Focus on what's (not) at issue:
co-speech gestures, presuppositions, and supplements under Contrastive Focus

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Overview

Original point of departure

- What is the status of the inferences triggered by co-speech gestures (informative, non-emblematic gestures co-occurring with some verbal expression), illustrated in (1)?

(1) a. John brought me a beer$^{\text{LARGE}}$_.
         → The beer that John brought me was large.

     b. John killed$^{\text{STAB}}$_ himself.
         → John stabbed himself.

- Ebert & Ebert (2014) claim the inferences triggered by co-speech gestures are supplemental. Schlenker (2015, to appear), based on the projection facts, argues they are *cosuppositions*, i.e., assertion-dependent presuppositions of the form *if p, g*, where *p* is the verbal expression co-occurring with the gesture and *g* is the content of the gesture:

(2) a. John didn't bring me a beer$^{\text{LARGE}}$.
        $\rightarrow$ If John was to bring me a beer, it would be large.
    b. *Context (for all "suicide" examples): We are playing a video game in which the characters routinely kill themselves. Sometimes characters can only kill themselves in one predetermined way, in other cases they have options.*
        If John kills$^{\text{STAB}}$ himself, I'll win.
        $\rightarrow$ If John kills himself, he will stab himself.

Observation: at-issue uses of co-speech gestures under CF

- Sometimes at-issue uses of co-speech gestures obtain under CF (Rob Pasternak, p.c., a.o.):

(3) a. If John brings me a **beer**$^{\text{SMALL}}$, I'll finish it, but if he brings me a **beer**$^{\text{LARGE}}$, I'll have to share it with someone.
$\nrightarrow$ If John brings me a beer, it will be small/large.

b. If John **kills**$^{\text{SHOOT}}$ himself, I'll win, but if he **kills**$^{\text{STAB}}$ himself, I won't.
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- Further observation (often made for factive verbs, e.g., in examples with *know* vs. *think* — see, e.g., Simons et al. to appear): sometimes standard presuppositions don't project under CF either:

(4) If John **stopped** smoking, I'll give you $10, but if he never **used** to smoke, I won't.
$\nrightarrow$ John used to smoke.

Goals of the study

- Look in a systematic way at the interaction of different types of non-at-issue content (co-speech gestures, presuppositions, supplements) with CF.
- See if there are any important differences among different types of non-at-issue content.
- Explain how non-at-issue content comes to have at-issue uses under CF.

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- At-issue uses of non-at-issue content under CF can be caused "locally" (to make local Focus alternatives licit) or "globally" (as a result of further reasoning on propositional CF alternatives).

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- Local interaction with CF:
  - When at-issue content is not enough to assure the licitness of CF alternatives, non-at-issue content can be used to restrict it:
    - For supplements that means only restrictive readings are available when the NPs they modify aren't contrastive.
    - For presuppositions and co-speech gestures that effectively means local accommodation (e.g., Heim 1983; Schlenker 2009).

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  - Non-at-issue content can also be used to disambiguate between two contrasted referents, in which case its non-at-issue status is preserved, but some of those cases might still involve predicate restriction, whose effects will be masked by the presuppositions of the definite.

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- Differences between co-speech gestures and presuppositions vs. supplements:
  - prosodic, trivially attributable to their configurational differences;
  - in the level of acceptability of at-issue uses, possibly also attributable to configurational differences.

Co-speech gestures

- Inferences triggered by co-speech gestures don't project when the verbal content of the local CF alternatives is identical, and the contrast is due to the gestural content only:

(5)   a. If <u>John</u> brings me a **beer**$^{\text{SMALL}}$ and <u>Bill</u> brings me a **beer**$^{\text{LARGE}}$, I'll have enough booze for the night.
        $\not\to$ If John brings me a beer, it will be small.
        $\not\to$ If Bill brings me a beer, it will be large.

    b. If <u>John</u> **kills**$^{\text{SHOOT}}$ himself and <u>Bill</u> **kills**$^{\text{STAB}}$ himself, I'll win.
        $\not\to$ If John kills himself, he'll shoot himself.
        $\not\to$ If Bill kills himself, he'll stab himself.

- If the verbal content is contrastive, the inferences project:

(6) a. If <u>John</u> brings me a **beer**$^{\text{LARGE}}$ and <u>Bill</u> brings me a **cocktail**$^{\text{SMALL}}$, I'll have enough booze for the night.
   $\rightarrow$ If John brings me a beer, it will be large.
   $\rightarrow$ If Bill brings me a cocktail, it will be small.

   b. If <u>John</u> **kills**$^{\text{STAB}}$ himself and <u>Bill</u> **wounds** himself, I'll win.
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   b. If <u>John</u> **kills**$^{\text{STAB}}$ himself and <u>Bill</u> **wounds** himself, I'll win.
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- Also, the inferences project, if CF is placed elsewhere:

(7) a. If <u>John</u> brings me a beer$^{\text{LARGE}}$ **today** and <u>Bill</u> brings me a beer$^{\text{SMALL}}$ **tomorrow**, I'll be happy.
$\rightarrow$ If John brings me a beer, it will be large.
$\rightarrow$ If Bill brings me a beer, it will be small.

   b. If <u>John</u> kills$^{\text{SHOOT}}$ himself **today** and <u>Bill</u> kills$^{\text{STAB}}$ himself **tomorrow**, I'll win.
$\rightarrow$ If John kills himself, he'll shoot himself.
$\rightarrow$ If Bill kills himself, he'll stab himself.

Relative clauses (RCs)

- When the contrasted NPs are identical, one can't have them bear prosodic CF markers and be modified by non-restrictive RCs:

(8) <u>John</u> brought me a beer/***beer** that/%which was **small** and <u>Bill</u> brought me a beer/***beer** that/%which was **large**.

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- When the contrasted NPs are contrastive, they can be modified by non-restrictive RCs while bearing CF markers:

(9) <u>John</u> brought me a **beer**, which was **small**, and <u>Bill</u> brought me a **cocktail**, which was **large**.

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(9) <u>John</u> brought me a **beer**, which was **small**, and <u>Bill</u> brought me a **cocktail**, which was **large**.

- When CF is placed elsewhere, two identical NPs can be modified by two non-restrictive RCs:

(10) <u>John</u> brought me a beer, which was **small**, **yesterday**, and <u>Bill</u> brought me a beer, which was **large**, **today**.

Presuppositions

- Presuppositions don't project when the at-issue content of the two contrasted expressions is not contrastive (enough), and the presuppositional content of one alternative contrasts with the (sometimes strengthened) at-issue content of the other:

(11) If <u>John</u> **stopped** smoking and <u>Bill</u> never **used** to smoke, I'll give you $10.
$\xrightarrow{\%}$ John used to smoke.

(12) %If <u>John</u> **doesn't** smoke and <u>Bill</u> **stopped** smoking, I'll give you $10.
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- (12) might be reminiscent of the *know* vs. *think* examples like (13), but I believe something else is going on in this case.

(13) If John **knows** that Mary is NYC, he should tell her mother, but if he only **thinks** that she is, he shouldn't.
 $\nrightarrow$ Mary is in NYC.

Presuppositions

- Presuppositions project if the at-issue content of the alternatives are contrastive enough (perhaps, with some lexical adjustment), as long as they don't contradict anything in the other alternatives globally:

(14) If <u>John</u> **stopped** smoking and <u>Bill</u> is taking a **break** from smoking, I'll give you \$10.
    $\rightarrow$ John used to smoke.
    $\rightarrow$ Bill used to smoke.

At-issueness of restrictors: negation-in-the-discourse test

- When co-speech gestures and presuppositions restrict predicates, their contribution can be directly negated in the discourse (modulo some parallelism considerations; judgements to be confirmed), just like with restrictive RCs:

(15)   a.   A: <u>John</u> brought me a **beer**$^{\text{SMALL}}$, and <u>Bill</u> brought me a **beer**$^{\text{LARGE}}$.
           B: No, John also brought you ?a large beer/a beer this$^{\text{LARGE}}$ large.

      b.   A: <u>John</u> **killed**$^{\text{SHOOT}}$ himself, and <u>Bill</u> **killed**$^{\text{STAB}}$ himself.
           B: No, John also ?stabbed himself/killed himself like this$^{\text{STAB}}$.

(16)   a.   A: <u>John</u> **doesn't** smoke, and <u>Bill</u> **stopped** smoking.
           B: No, Bill also ??didn't use to smoke/doesn't smoke.

      b.   A: <u>John</u> **stopped** smoking, and <u>Bill</u> never **used** to smoke.
           B: No, John also never used to smoke.

(17)   A: <u>John</u> brought me a beer that was **small**, and <u>Bill</u> brought me a beer that was **large**.
      B: No, John also brought you a beer that was large.

Sketching a story for predicates

- When the at-issue content of two CF-ed predicates is not enough to assure they are licit alternatives to one another (see Katzir 2014 and the references therein), non-at-issue content can be used to restrict the at-issue content.

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  the at-issue content.
    - For RCs that means only restrictive uses are available when NPs they
      modify are not contrastive.
    - For presuppositions and inferences triggered by co-speech gestures that
      effectively means local accommodation, since restriction is done simply
      by conjoining the restrictor with the predicate, e.g.:
        - $beer^{LARGE}$: *beer and (beer $\Rightarrow$ large)*, equivalent to *beer and large*;
        - $kill^{STAB}$: *kill and (kill $\Rightarrow$ stab)*, equivalent to *kill and stab*;
        - *stopped*: *doesn't* and *used to*.

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        - *stopped*: *doesn't and used to*.

- This is not immediately enough for the *doesn't* vs. *stopped* case. There I assume that *doesn't* is exhaustified with respect to *stopped*: *doesn't and not (doesn't and used to)*, i.e., *doesn't and didn't use to*, which now is a good alternative to *doesn't and used to*.

Observation: non-at-issue content distinguishing referents

- Non-at-issue content can be used to distinguish between two referents that are otherwise indistinguishable, seemingly without losing its non-at-issue status. In (18)–(21) the relevant inferences project, none of them is good under the 'two referents' reading.

(18) If you invite **John**^TALL , I'll be happy, but if you invite

   John^SHORT , I won't.
   → The first John is tall, the second John is short.

(19) If you invite John/***John** the **linguist**, I'll be happy, but if you invite John/***John** the **philosopher** I won't.
   → The first John is a linguist, the second John is a philosopher.

(20) %If you invite John/*__John__ who's a __linguist__, I'll be happy, but if you
       invite John/*__John__ who's a __philosopher__, I won't.
       $\rightarrow$ The first John is a linguist, the second John is a philosopher.

(21) John is considering inviting Bill or Mary. If he invites __him__, I'll be
       happy, but if he invites __her__, I won't.
       $\rightarrow$ The referent of *him* is male, the referent of *her* is female.

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- Also, those inferences can't be directly negated in the discourse, e.g.:

(22) A: I want to invite __John__$^{\text{TALL}}$, and Mary wants to invite __John__$^{\text{SHORT}}$.
   B: #No, the first John isn't tall/this$^{\text{TALL}}$ tall.

(23) A: I want to invite John the __linguist__, and Mary wants to invite John the __philosopher__.
   B: #No, the first John isn't a philosopher.

Sketching a story for definites

- Disambiguation rather than restriction: non-at-issue content can be used to disambiguate between otherwise indistinguishable referents; unlike restriction, disambiguation doesn't change the at-issueness status of the disambguating material.

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- An alternative restriction-based approach to proper names:

    - Assume they are decomposable into a determiner and its restriction (along the lines of Matushansky 2008).
    - At the predicate level *John* and *John* are identical, and the non-at-issue content is forced to restrict them, e.g., $\lambda x.\mathbf{john}(x) \wedge \mathbf{tall}(x)$.
    - At the DP level the existence $+$ uniqueness presupposition is triggered and "masks" the at-issueness of the restrictor.

Presuppositions contradicting an alternative

- Judgements for (4), repeated below, are more robust than for (11):

(24) If John **stopped** smoking, I'll give you $10, but if he never **used** to smoke, I won't.
    $\not\rightarrow$ John used to smoke.

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- Rough intuition: the presupposition of *John stopped smoking* contradicts the assertive content of *John never used to smoke*. If our common ground entails that John used to smoke, the second alternative is false, but then it is pragmatically odd to entertain it in an antecedent of a conditional.

- When the presuppositions of the propositional CF alternatives contradict each other, neither one projects:

(25) If John **stopped** smoking, I'll give you \$10, but if he **started** smoking, I won't.
    $\nrightarrow$ John used to smoke/not smoke.

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  - Since the at-issue content of *stop* and *start* is contrastive enough, the two presuppositions project when they are not contradictory:

(26) If <u>John</u> **stopped** smoking and <u>Bill</u> **started** smoking, I'll give you \$10.
  $\rightarrow$ John used to smoke.
  $\rightarrow$ Bill used to not smoke.

- More cases of projection under CF:

(27) a. If John **stopped** smoking, I'll give you \$10, but if he's just taking a **break** from smoking, I won't.

   b. Although John didn't **stop** smoking, he began to **hate** smoking.
$\rightarrow$ John used to smoke.

(28) a. If John **started** smoking, I'll give you \$10, but if he just **tried** smoking, I won't.

   b. Although John didn't **start** smoking, he began to **tolerate** smoking.
$\rightarrow$ John used to not smoke.

- The case of contradictory presuppositions might be even more straight-forward: no common ground can entail a contradiction. But unless further pragmatic reasoning is assumed, it should suffice to accommodate just one of the presuppositions.
- **Alternative assertability principle:** all propositional Focus alternatives should be in principle assertable with respect to the same common ground.
- Consequence: if a presupposition of one alternative hinders assertability of another alternative, the offending presupposition should be accommodated. E.g., *John never used to smoke* isn't assertable wrt a common ground that entails that John used to smoke, so the presupposition triggered by *stopped* in (24) can't project.

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- So, are co-speech gestures more like presuppositions or more like supplements? Does the question even make sense anymore?

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