

# Lecture 17

## LCD 306: Semantics & Pragmatics

C.N. Serrano Madsen II  
Queens College  
CUNY

Thursday 16 April 2015

# Outline

## 1 Presupposition

# Table of Contents

## 1 Presupposition

# Presuppositions

- A speaker has presuppositions
- An utterance has entailments

## Differences

- Entailment
  - Whenever A is true, B is true
- Presupposition
  - B must be taken for granted or assumed in order to interpret A

## Entailment Test

- If there is any situation where A can be true, and B might not be true, then A does NOT entail B.
- If there is no such situation, then A entails B.

## Entailment Test

- 1 Assume that A is true.
- 2 Assume that B is NOT true.
- 3 Check for contradiction.
  - If there is a contradiction, then A entails B.
  - If not, then A does not entail B.

## Presupposition Test

- A presupposes B if it is inappropriate (odd, anomalous, out-of-place) to assert A without assuming that B is true.

# Presupposition

Presupposition, unlike entailment, survives under...

- Negation
- Subordination (under modals, antecedent of if clause)
- Questioning
- Factive Verbs

# Presupposition Triggers

- Some words trigger (imply) a presupposition
- Conventional Implicature

# Presupposition Triggers

- Definiteness of a noun presupposes the nouns existence
- Possessives, Proper Names
- Existential Presupposition

# Presupposition Triggers

- Possessives >> Possession
- Like >> Know
- Answer
- Only, again, manage, third, continue, win, another, lie

# Presupposition Triggers

- Meaning of certain verbs
  - stop >> used to
  - know that
  - regret
  - forgot to >> supposed to
  - scare X >> X is animate

# Presupposition Cancellation

- the presupposed statement can be denied or canceled.
- Presupposition cancellation often feels extremely odd, but it is not a total contradiction.
- entailment cancellation impossible: results in logical contradiction

# Entailment and Presupposition

Does A presuppose/entail B?

- A. Julio realized that Xochitl is a ghost
- B. Xochitl is a ghost.

# Entailment and Presupposition

Does A presuppose/entail B?

- A. Julio doesn't realized that Xochitl is a ghost
- B. Xochitl is a ghost.

# Entailment and Presupposition

Does A presuppose/entail B?

- A. Jorge sees a boy
- B. Jorge sees a person

# Entailment and Presupposition

Does A presuppose/entail B?

- A. Karen steals a car.
- B. Karen takes a car.

# Entailment and Presupposition

Does A presuppose/entail B?

- A. The shah of Iran doesn't play tennis.
- B. There is a shah of Iran.

# Entailment and Presupposition

Does A presuppose/entail B?

- A. Does every Tejana in the room smoke?
- B. There is a Tejana in the room.

# Entailment and Presupposition

Does A presuppose/entail B?

- A. It bothers Jorge that Carlos wants a baby.
- B. Carlos wants a baby.

# Entailment and Presupposition

Does A presuppose/entail B?

- A. It doesn't bother Jorge that Carlos wants a baby.
- B. Carlos wants a baby.

# Presupposition Triggers

What is the presupposition? What is the trigger? Why?

- A. Alicia didn't see the snake with two heads
- B. "... the snake with two heads"
- C. Definite referring expressions (singular terms)

# Presupposition Triggers

What is the presupposition? What is the trigger? Why?

- A. Maria Elena didn't die in misery
- B. "Maria Elena..."
- C. Definite referring expressions (singular terms)

# Presupposition Triggers

What is the presupposition? What is the trigger? Why?

- A. Chuy began drafting the brief
- B. "... began..."
- C. Change of state verbs

# Presupposition Triggers

What is the presupposition? What is the trigger? Why?

- A. Estas guapo
- B. "Tu"
- C. Honorific terms

# Presupposition Triggers

What is the presupposition? What is the trigger? Why?

- A. He is a a Mexican, therefore he is brave.
- B. "therefore"
- C. Consequence

# Presupposition Triggers

What is the presupposition? What is the trigger? Why?

- A. Even the old man could use the computer.
- B. "Even"
- C. Unexpected