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

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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)  
\begin{enumerate}
  \item If John brings me a \textbf{beer$^{\text{SMALL}}$}, I’ll finish it, but if he brings me a \textbf{beer$^{\text{LARGE}}$}, I’ll have to share it with someone.
  \[ \implies \text{If John brings me a beer, it will be small/large.} \]
  \item If John \textbf{kills$^{\text{SHOOT}}$} himself, I’ll win, but if he \textbf{kills$^{\text{STAB}}$} himself, I won’t.
  \[ \implies \text{If John kills himself, he will shoot/stab himself.} \]
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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\textsuperscript{small}, I’ll finish it, but if he brings me a beer\textsuperscript{large}, I’ll have to share it with someone.
\[\sim \text{If John brings me a beer, it will be small/large.}\]

b. If John \textbf{kills}\textsuperscript{shoot} himself, I’ll win, but if he \textbf{kills}\textsuperscript{stab} himself, I won’t.
\[\sim \text{If John kills himself, he will shoot/stab himself.}\]

Further observation (often made for factive verbs, e.g., in examples with \textit{know} vs. \textit{think} — see, e.g., Simons et al. to appear): sometimes standard presuppositions don’t project under CF either:

(4) If John \textbf{stopped} smoking, I’ll give you $10, but if he never \textbf{used} to smoke, I won’t.
\[\sim \text{John used to smoke.}\]
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.
(Tentative) generalizations and conclusions

- 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).

  - 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.
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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 John brings me a \textbf{beer}^{\text{SMALL}} and Bill brings me a \textbf{beer}^{\text{LARGE}}, I’ll have enough booze for the night.
   - If John brings me a beer, it will be small.
   - If Bill brings me a beer, it will be large.

b. If John \textbf{kills}^{\text{SHOOT}} himself and Bill \textbf{kills}^{\text{STAB}} himself, I’ll win.
   - If John kills himself, he’ll shoot himself.
   - If Bill kills himself, he’ll stab himself.
If the verbal content is contrastive, the inferences project:

(6) a. If John brings me a beer\textsuperscript{LARGE} and Bill brings me a cocktail\textsuperscript{SMALL}, I'll have enough booze for the night.
   → If John brings me a beer, it will be large.
   → If Bill brings me a cocktail, it will be small.

b. If John \textit{kills}\textsuperscript{STAB} himself and Bill \textit{wounds} himself, I’ll win.
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    → If Bill brings me a cocktail, it will be small.

b. If John kills\textsuperscript{STAB} himself and Bill wounds himself, I’ll win.
    → If John kills himself, he’ll stab himself.

Also, the inferences project, if CF is placed elsewhere:

(7) a. If John brings me a beer\textsuperscript{LARGE} \textit{today} and Bill brings me a beer\textsuperscript{SMALL} \textit{tomorrow}, I’ll be happy.
    → If John brings me a beer, it will be large.
    → If Bill brings me a beer, it will be small.

b. If John kills\textsuperscript{SHOOT} himself \textit{today} and Bill kills\textsuperscript{STAB} himself \textit{tomorrow}, I’ll win.
    → If John kills himself, he’ll shoot himself.
    → 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) John brought me a beer/*beer that/%which was small and Bill brought me a beer/*beer that/%which was large.
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)  **John** brought me a beer/*beer that/%which was **small** and **Bill** brought me a beer/*beer that/%which was **large**.

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

(9)  **John** brought me a **beer**, which was **small**, and **Bill** brought me a **cocktail**, which was **large**.
Relative clauses (RCs)

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

(9) John brought me a beer, which was small, and Bill brought me a cocktail, which was large.

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

(10) John brought me a beer, which was small, yesterday, and Bill 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 **John** stopped smoking and **Bill** never **used** to smoke, I’ll give you $10.

\[ \% \rightarrow \text{John used to smoke.} \]

(12) %If **John** doesn’t smoke and **Bill** **stopped** smoking, I’ll give you $10.

\[ \not\% \rightarrow \text{Bill used to smoke.} \]
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 John stopped smoking and Bill never used to smoke, I’ll give you $10.
\[\leadsto\] John used to smoke.

(12) %If John doesn’t smoke and Bill stopped smoking, I’ll give you $10.
\[\leadsto\] Bill used to smoke.

(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.
\[\leadsto\] Mary is in NYC.
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 John stopped smoking and Bill is taking a break from smoking, I’ll give you $10.
→ John used to smoke.
→ 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: John brought me a beer\textsuperscript{small}, and Bill brought me a beer\textsuperscript{large}.
   B: No, John also brought you a large beer/a beer this\textsuperscript{large} large.
   
   b. A: John killed\textsuperscript{shoot} himself, and Bill killed\textsuperscript{stab} himself.
   B: No, John also stabbed himself/killed himself like this\textsuperscript{stab}.

(16)  
   a. A: John doesn’t smoke, and Bill stopped smoking.
   B: No, Bill also didn’t use to smoke/doesn’t smoke.
   
   b. A: John stopped smoking, and Bill never used to smoke.
   B: No, John also never used to smoke.

(17)  
   A: John brought me a beer that was small, and Bill 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.
Sketching a story for predicates

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  - 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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    - 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.

- 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.
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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 \textbf{John}^{\text{TALL}}, I’ll be happy, but if you invite \textbf{John}^{\text{SHORT}}, I won’t.
\[ \rightarrow \text{The first John is tall, the second John is short.} \]

(19) If you invite John/*\textbf{John} the linguist, I’ll be happy, but if you invite John/*\textbf{John} the philosopher I won’t.
\[ \rightarrow \text{The first John is a linguist, the second John is a philosopher.} \]
(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.
→ 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.
→ The referent of him is male, the referent of her is female.
(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.
   → 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.
   → The referent of him is male, the referent of her is female.

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

(22) A: I want to invite John\textsuperscript{TALL}, and Mary wants to invite John\textsuperscript{SHORT}.
    B: #No, the first John isn’t tall/this\textsuperscript{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 disambiguating material.
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- For pronouns (*him* vs. *her*) we could say that $x_i$ and $x_j$ are licit CF alternatives to one another, so local accommodation isn’t enforced. The gender features help distinguish the referents, but remain non-at-issue.
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  - We could assume the same story for proper nouns, saying they come with indices, and *John*$_i$ and *John*$_j$ are licit CF alternatives.
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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., $\lambda x.\text{john}(x) \land \text{tall}(x)$.
  - At the DP level the existence + uniqueness presupposition is triggered and “masks” the at-issueness of the restrictor.
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Global reasoning on propositional CF alternatives

General conclusions
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.

\[ \downarrow \] John used to smoke.
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.
\[ \neg \Downarrow \text{John used to smoke.} \]

- 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.

\[\neg \rightarrow \text{John used to smoke/not smoke.}\]
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.

\[ \rightarrow \text{John used to smoke/not smoke.} \]

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

(26) If _John_ stopped smoking and _Bill_ started smoking, I’ll give you $10.

\[ \rightarrow \text{John used to smoke.} \]
\[ \rightarrow \text{Bill used to not smoke.} \]
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. 
   → 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.
   → 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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- Differences among different types of non-at-issue content:
  - (Trivial?) prosodic differences between non-at-issue content that shares a time slot with at-issue content (co-speech gestures, presuppositions) and one that doesn’t (supplements).
  - Difference in the level of acceptability between co-speech gestures and presuppositions vs. RCs and appositives used as restrictors/disambiguators.

That can be partially due to prosodic reasons, since with co-speech gestures we often end up with CF markers on phonologically identical strings while with supplements we don’t. That can also be due to the interaction between configuration and triviality, along the lines of Schlenker’s typology of non-at-issue content.

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