

Presuppositions are propositions taken for granted at a certain point in a conversation. Thinking of propositions as sets of worlds, the intersection of all operative presuppositions contains all and only worlds that are candidates for being the actual world. This set **C** is known as the *context set* or the *common ground*. Proposition **P** is presupposed iff it's entailed by the common ground, that is, all **C**-worlds are **P**-worlds.

The point of assertion is to whittle down the set of worlds that are candidates for actuality (the context set). This is the same as building up the totality of what's presupposed, since a smaller set of worlds is a stronger proposition, a proposition that entails more **P**s.

An assertion of sentence **S** in context **C** is in effect a proposal to replace **C** with a new context **C'** from which all non-**S** worlds have been banished. Letting **S_w** be the proposition expressed by **S** in the world of utterance **w**, it's a proposal to replace **C** with **C' = C ∩ S_w**. Another way to put it is that the assertion is a proposal to add **S_w** to what we're taking for granted, to the totality of what's presupposed.

Possible worlds play two roles here. First, whether the proposition expressed is true depends on which world it's seen as a description of. This is worlds in their circumstances-of-evaluation guise. Second, which proposition is expressed depends on which world our utterance of **S** is seen as taking place. This is worlds in their context-of-utterance guise. There is a *double dependence of truth-value on worlds*, which is nicely represented by a two-dimensional matrix.

"Let me give a simple example: I said *You are a fool* to O'Leary. O'Leary is a fool so what I said was true, although O'Leary does not think so. Now Daniels, who is no fool and who knows it, was standing near by, and he thought I was talking to him. So both O'Leary and Daniels thought I said something false: O'Leary understood what I said, but disagrees with me about the facts: Daniels, on the other hand, agrees with me about the facts (he knows that O'Leary is a fool), but misunderstood what I said. Just to fill out the example, let me add that O'Leary believes falsely that Daniels is a fool. Now compare the possible worlds *i*,) and *k*. *i* is the world as it is, the world we are in; *j* is the world that O'Leary thinks we are in; and *k* is the world Daniels thinks we are in. If we ignore possible worlds other than *i*, *j* and *k*, we can use represent the proposition I actually expressed [as the one true in *i* and *k* but false in *j*]. But the following 2-dimensional matrix [B] also represents the second way that the truth-value of my utterance is a function of the facts."

	<i>i</i>	<i>j</i>	<i>k</i>
<i>i</i>	T	F	T
<i>j</i>	T	F	T
<i>k</i>	F	T	F

Notice the diagonal proposition TFF. "[It says] roughly this: *What is said in Smith's utterance of "You are a fool" is true*, where the definite description, *What is said in Smith's utterance of "You are a fool"* may be a nonrigid designator — a description that refers to different propositions in different worlds."

Three principles this suggests about the proposition(s) expressed by an assertive utterance in live-option worlds (= worlds in the context set = worlds satisfying operative presuppositions). A proposition is expressed in each live-option world that

- Evaluability** is defined on each live-option world.
- Non-triviality** is true in some, not all, live-option worlds.
- Unequivocality** is same proposition as is expressed in all other live-option worlds.

Evaluability says you should not be asserting anything that might be unevaluable. **Non-triviality** says you should not be asserting anything whose truth-value is already settled. **Unequivocality** says that the content of your utterance should not depend on possibly unknown facts.

Three ways to react to apparent rule violations. Maybe the speaker's context set is smaller/larger/different from what it seemed to be. Maybe the speaker didn't say what he seemed to. Maybe the rules really were violated. "there is usually a lot of flexibility in both the context and the interpretation of what is said, the third reaction will be an unusual one." Examples. "Hesperus = Phosphorus." "I am here." "O'Leary does not exist." "If Aristotle does not exist, then..." "If Aristotle had not existed, then..."

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