

# Not sure if this is relevant...

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## 1. Observation

- (1) a. Which colours do you like most? (minimally:  $\exists xPx$ )  
b. Blue... [with final rise] ( $Pb$ )

Readings (a.o.):

- I.* Not sure if I really like blue that much. (Gunlogson)  
*II.* Should I have said 'aquamarine' instead?  
*III.* Did I pronounce 'blue' correctly?  
*IV.* Not sure about the other colours. (Constant)

## 2. Aims of this poster

I claim that **a final rise conveys uncertain cooperativity** (the latter à la Grice).

- ▶ Reading *I* = uncertain Quality
- ▶ Reading *II* = uncertain Quantity
- ▶ Reading *III* = uncertain Manner
- ▶ Reading *IV* = **uncertain Relevance**

I will derive reading *IV* based on:

- ▶ attentive/inquisitive semantics (Roelofsen);
- ▶ relevance as context-relative entailment (Roberts);
- ▶ previous work on exhaustivity implicatures (Westera).

I leave readings *I-III* to intuition.

## 3. Notation

- ▶  $A, B$ : **meanings, i.e., sets of sets of worlds.**
- ▶  $s, t$ : information states, i.e., sets of worlds
- ▶  $w$ : a world.
- ▶  $A_s = \{a \cap s \mid a \in A\}$ :  $A$  restricted to  $s$ .
- ▶  $\models$ : entailment.
- ▶  $[\varphi]$ : the meaning of sentence  $\varphi$ .

## 4. Ingredients (Westera, 2013)

Relevance is world-dependent (non-logical):

- ▶  $B$  is **relevant** to  $A$  in  $w$  iff for some  $t, w \in t, B_t \models A$ .
- ▶ An agent with knowledge state  $s$  **knows how**  $B$  is relevant to  $A$  iff  $B_s \models A$ .

**Maxim of Relevance:** know how your utterance is relevant to the question under discussion (cf. Roberts).

Intuitive example:

- (2) a. Will John go to the party?  
b. It's raining.  $\rightsquigarrow$   $John \{hates/loves\} rainy parties$ .

The richer the semantics, the stricter this maxim.

- ▶ **Attentive semantics** models the possibilities a sentence draws attention to (Roelofsen).
- ▶  $B \models A$  iff  $\cup B \subseteq \cup A$  (info) and  $B \supseteq A \cup B$  (attentive).
- ▶ Now (1b)  $\not\models$  (1a), because  $[Pb] \not\models [\exists xPx] \cup [Pb]$ .

## 5. Predictions

**Fact:** (1b) complies with the Maxim of Relation iff for all  $c \neq b$ , the speaker believes  $Pb \rightarrow Pc$  or  $Pb \rightarrow \neg Pc$ .

For (1), *without* its final rise, we would get (Westera):

1. The speaker believes that  $Pb$  (Quality)
2.  $\forall c \neq b$ , she lacks the belief that  $Pc$  (Quantity)
3.  $\forall c \neq b$ , she believes  $Pb \rightarrow Pc$  or  $Pb \rightarrow \neg Pc$  (Relation)
4.  $\forall c \neq b$ , she believes  $\neg Pc$  = exhaustivity!

But *with* its rise, conveying uncertain relevance, we get:

1. The speaker believes that  $Pb$  (Quality)
2.  $\forall c \neq b$ , she lacks the belief that  $Pc$  (Quantity)
3.  $\forall c \neq b$ , she's unsure whether  $Pb \rightarrow (-)Pc$  (**final rise**)
4.  $\forall c \neq b$ , she's unsure whether  $Pc$  = reading *IV*!

## 6. Conclusions

- ▶ Final fall/rise conveys certain/uncertain cooperativity.
- ▶ Reading *IV* arises from semantics-pragmatics interplay.
- ▶ Pragmatics is sensitive to attentiveness (cf. Ciardelli).
- ▶ Pragmatic notions (e.g., 'relevance') enter semantics.

### A. Available upon request (please ask!)

1. A recent handout with formal details and pictures.
2. Contextual entailment of Roberts is too strong.
3. 'Within a world, everything is related.'
4. The focus in *rise-fall-rise* makes quantity/relevance readings more salient (cf. Constant).
5. Perhaps not all final rises are the same (but so what).
6. Bonus: implicatures are not (explicitly) cancellable.

### B. References

- ▶ Ciardelli, *et al.* (2009). *Attention! Might in Inquisitive Sem.*
- ▶ Constant (2012). *English rise-fall-rise: a study in the semantics and pragmatics of intonation.*
- ▶ Grice, H. (1975). *Logic and conversation.*
- ▶ Gunlogson (2008). *A question of commitment.*
- ▶ Roberts, C. (2012). *Information structure in discourse: Towards an integrated formal theory of pragmatics.*
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- ▶ Westera (2013). *Inq. pragmatics: entailment as relatedness.*

### C. Acknowledgements

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