -Ø in the context of 1st or 2nd person possessor agreement, as (1b) shows (Bacskai-Atkari 2017; É. Kiss 2014). We analyze this as optional contextual allomorphy triggered by the possessor features.

(1)   a. Mari kölcsönkért egy toll{-at/*-Ø}.
           Mary borrowed   a   pen{-ACC}
           'Mary borrowed a pen.'
       b. Mari kölcsönkérte egy toll-am{-at/-Ø}.
           Mary borrowed   a   pen-POSS.1SG{-ACC}
           'Mary borrowed a pen of mine.'

What has gone unnoticed in existing literature is that in NP ellipsis (NPE), the accusative suffix *-(V)t* must appear on the remnant (*kék-et* 'blue-ACC'), regardless of the form of the case suffix in the correlate. Compare (2b) to its counterpart without NPE (2a).

(2)   a. Mari kölcsönkérte egy piros toll-am{-at/-Ø},
           Mary borrowed   a   red   pen-POSS.1SG{-ACC},
           Zsuzsi pedig egy kék toll-am{-at/-Ø}.
           Susie and   a   blue pen-POSS.1SG{-ACC}
           'Mary borrowed a red pen of mine, and Susie a blue pen of mine.'
       b. Mari kölcsönkérte egy piros toll-am{-at/-Ø},
           Mary borrowed   a   red   pen-POSS.1SG{-ACC},
           Zsuzsi pedig egy kék{-et/*-Ø}.
           Susie and   a   blue{-ACC}
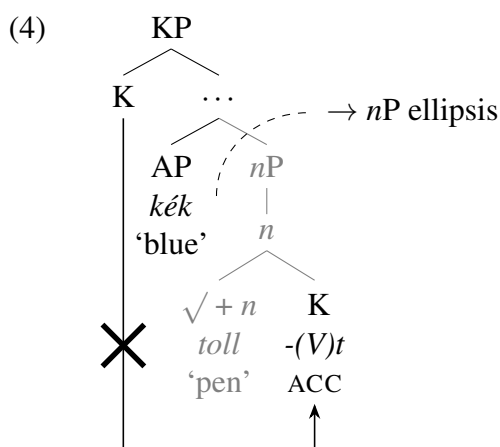   'Mary borrowed a red pen of mine, and Susie a blue (pen of mine).'

Crucially, although possessive morphology (*-(V)m*) does not show up on the remnant adjective (Saab and Lipták 2016), the remnant in (2b) can only be interpreted as referring to the speaker's blue pen, not just any blue pen. (This judgement is shared by one author of the present paper and five other native speaker consultants.) This provides evidence that possessive morphology was present and subsequently elided.

If ellipsis were just non-pronunciation (e.g. Merchant 2001; Aelbrecht 2009), the possessive features that condition the contextual allomorphy of the accusative suffix would still be present in the remnant, predicting the adjective (*kék*) to also display the *-(V)t*/-Ø allomorphy. This, however, is not what we find (2b). Therefore, ellipsis bleeds allomorphy.

However, the pattern in (2b) complies with the Ellipsis-Morphology (ELMO) Generalization (3) (Saab and Lipták 2016):

(3) For every morphological operation MO that affects the domain of X, where X contains the target of MO, MO cannot apply in X if X is subject to ellipsis.

On Saab and Lipták's account, in non-elliptical contexts, case affixes lower onto the noun. In NPE, however, this operation is blocked; the affixes get stranded and need to find another host. In (2b) in particular, the ACC suffix in the remnant gets stranded, and ends up being hosted by the material that precedes the elided noun (i.e. the adjective). This is schematized in (4). On this analysis, then, because the suffix does not attach to a possessive noun that conditions allomorphy, no allomorphy is predicted.

(4)

```
            KP
           /  \
         K     ...
               /  \  ----  → nP ellipsis
             AP     nP
             kék    |
            'blue'  n
                   /  \
                 √ + n   K
                 toll   -(V)t
                 'pen'  ACC
```

Another way to implement ELMO and capture the fact that ellipsis bleeds allomorphy is via an obliteration analysis (Banerjee 2020, following Arregi and Nevins 2007; see also Murphy 2018). In Distributed Morphology (Halle and Marantz 1993, 1994), obliteration is the deletion of all features of a terminal prior to Vocabulary Insertion. Obliterated terminals (here, the possessed noun) thus cannot condition allomorphy.

Similar observations regarding ellipsis bleeding allomorphic possibilities have been made for Irish (Bennett et al. 2019) and Bengali (Banerjee 2020). The Hungarian data are novel evidence for such an interaction in the nominal, rather than the clausal, domain.

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