

snippets

Issue 40 - January 2021

Contents

1. Paul Marty. *A note on Schlenker's Translucency.*
2. Carlos Muñoz Pérez. *Island effects with infinitival hanging topics.*
3. Rint Sybesma. *Raise is rise+v (rather than rise+Voice).*



ISSN 1590-1807

Published in Led on Line - Electronic Archive by
LED - Edizioni Universitarie di Lettere Economia Diritto - Milano - Italy
<https://www.ledonline.it>

January 2021

Copyright

The works included in *Snippets* are the property of their authors and are used by permission. Readers must apply the same principles of fair use to the works in this electronic archive that they would to a printed archive. These works may be read online, downloaded and printed for personal use, copied and freely distributed, or the URL of *Snippets* included in another electronic document. Any reference to material included in *Snippets* must cite the author and the source. The texts may not be published commercially (in print or electronic form), edited, or otherwise altered without the permission of the author.

Editors

Sam Alxatib, Graduate Center, City University of New York
Isaac Gould, Ewha Womans University
Orin Percus, Université de Nantes

Review Board

Simon Charlow (Rutgers University), Christopher Davis (University of the Ryukyus), Michael Yoshitaka Erlewine (National University of Singapore), Ilaria Frana (Università degli Studi di Enna “Kore”), Daniel Gutzmann (University of Cologne), Laura Kalin (Princeton University), Peter Klecha (Swarthmore College), Marie-Christine Meyer (Zentrum Allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft), Neil Myler (Boston University), Michelle Sheehan (Anglia Ruskin University), Yasutada Sudo (University College London), Ayaka Sugawara (Waseda University), Gary Thoms (New York University), Maziar Toosarvandani (University of California, Santa Cruz), Wataru Uegaki (University of Edinburgh), Coppe van Urk (Queen Mary University of London), Alexis Wellwood (University of Southern California), Rebecca Woods (Newcastle University).

The editors would also like to thank Amir Anvari, Kenyon Branan, Cindy Chen, Luka Crnić, Paloma Jeretić, Todor Koev, Manuel Križ, Jon Ander Mendia, Despina Oikonomou, and Yimei Xiang, for their reviews.

Email: snippetsjournal@gmail.com

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.

A note on Schlenker's Translucency

Paul Marty · University College London

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.7358/snip-2021-040-mart>

Schlenker (2010, 2013, 2020) argues that the content of Appositive Relative Clauses (ARCs) should be *translucent* in the sense that they should make a weak semantic contribution relative to the global utterance context (1).

- (1) **Translucency** (adapted from Schlenker 2013, (24))
If an ARC is uttered in a global context set C,
a. its content should not be locally trivial, but
b. it should be possible to add to C unsurprising assumptions to obtain a context C⁺ in which its content is locally trivial.

Condition (1a) captures Potts's (2005) observation that the content of an ARC should be informative. Condition (1b) is motivated by Schlenker's novel observation that not any information can appear in an ARC, as exemplified by the contrast in (2), modelled after Schlenker's examples.

- (2) *Context: Smith has worked for the NYPD for 20 years.*
a. Smith, who is a reputed officer, has murdered two people today.
b. #Smith, who has murdered two people today, is a reputed officer.

Following Schlenker, the contrast above arises because the ARC in (2b), unlike the one in (2a), violates (1b). In a nutshell, the content of the ARC in (2a) can be made locally trivial if speakers enrich the global context by assuming that, over his 20 years of service, Smith has gained in reputation; by contrast, the content of the ARC in (2b) is quite disconcerting and, arguably, speakers fail here to find such a smooth enrichment of the global context to make it locally trivial.

In this note, we add to (2) the novel contrasts in (3)-(5): in each pair, the (a) and (b) sentences are uttered in the same global context set and involve the same ARC, the content of which should be quite surprising given common knowledge. Thus, following Translucency, the ARCs in those pairs should be both unnatural. This prediction is however incorrect: while the (a)-sentences are indeed unnatural in most contexts, the (b)-sentences sound perfectly natural.

- (3) a. #Bill, who has thirteen fingers, speaks faster than anybody else.
b. Bill, who has thirteen fingers, plays arpeggios faster than anybody else.
(4) a. #Sue, who has just won a huge lottery jackpot, was born in 1985.
b. Sue, who has just won a huge lottery jackpot, bought a \$10 million yacht.
(5) a. #John's father, who is dying of an autoimmune disease, voted for Trump.
b. John's father, who is dying of an autoimmune disease, is in palliative care.

Intuitively, the (b)-examples sound natural because the ARCs in them contribute to explain some of the implications of the main clauses in which they appear (e.g., Bill plays arpeggios faster than anybody else *because he has thirteen fingers*). By contrast, in the (a)-sentences, these same ARCs cannot fulfil such purposes (e.g., Bill speaks faster than anybody else *#because he has thirteen fingers*), and their informative content is perceived there as superfluous. These contrasts are thus problematic for the current formulation of Translucency and, specifically, for the idea that the contribution of an ARC is to be evaluated relative to the original context together with the linguistic material that precedes it. They suggest instead that the contribution of an ARC can be evaluated by considering all (preceding and following) material in the sentence.

Two analytical options could be explored to account for these contrasts:

- The condition (1b) of Translucency could be amended so that ARCs should make a weak contribution relative to the main clause in which they appear. This same result could also be achieved by assuming instead that speakers rely on a symmetric (rather than incremental) algorithm for calculating the local context of ARCs (P. Schlenker, p.c.). We note, however, that these refinements would not immediately account for the contrasts above. In particular, one would still have to explain why, for instance, the information of *Bill has thirteen fingers* is easier to trivialize upon considering *Bill plays arpeggios faster than anybody else* rather than *Bill speaks faster than anybody else*.
- Alternatively, the logic behind Translucency could be recast in terms of relevance so that the contribution of an ARC should be relevant yet less critical to the conversation than that of the main clause in which it appears. In other words, the contribution of an ARC should be that of a *relevant side comment* (e.g. Loock 2007; Leffel 2014; Marty 2017). As far as we can see, this alternative view would also capture the novel contrasts discussed in this note by distinguishing the ARCs whose content can easily be construed as following up on that of their main clause from those whose content appears to be orthogonal to that of their main clause, and which are thus perceived as odd contributions.

References

- Leffel, Timothy James. 2014. The semantics of modification: Adjectives, nouns, and order. Doctoral Dissertation, New York University.
- Loock, Rudy. 2007. Appositive relative clauses and their functions in discourse. *Journal of Pragmatics* 39:336–362.
- Marty, Paul P. 2017. Implicatures in the DP domain. Doctoral Dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- Potts, Christopher. 2005. *The Logic of Conventional Implicatures*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Schlenker, Philippe. 2010. Supplements within a unidimensional semantics II: Epistemic status and projection. In *Proceedings of the 40th Annual Meeting of the North East Linguistic Society (NELS 40)*, ed. Seda Kan, Claire Moore-Cantwell, and Robert Staubs, 167–182. Amherst, MA: GLSA.

Schlenker, Philippe. 2013. Supplements without bidimensionality. Ms., Institut Jean-Nicod, CNRS; New York University.
Schlenker, Philippe. 2020. Supplements without bidimensionality [expanded and restructured version]. Ms., Institut Jean-Nicod, CNRS; New York University.

Paul Marty
p.marty@ucl.ac.uk
University College London
Chandler House, 2 Wakefield Street
London WC1N 1PF
UK

Island effects with infinitival hanging topics

Carlos Muñoz Pérez · Pontifical Catholic University of Chile

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.7358/snip-2021-040-muno>

Romance hanging topics are uncontroversially analyzed as constituents that are base-generated above the matrix CP level (e.g. Cinque 1977, 1990; Alexiadou 2006; López 2009). This account assumes that there is no narrow syntactic operation connecting the hanging topic to the position where it is interpreted within the clause; instead, this connection is taken to rely on an anaphoric relation with a resumptive element, and on discourse-related mechanisms.

One property of hanging topics that motivates this approach is their insensitivity to island restrictions. As the following Spanish examples show, the clause-internal correlate of the hanging topic can be within a relative clause, e.g. (1c), or an adjunct, e.g. (1d).

- (1) a. Con respecto a la canción, la escucho todos los días.
with respect to the song it listen.1SG all the days
'As for the song, I listen to it every day.'
- b. Con respecto a la canción, sé que la escuchas todos los días.
with respect to the song, know.1SG that it listen.2SG all the days
'As for the song, I know that you listen to it every day.'
- c. Con respecto a la canción, conozco al hombre que la compuso.
with respect to the song, know.1SG to.the man that it composed
'As for the song, I know the man who composed it.'
- d. Con respecto a la canción, suelo bailar mientras la escucho.
with respect to the song, be.accustomed.1SG dance while it listen.1SG
'As for the song, I usually dance while I listen to it.'

As shown above, hanging topics in this language may be introduced by prepositional expressions like *con respecto a* 'with respect to' (Zubizarreta 1999). Elements like these may also introduce infinitival topics, as in (2). In this new paradigm, the sentences in which the correlate of the hanging topic is within an island do exhibit degradation.

- (2) a. Con respecto a cantar, lo hago todos los días
with respect to sing it do.1SG all the days
'As for singing, I do it every day.'
- b. Con respecto a cantar, sé que lo haces todos los días.
with respect to sing know.1SG that it do.2SG all the days
'As for singing, I know you do it every day.'
- c. ?? Con respecto a cantar, conozco al hombre que lo hizo.
with respect to sing know.1SG to.the man that it did
'As for singing, I know the man who did it.'

- d. ?? Con respecto a cantar, suelo bailar mientras lo hago.
 with respect to sing be.accustomed.1SG dance while it do.1SG
 ‘As for singing, I usually dance while I do it.’

The contrast between (1) and (2) shows that the traditional observation that hanging topics do not display island restrictions must be qualified: it seems to hold for nominal hanging topics, but not for infinitival ones. In particular, the pattern indicates that sensitivity/insensitivity to islands is not a property of the hanging topic construction *per se*, but of the type of phrase functioning as a hanging topic.

In principle, the unacceptability of (2c) and (2d) suggests that some constituent moves when the hanging topic contains an infinitive. A potential analysis along these lines, however, faces the problem that island sensitivity in these constructions seems to be selective. For instance, the sentence in (3b), in which the correlate of the hanging topic is within a complex NP, is acceptable if the infinitive is interpreted as a contrastive topic (for completeness, note also the acceptability of (3a)); an account of (2c) and (2d) in terms of movement restrictions fails at predicting this.

- (3) a. Con respecto a la canción, escuché el rumor de que Madonna no la compuso.
 with respect to the song heard.1SG the rumor of that Madonna not it composed
 ‘As for the song, I heard the rumor that Madonna didn’t compose it.’
 b. Con respecto a cantar, escuché el rumor de que Madonna no lo hará más.
 with respect to sing heard.1SG the rumor of that Madonna not it will.do more
 ‘As for singing, I heard the rumor that Madonna won’t do it anymore.’

In conclusion, further research is necessary to determine why adjuncts and relative clauses trigger island effects with infinitival hanging topics. If a movement-based account can be successfully implemented, the phenomenon makes a case against the assumption that no narrow syntactic operation is involved in licensing hanging topics.

References

- Alexiadou, Artemis. 2006. Left dislocation (including CLLD). In *The Blackwell Companion to Syntax, Vol. 1*, ed. Martin Everaert and Henk van Riemsdijk, 668–699. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Cinque, Guglielmo. 1977. The movement nature of left dislocation. *Linguistic Inquiry* 8:397–412.
- Cinque, Guglielmo. 1990. *Types of A-bar Dependencies*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- López, Luis. 2009. *A Derivational Syntax for Information Structure*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Zubizarreta, María Luisa. 1999. Las funciones informativas: Tema y foco. In *Gramática Descriptiva de la Lengua Española, Vol. 3*, ed. Violeta Demonte and Ignacio Bosque, 4215–4244. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe.

The author acknowledges financial support from ANID (FONDECYT 3190813).

Carlos Muñoz Pérez
carlos.munozperez@uc.cl
Faculty of Language and Literature
Pontifical Catholic University of Chile
Av. Vicuña Mackenna 4860, Santiago 7820436
Chile

Raise is *rise*+*v* (rather than *rise*+Voice)

Rint Sybesma · Leiden University

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.7358/snippet-2021-040-sybe>

Alexiadou, Gehrke, and Schäfer (2014), hereafter AGS, argue that the stem alternation in unaccusative-transitive (in their terms, anticausative-causative) pairs like English *rise-raise* and German *versinken-versenken* (‘sink^{intrans}-sink^{trans}’) is triggered by the incorporation of Voice. Assuming that transitives and unaccusatives are both bi-eventive, involving a verbal event *v* and a result state, they observe that transitives differ from unaccusatives only in the presence of the external argument. Following Kratzer (1996) in assuming that external arguments are introduced by VoiceP, AGS correlate the formal change to the addition of Voice as well.

In note 10, they consider the idea (cf. Embick 2010) that unaccusatives involve one layer (“*v*-BECOME”), while transitives involve two more: one more verbal layer (“*v*-CAUSE”) and VoiceP; see (1) (their (i) in n. 10):

- | | | | | | | |
|-----|----|--------|-------------------|--------------------|------------|----------------|
| (1) | a. | [Voice | [<i>v</i> -CAUSE | [<i>v</i> -BECOME | [STATE]]]] | (transitive) |
| | b. | | | [<i>v</i> -BECOME | [STATE]] | (unaccusative) |

Under this view, they state, the stem alternation could be triggered by *v*-CAUSE rather than Voice. They conclude, however, that in terms of event complexity, “there are no empirical arguments for an additional verbal layer in causatives”.

However, event complexity aside, empirical arguments for (1a) can be developed, if we consider a third form, the middle, which, as is well known, does have causative-transitive semantics (some external force is involved), while being unable to express the external argument overtly (it is syntactically inactive), and if we adopt the view on *v*-CAUSE and Voice from Harley 2013, 2017 and Pykkänen 2008. Under that view, *v* primarily does a semantics job: it introduces the causative-transitive semantics, but not the external argument (Harley 2013:35). Voice is complementary to *v* by introducing the external argument with the syntax necessary to express it overtly (Harley 2013:34-35; Pykkänen 2008:88). Middles — with a transitive semantics, but lacking the external argument syntactically — can then be argued to constitute the missing link between (1a) and (1b):

- | | | | | |
|-----|-------------------|--------------------|-----------|----------|
| (2) | [<i>v</i> -CAUSE | [<i>v</i> -BECOME | [STATE]]] | (middle) |
|-----|-------------------|--------------------|-----------|----------|

Den Dikken and Sybesma (1998) observe that some verbs realize unaccusative, middle, and transitive using one single form (*grow*, *break*), while others use two suppletive forms to cover the paradigm: unaccusative *go*, *come*, and *die* pair up with *take*, *bring*, and *kill* respectively (cf. Haspelmath 1993). Importantly, it is the transitive form that is also used for the middle: {*kill/bring/take*} *easily*. Per (1) and (2), there is a correlation between form and incorporation of *v*-CAUSE.

Returning to the stem alternation in *rise-raise* and *versinken-versenken*, we observe that, here too, the transitive (3c)-(4c) and the middle (3b)-(4b) are formally identical and different from the unaccusative (3a)-(4a):

- (3) a. The sun **raises** every day.
 b. Such money **raises** easily.
 c. **Raise** your hand.
- (4) a. Das Schiff **versinkt**.
 the ship sinks
 ‘The ship is sinking.’ (AGS’s (16c))
- b. Das Schiff **versenkt** sich leicht.
 the ship sinks self easily
 ‘The ship sinks easily.’ (AGS’s (i), n. 17)
- c. Hans **versenkt** das Schiff.
 Hans sinks the ship
 ‘Hans is sinking the ship.’ (AGS’s (16a))

These facts constitute empirical support for (1) and (2). They also show that, if we assume that the layered structure is built bottom-up, the change in form coincides with the incorporation of causative-transitive semantics, i.e., of *v*.

References

- Alexiadou, Artemis, Berit Gehrke, and Florian Schäfer. 2014. The argument structure of adjectival participles revisited. *Lingua* 149:118–138.
- den Dikken, Marcel, and Rint Sybesma. 1998. Take serials light up the middle. Paper presented at GLOW 21, Tilburg.
- Embick, David. 2010. *Localism versus Globalism in Morphology and Phonology*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Harley, Heidi. 2013. External arguments and the Mirror Principle: On the distinctness of voice and *v*. *Lingua* 125:34–57.
- Harley, Heidi. 2017. The “bundling” hypothesis and the disparate functions of little *v*. In *The Verbal Domain*, ed. Roberta D’Alessandro, Irene Franco, and Ángel J. Gallego, 3–28. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Haspelmath, Martin. 1993. More on the typology of inchoative-causative verb alternations. In *Causatives and Transitivity*, ed. Bernard Comrie and Maria Polinsky, 87–120. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Kratzer, Angelika. 1996. Severing the external argument from its verb. In *Phrase Structure and the Lexicon*, ed. Johan Rooryck and Laurie Zaring, 109–137. Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- Pylkkänen, Liina. 2008. *Introducing Arguments*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Rint Sybesma
R.P.E.Sybesma@hum.leidenuniv.nl
 Leiden University
 FGW/Dept of Chinese Studies
 P.O. Box 9515
 2300 RA Leiden
 The Netherlands