

Semantic and Pragmatic Fieldwork

June 20, 2018

1 Presupposition – try it!

What does each of the following sentences in (1)-(12) presuppose? Give a **one-sentence statement** of the presupposition, and **identify the element which triggers it**. Demonstrate that this is a presupposition and not an entailment by testing what happens when you negate the sentence, or by testing it in a yes/no question (it's not necessary to use both tests, as sometimes one is more natural than the other). (1) is an example:

(1) 'John stopped burning the toast.'

Presupposition: John used to burn the toast regularly

Trigger: *stopped*

Test: Using a negated form of the sentence *John did not stop burning the toast* and *Did John stop burning the toast?* also presuppose that John used to burn the toast.

(2) 'John quit smoking.'

(3) 'I'm sorry I'm late.'

(4) 'Wanda is late again.'

(5) 'Cosimo is late, too.'

(6) 'Argo finally stopped criticizing me.'

(7) 'In 2012 the policy was reinstated.'

(8) 'Wayne Gretzky is a better hockey player than Sidney Crosby.'

(9) 'Camillo regrets that he insulted his boss.'

(10) 'The truck began to roll faster on the slope.'

2 Preupposition in real life

- (11) Try finding another presupposition in English. Use the negation or question test to show it. Remember, presupposition triggers are everywhere and in every language – sometimes hiding in plain sight!
- (12) Try finding another presupposition in a language **other than English**. Use the negation or question test to show it. This can be more challenging than it sounds, and often we only stumble across them in our work. But this kind of work is central to semantic and pragmatic fieldwork. Just remember to follow your methodology!