

"It was Sarah who found the treasure" presupposes what? "I regret Burlington is the capital of Vermont." "Jill owns a Ford, too." "Even Harry could lift that."

When Frege and Strawson talk about presupposition, they mean *semantic* presupposition. This is a relation between sentences and other sentences (or perhaps propositions).

S semantically presupposes P iff S has no truth-value unless P is true.

Alternatively.... iff P is implied both by S and by  $\sim$ S.

Reason to worry. Intuitions about truth vs untruth are strong. Intuitions about false vs gappy are shaky, variable. Strawson feels "The KoF is bald" is gappy; Russell is pretty sure it is false. Strawson grants, moreover, that in some contexts his intuitions go with Russell! "Who are some famous bald people?" "The KoF is bald, for one."

Stalnaker thinks we need to distinguish the *phenomenon* of presupposition from *theories* of that phenomenon. The phenomenon is that speakers sometimes treat it as "already" true that P.

*A speaker pragmatically presupposes that P ... just in case he is disposed to act, in his linguistic behavior, as if he takes the truth of P for granted, and ... assumes that his audience recognizes that he is doing so. (P, 449)*

*Alternatively, ...he treats it as common ground amongst all parties to the conversation that P.*

Sometimes a sentence S may be inappropriate to utter unless it is pragmatically presupposed that P.

*a sentence has a presupposition in a derivative sense just in case the use of that sentence would for some reason normally be inappropriate unless the speaker presupposed a particular proposition. (P, 451)*

That the sentence they're uttering lacks truth-value is one theory of why it would be inappropriate.

*It may be that ... a statement will fail to have a truth value when one of its presuppositions is false, but if so, this will be a substantive generalization, and not something true by definition. (P, 451)*

Three arguments for the pragmatic approach. (1) Some presuppositions seem more or less orthogonal to what's being said by S; it's hard to see why their falsity should prevent S from being evaluable. "I am Serbian, too."

(2) Sentence presupposition is the requirement that P be pragmatically presupposed. This points the way to other sentential constraints of this type. Anti-presupposition: "She believes that P" is inappropriate if P is pragmatically presupposed; you should say, "She knows that P." What's asserted should *not* be presupposed. Also certain sentences ("too") are appropriate only if a certain *type* of proposition is pragmatically presupposed.

(3) Projection problem. If S presupposes P, when is that presupposition passed along to ...S.... "France has a king and the KoF is bald" does NOT presuppose France has a king. Semantic rules for this are finicky and arbitrary-seeming. But it only makes sense on a pragmatic approach, if we posit that accepted assertions then become part of the common ground. When I say, P&S, P is bound to be part of the common ground by the time I get to S.

Kai: maybe we DO have strong gappy vs false intuitions! "I had breakfast with the KoF this morning" seems false not gappy. Question remains whether these intuitions are semantically significant. No, he thinks.

Tests for presupposition: "Hey, wait a minute," projection. By these tests, even intuitively false KoF sentences presuppose France has a king. ("The KoF is in this room right now.")

What do these gappy vs false judgments signify, then? Old idea: S will seem false iff it's rejectable *even apart from P*. Kai attempts to make this more precise. Does it mean that we can determine that S is false while remaining agnostic on whether P? No, because of "The KoF is on a state visit to Australia." (If he exists, why not?) His proposal: "there is a contextually salient entity whose properties (known or not known) are *in principle* enough to falsify the sentence" (23). Does this always work?

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