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Are entailments reinforceable without redundancy? A cognitive-pragmatic analysis

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1. Introduction: Reinforceability of implicatures

Conversational implicatures

+> ‘implicates’

(1) I want a drink +> ‘I want an *alcoholic* beverage’

Generalized Conversational implicature (GCI)
(default inference) in e.g. Levinson (2000).

Metonymy in cognitive linguistics:

DRINK → ALCOHOLIC DRINK

Defeasibility/Cancelability of implicature

(2) I want a drink, **but** no alcohol please.

Implicature **canceled** by means of the ***but*-clause**.

Reinforceability of implicature

(3) I want a drink. Something with alcohol in it [...]. (<https://livlugara.com/page/2/>)

Implicature reinforced in the second clause.

Reinforceability restricted to implicature?

- Levinson (2000) seems to assume that reinforceability is restricted to implicatures.
- Our claim: Entailments and presuppositions can also be reinforced under certain conditions.

Reinforceability of implicatures

(\models ‘entails’, $+>$ ‘implicates’)

Scales of emotivity (Horn Scales):

- (1)a. X is **happy** \models X is **content**
 - b. X is **content** $+>$ X is **not happy**
- (2)a. X **loves** Y \models X **likes** Y
 - b. X **likes** Y $+>$ X does **not love** Y

Examples of reinforced implicatures (Horn Scales)

- (1) He had been **content, but not happy**, in that position for five years. Because of reorganization he was transferred to a nonmanufacturing division, where he was again **content but not happy** for another five years. (<https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=pSAUAQAAQAAJ>)
- (2) I **liked him but did not love him**, not just yet. (<https://books.google.co.uk/books?isbn=1483680797>)

In (1) and (2), the implicatures of **content** and **liked**, respectively, can be **reinforced** without creating an effect of redundancy.

2. Reinforceability of entailments

2.1. Some examples

Reinforceability of entailments?

- Entailments are **not defeasible** without contradiction.
- Tempting hypothesis

Reinforcement of entailments is avoided: **redundancy** effect.

Reinforceability of presuppositions?

- Presuppositions are not defeasible without contradiction.
- Tempting hypothesis
Reinforcement of presuppositions is avoided: redundancy effect.

Reinforceability of entailments and presuppositions?

Violation of a Gricean maxim

- The reinforcement of entailments and presuppositions seems to constitute a violation of one of Grice's **Maxims of Manner**, namely, the maxim **Avoid prolixity** or **Be brief**.
- **However:** Reinforcement of entailments and presuppositions **does** occur!

Entailment

Two possibilities regarding the **sequencing** of entailing and entailed unit:

1. ENTAILED unit > ENTAILING unit
2. ENTAILING unit > ENTAILED unit

ENTAILED > ENTAILING

“My sister is **dead**.” “What?” I panic. “She was **killed** in the Savoy hotel here in Huddinge last night,” answers Mary Bjorn, sounding as if she is trying to suppress her emotions. (<https://books.google.co.uk/books?isbn=0595422306>)

Comment: The order **ENTAILED-ENTAILING** is **not felt to be redundant**. The unit ***was killed*** entails the attribute ‘**dead**’, which is already ***given*** information, but, importantly, ***was killed*** also provides ***new*** information.

ENTAILING > ENTAILED 1

Thesis: Reinforcement of ENTAILED tends to be infelicitous if **the entailed proposition is coded as a whole clause.** Consider:

- (1) [...] President Washington **made** Hamilton **defend himself** against a number of charges [...].
(COCA 1993)
- (2) **If** Hamilton **defended himself** against a number of charges [...].
- (3) **#President Washington made** Hamilton **defend himself** against a number of charges, and Hamilton **defended himself** against a number of charges.

ENTAILING > ENTAILED 2

However: Reinforcement of **entailed** unit occurring after **entailing** unit is possible if the entailed content is coded **economically** (as a short unit):

Some of them have been found **killed**, **dead**, in different parts of the city. One was hit by a car. It's just not safe. (globalnews.ca)

Note: *dead* is also entailed by *die*: i.e., the death of the persons in question is not necessarily a consequence of having been **killed**. In this sense, **dead** might provide partially **new** information, i.e. is not completely redundant.

ENTAILING > ENTAILED 3

- (1) Martin Luther King, Jr. had been **killed** in Memphis.
Killed. Dead. Shot. (COCA 1990)
- (2) [...] a lot of opponents just want to see this industry
killed, dead, no development [...]. (COCA 2000)
- **Entailment relation** *kill (x,y) ⊨ dead (y)*: in (1) **literal**, in (2) **metaphorical**. **Order**: ENTAILING unit > ENTAILED unit. Thus, the lexical item **dead** is redundant.
 - **Nevertheless**: (1) and (2) sound entirely natural. The redundant unit **dead** has a discourse-pragmatic function in these examples.
 - **Function** of redundant **dead**: conveys strong **evaluative** and **emotional** attitude toward some state-of-affairs: shock, sadness in (1), anger, indignation in (2).

3. Chaining of synonymous lexical items

Synonymy: Mutual entailment

The New Oxford American Dictionary (NOAD) proposes the following definitions for *as well*, *also*, and *too*:

- i. *as well* ‘in addition; too’
- ii. *also* ‘in addition, too’
- iii. *too* ‘in addition; also’

also, as well, too

Non-redundant (academic discourse):

- (1) The comparative perspective highlights other problems in cooperative purchasing *as well*.
(COCA 2017, ACAD)

Redundant (spoken language (TV)):

- (2) We thank you very much for joining us, and we thank all of our guests for joining us *as well too*.
(COCA 2000, CNN)
- (3) The health care system has *also* collapsed *too*.
(COCA 2000, CNN)

Redundant: *also [...] too*

Spoken language (TV):

The health care system has *also* collapsed *too*. (COCA 2000, CNN)

How to account for redundant chaining of synonymous units

- (1) We thank you very much for joining us, and we thank all of our guests for joining us **as well too**. (COCA 2000, CNN)
 - (2) The health care system has **also** collapsed **too**. (COCA 2000, CNN)
- **Possibly higher redundancy in oral language** : more spontaneous, less controlled than **written** discourse.
 - **Redundancy** in oral discourse: less noticeable than in written discourse and therefore tolerated.
 - **Emphasizing the importance** of (aspects of) the message:
(1) ***also as well***: important new message concerning new panelist Jeffry Lord. (2) ***as well too***: emphasizes how welcome guests on the program are; (3) ***also [...] too***: emphasizes the importance of the news that the health care system has broken down.

3. Lexical pairs: Non-redundant vs. redundant

descend vs. *descend down*

- (1) Eleanor **descended** the last three steps in front of Nancy [...]. (COCA 2007, FIC)
- (2) Then Vernon **descended down** through strata of pallid light trying to imagine this man wielding a knife. (COCA 2007, FIC)
- (1): *descend* ‘move **down** (a slope or stairs)’ (NOAD): downward motion is entailed by the verb.
- (2): ‘Downward motion’ is **given** information that is repeated in (2)!

ascend vs. *ascend up*

- (1) Having secured the lock to his satisfaction, Jones T **ascended** the stair to the upper gallery. (COCA 2017, FIC)
- (2) He **ascended up** that passageway, growing more and distant, until he disappeared. (COCA 1990, FIC)

ascend ‘go up or climb’ (NOAD): upward motion is entailed by the verb.

descend down and *ascend up*

Two possible motivations for the use of redundant particles *down* and *up*:

- Morphological opacity
 1. *descend* < Old French *descendre* < Latin *descendere* (*de-* ‘down’, *scandere* ‘climb’)
 2. *ascend* < Latin *ascendere* (*ad-* ‘to’, *scandere* ‘climb’)
- Conceptual foregrounding, emphasizing downward/upward movement.

gather vs. *gather together*

- (1) A few hundred people *gathered* outside Vice President-elect Mike Pence's temporary house [...]. (COCA 2017, Charlotte Observer)
- (2) The next day, a number of our folks from Wisconsin *gathered together* in the office of the chief of staff [...]. (COCA 2017, Fox News)

gather ‘come *together*’ (NOAD): Explicit redundant coding of the already entailed meaning component by means of *together* in (2): Conceptual **foregrounding**, **emphasizing** or **intensifying** of the meaning component of ‘togetherness’.

merge vs. *merge together*

- (1) In July, Random House and Penguin **merged** to form a corporate colossus that controls a quarter of world book publishing. (COCA 2013, New Republic)
- (2) The gigantic galaxies formed when smaller proto-galaxies **merged together** to create ever larger and larger structures [...]. (COCA 2012, US Today Magazine)

merge ‘combine or cause to combine a single entity (NOAD): *together* is redundant, because its sense is already entailed by *merge*. Still, the overtly and separately coded concept ‘together’ has the effect of **emphasizing** the merging process of *separate* entities into *one* new structure.

enter vs. *enter into* 1

- (1) A female uniformed officer **entered the room** and whispered something into the detective's ear.
(COCA 2017, FIC)
- (2) Maine: Portland – The city's school system **entered an agreement** with the U.S. Department of Education that requires better educational opportunities for students. (COCA 2000, USA Today)
- (1): MOTION into a CONCRETE CONTAINER ; (2) metaphorical MOTION into an ABSTRACT CONTAINER.

enter vs. *enter into* 2

- (1) And just as that was decided on, the young count **entered into the church**, and suddenly two snow-white doves flew on his shoulders and remained sitting there. (COCA 2006, ACAD)
- (2) Montgomery County has **entered into** an **agreement** with the US Education Department's Office of Civil Rights [...]. (COCA 1999, NEWS, Washington Post)

Question: Is there **free variation** of the use of ***enter*** vs. ***enter into*** in both their CONCRETE and ABSTRACT MOTION senses?

Distribution of *entered a/the building/agreement* vs. *entered into a/the building/agreement* in the NOW corpus

	SPATIAL Noun: <i>building</i>	METAPHORICAL Noun: <i>agreement</i>
<i>entered a/the N</i>	1173 99.2%	413 (7.8%)
<i>entered into a/the N</i>	9 0.8%	4931 92.2%
TOTAL	1182 100%	5344 100%

Tentative hypothesis (needs further empirical support)

- Conceptual division of labor (i.e. complementary distribution):
- *enter NP*: tends to collocate with nouns that denote **concrete** locations in **space**
- *enter into NP*: tends to be used **metaphorically**, i.e. collocates with nouns that denote **abstract** concepts such as *agreement, treaty*

3. Reinforceability of presuppositions

Two kinds of sequencing

- i. The presupposed unit **precedes** the presupposing unit:

PRESUPPOSED unit > **PRESUPPOSING** unit

- ii. The presupposed unit **follows** the presupposing unit:

PRESUPPOSING unit > **PRESUPPOSED** unit

PRESUPPOSED > PRESUPPOSING

manage: presupposes EFFORT (trying more or less hard) and/or DIFFICULTY to perform some ACTION:

- (1) With **some effort** he **managed** to pull himself to his feet, his head spinning slightly with the effort.
(<https://books.google.co.uk/books?isbn=1907230610>)
- (2) He works as an engineer for a large company, but **despite his efforts**, he **didn't manage** to climb the ladder to a better position [...]. (www.imdb.com/title/tt0629550/reviews)

As in the case of **ENTAILED > ENTAILING**, the order **PRESUPPOSED > PRESUPPOSING** is not felt to be redundant because the **PRESUPPOSING** unit *managed* provides **new** information.

PRESUPPOSING unit > PRESUPPOSED unit

- (1) He regrets that he said it, but he did say it. (Horn 1991: 322)
 - (2) Occasionally I got the belt, but I have to admit I didn't get it as much as my four older brothers got it. Yes, I have FOUR older brothers. (<https://books.google.co.uk/books?isbn=1496917170>)
 - (3) I didn't manage, although I tried. (<https://forum.us.forgeofempires.com>)
- Although PRESUPPOSED units usually provide given information, (1)–(3) are not felt to be redundant: (1) emphatic repetition; (2) PRESUPPOSED actually conveys new information; (3) PRESUPPOSED implicates ‘I tried hard’.

4. Conclusion

Defeasibility & reinforceability of three inferential relations

INFERENTIAL RELATION	Defeasible	Reinforceable	Reinforceable with additional <i>implicated</i> content
<i>Implicature</i>	+	+	+
<i>Entailment</i>	-	-	+
<i>Presupposition</i>	-	-	+

Content and function of reinforced entailments and presuppositions

Explicitly coded entailments (**ENTAILED**) and presuppositions (**PRESUPPOSED**) following the **ENTAILING / PRESUPPOSING** unit are acceptable if they provide some **additional content or function**:

- morphological opacity
- emphasis
- important or new information
- emotional attitude

Final note

- Redundantly used entailments and presuppositions: often *motivated* by the *iconic* principle *more form – more content*.
- In repeating already entailed or presupposed information, speakers create the expectation that they have additional information to convey (e.g. via implicature).
- Thin line between genuine new information expressed through reinforced entailments and presuppositions, and mere *verbiage* – a violation of Grice's submaxim 'Avoid prolixity'.

References

- Horn, L. R. 2009. Implicature, truth, and meaning. *International Review of Pragmatics* 1: 3–34.
- Levinson, S. C. 2000. *Presumptive Meanings: The Theory of Generalized Conversational Implicature*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.