

Contrastive Focus and (non-)at-issueness across modalities

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Original debate: semantic status of gestures

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

- (1) a. John ordered a beer^{LARGE} .
- The beer that John ordered was large.

- b. John killed^{STAB}  himself.
- John stabbed himself.

- Ebert & Ebert (2014) claim co-speech gestures act like supplements. Schlenker (to appear), based on the projection and distribution facts, argues co-speech gestures trigger *cosuppositions*, i.e., assertion-dependent presuppositions of the form $P \Rightarrow G$, where P is the verbal expression, G is the content of the gesture, and \Rightarrow is generalized entailment:

- (2) a. John didn't order a beer^{LARGE}.
 → In the local context of *beer*^{LARGE}, $beer \Rightarrow large$, i.e., roughly, if John was to order a beer, it would be large.
- b. *Context: 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^{STAB} himself, I'll win.
 → In the local context of *kill*^{STAB}, $kill \Rightarrow stab$, i.e., roughly, if John kills himself, he will stab himself.

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- Schlenker further argues post-speech gestures are supplements:

- (3) a. ??John didn't order a beer — LARGE.
 b. ??John didn't kill himself — STAB.

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.):

- (4) a. *Context: We are in a bar and making bets on who of our colleagues is going to order what.*
If *John* orders a **beer**^{SMALL} and *Bill* orders a **beer**^{LARGE}, I'll win.
↗ If John/Bill orders a beer, it will be small/large.
- b. If *John* **kills**^{SHOOT} himself and *Bill* **kills**^{STAB} himself, I'll win.
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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:

(5) If *John* **stopped** smoking but *Bill* [never **used** to smoke]/[**never** smoked], I'll win.

↗ John used to smoke.

Questions

- How do different types of non-at-issue (NAI) content (co- and post-speech gestures, presuppositions, supplements) interact with CF?
- How can we explain any differences in behavior under CF among different types of NAI content?
- Do those differences shed any light on the status of co-and post-speech gestures?

Anticipating the main conclusion

- There are differences between NAI content that shares a time slot with some at-issue (AI) content (presuppositions, co-speech gestures) and NAI with a separate time slot (supplements, post-speech gestures) — factor deemed important in Schlenker (to appear):

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 - NAI content with a separate time slot can bear CF markers without losing its NAI status, but that CF has to be NAI, too (such CF-ed content can't address the question under discussion).

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 - NAI content with a separate time slot can bear CF markers without losing its NAI status, but that CF has to be NAI, too (such CF-ed content can't address the question under discussion).
 - AI/restrictive uses of content with a separate time slot are readily available; such uses of NAI content w/o a separate time slot arise as a last resort and are typically marginal. That's in line with Schlenker's claim that NAI content w/o a separate time slot has to be trivial.

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Caveat: two levels of interaction with CF

- AI uses of NAI content can obtain globally, by reasoning on propositional alternatives, or locally, at the level of focused elements.

- (6) a. If John **stopped** smoking, I'll win, but if he **started** smoking, I won't.
↗ John used to smoke/not smoke.
- b. If John **stopped** smoking, I'll win, but if he never **used** to smoke, I won't.
↗ John used to smoke.
- (7) a. If *John* **stopped** smoking and *Bill* **started** smoking, I'll win.
→ John used to smoke; Bill used to not smoke.
- b. If *John* **stopped** smoking but *Bill* [never **used** to smoke]/[**never** smoked], I'll win.
↗ John used to smoke.

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- b. If *John* **stopped** smoking but *Bill* [never **used** to smoke]/[**never** smoked], I'll win.
 ↗ John used to smoke.
- We'll set aside the AI uses due to global reasoning (intuition: all Focus alternatives must be assertable wrt the same common ground).

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NAI w/o a separate time slot: generalizations

- AI uses of NAI content w/o a separate time slot emerge when the AI content of a mixed/two-dimensional (NAI+AI content) expression under CF is not enough to assure the licitness of the Focus alternatives: e.g., *beer* vs. *beer*; *doesn't* vs. *never used to*; *doesn't* vs. *doesn't* (see Katzir 2014 and references therein on what makes good Focus alternatives) — so CF has to target the NAI content to make the alternatives licit, but that necessarily makes that NAI content AI.

- (8) a. If *John* orders a **beer**^{SMALL} and *Bill* orders a **beer**^{LARGE}, I'll win.
 ↗ If John/Bill orders a beer, it will be small/large.
- b. If *John* **stopped** smoking but *Bill* [never **used** to smoke]/[**never** smoked], I'll win.
 ↗ John used to smoke.
- c. %If *John* **doesn't** smoke but *Bill* **stopped** smoking, I'll win.
 ↗ Bill used to smoke.

- If the AI content of the focused elements is contrastive enough no such effect obtains:

- (9) a. If *John* orders a **beer**^{LARGE} and *Bill* orders a **cocktail**^{SMALL}, I'll win.
→ If John orders a beer, it will be large.
→ If Bill orders a cocktail, it will be small.
- b. If *John* **stopped** smoking and *Bill* is taking a **break** from smoking, I'll give you \$10.
→ John/Bill used to smoke.
- c. If *John* **stopped** smoking and *Bill* started to **hate** smoking, I'll give you \$10.
→ John used to smoke.

- If the CF is placed elsewhere, no such effect obtains:

- (10) a. (i) If **John** orders a beer^{SMALL} and **Bill** orders a beer^{LARGE}, I'll win.
 (ii) If *John* orders a beer^{SMALL} **now** and *Bill* orders a beer^{LARGE} **in an hour**, I'll win.
 → If John/Bill orders a beer, it will be small/large.
- b. (i) If John stopped smoking and Bill never used to smoke, I'll win.
 → John used to smoke.
- (ii) If *John* stopped smoking **tobacco** and *Bill* never used to smoke **weed**, I'll win.
 → John used to smoke tobacco.
- (iii) If *John* doesn't smoke **tobacco** and *Bill* stopped smoking **weed**, I'll win.
 → Bill used to smoke weed.

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Non-restrictive RCs

- Placement of CF markers on identical nouns isn't acceptable, regardless of whether they are modified by restrictive or non-restrictive restrictive relative clauses (RCs) — since *beer* is a non-mixed/one-dimensional expression, there is nothing in (11) that could make *beer* and *beer* licit Focus alternatives to one another:

(11) **John* ordered a **beer** that/, which was **small**, and *Bill* ordered a **beer** that/, which was **large**.

- CF markers within non-restrictive RCs are acceptable w/o making them AI, even if the two DPs they modify are identical, but this “NAI” CF can’t be addressing the question under discussion:

(12) A: Who ordered a beer of which size?

- a. B: *John* ordered a beer that was **small**, and *Bill* ordered a beer that was **large**.
- b. *B: *John* ordered a beer, which was **small**, and *Bill* ordered a beer, which was **large**.

(13) a. A: Who ordered a beer?

B: **John** ordered a beer, which was **small**, and **Bill** ordered a beer, which was **large**.

- b. A: Who ordered a beer when?

B: *John* ordered a beer, which was **small**, **yesterday**, and *Bill* ordered a beer, which was **large**, **today**.

Post-speech gestures

- NAI CF is available for post-speech gestures (to the extent to which we believe in focusing standalone gestures):

(14) a. A: Who ordered a beer?

B: **John** ordered a beer — **SMALL**, and **Bill** ordered a beer — **LARGE**.

b. A: Who ordered a beer when?

B: *John* ordered a beer — **SMALL yesterday**, and *Bill* ordered a beer — **LARGE today**.

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B: **John** ordered a beer — **SMALL**, and **Bill** ordered a beer — **LARGE**.

b. A: Who ordered a beer when?

B: *John* ordered a beer — **SMALL yesterday**, and *Bill* ordered a beer — **LARGE today**.

- Yet, restrictive uses of post-speech gestures are unavailable or constrained, which might be due to prosodic reasons (restrictive modifiers are typically grouped together with what they modify):

(15) A: Who ordered a beer of which size?

B: ??*John* ordered a beer — **SMALL**, and *Bill* ordered a beer — **LARGE**.

Elucidating the difference b/n the two types of NAI content

- Crucially, NAI CF, available for non-restrictive RCs, is unavailable for NAI content w/o a separate time slot.

- (16) a. (i) If *John*/??**John** orders a **beer**^{SMALL} and *Bill*/??**Bill** orders a **beer**^{LARGE}, I'll win.
 ↗ If John/Bill orders a beer, it will be small/large.
- (ii) If **John** orders a beer, which will be **small**, and **Bill** orders a beer, which will be **large**, I'll win. → If John/Bill orders a beer, it will be small/large.
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- (Tentative) proposal:
 - When CF markers occur on a mixed/two-dimensional expression, the two types of content compete for the association of the CF markers, and NAI content always loses unless it's made AI.
 - Furthermore, making NAI content w/o a separate time slot AI is costly (assumed for local accommodation in the presupposition literature — e.g., Heim 1983; Schlenker 2009; explainable by Schlenker's (to appear) triviality generalization), so it can only be done when association of the CF markers with the NAI content is the only way to make the Focus alternatives licit (and is often marginal).

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 - Example (NAI content underlined): [*beer*]_F^{LARGE} is the default configuration, *beer*^{[LARGE]_F is available, but only as a last resort, *beer*_{[LARGE]_F is unavailable.}}

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 - Example (NAI content underlined): [*beer*]_F^{LARGE} is the default configuration, *beer*^{[LARGE]_F is available, but only as a last resort, *beer*_F^[LARGE] is unavailable.}
 - NAI with a separate time slot doesn't compete for the association of the CF markers with anything, so it can bear NAI CF. Nor does it have to be trivial, hence the free availability of restrictive RCs.

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Disambiguating uses of NAI content

- NAI content can be used to distinguish between two referents that are otherwise indistinguishable, seemingly without losing its NAI status. In (17)–(20) the relevant inferences project, none of them is good under the ‘two referents’ reading.

(17) 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.

(18) If you invite John the **linguist**, I'll be happy, but if you invite John the **philosopher** I won't.

→ The first John is a linguist, the second John is a philosopher.

- (19) %If you invite John who's a **linguist**, I'll be happy, but if you invite John who's a **philosopher**, I won't.
→ The first John is a linguist, the second John is a philosopher.
- (20) 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.

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

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

(22) 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.

Questions raised by disambiguating uses of NAI content

- For *him* vs. *her* we could say that x_i and x_j are licit Focus alternatives to one another, so CF markers don't have to associate with the gender features, thus, local accommodation isn't enforced. The gender features help distinguish the referents, but remain unfocused and NAI.

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- We could assume that proper nouns come with indices, too ($John_i$ and $John_j$ would be licit alternatives to one another). But:
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 - The CF in (18) and (19) is definitely not NAI (the CF-ed elements can clearly address the question under discussion).
 - The prosody in those examples is that of restrictive modifiers.
- An alternative approach to proper nouns:
 - Assume they are decomposable into a determiner and its restriction (along the lines of Matushansky 2008).
 - At the NP level *John* and *John* are identical, and the NAI content is forced into the restrictive use (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.

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 - NAI content with a separate time slot doesn't have the constraints above and can bear NAI CF as well as have freely available restrictive uses, modulo additional prosodic considerations.

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 - Further differences b/n the two have to do with their “embeddability”/anaphoricity restrictions. Could they, too, be explained via the time slot parameter? I’m working on it...

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Notational conventions

- A gesture co-occurring with a verbal expression is added as a superscript: word^{GESTURE}.
- New gestures are illustrated with pictures after an underscore: word^{GESTURE}_picture.
- A gesture following a verbal expression is placed after a dash: word — GESTURE.
- **Bold** indicates prosodic Contrastive Focus marking ((L+)H* pitch accent and lengthening on the stressed syllable, hyper-articulation, raised eyebrows, head nod, acceleration and/or increased amplitude of the gesture, etc.).
- *Italic* indicates prosodic Contrastive Topic marking ((L+)H*L-H% contour, gestural markers of prominence).
- A subscript _F on a bracketed expression indicates that it is semantically in Focus.