Are entailments reinforceable without redundancy?
A cognitive-pragmatic analysis

Klaus-Uwe Panther¹ & Linda L. Thornburg²

¹University of Hamburg ²Independent Scholar
# Table of Contents

1. Introduction: Reinforceability of implicatures
2. Reinforceability of entailments
   2.1. Some examples
   2.2. Chaining of synonymous lexical items
   2.3. Lexical pairs: Non-redundant vs. redundant
3. Reinforceability of presuppositions
4. Conclusion
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 \text{ ‘entails’}, +\text{> ‘implicates’})

Scales of emotivity (Horn Scales):

(1)a. X is happy \models X is content

b. X is content +\models X is not happy

(2)a. X loves Y \models X likes Y

b. X likes Y +\models 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=pSAUAQAAMAAJ)

(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
“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.
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) $\vdash$ 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.
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.
(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** \( \text{kill} (x,y) \vDash \text{dead} (y) \): 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 ascending
    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) 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.
(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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SPATIAL Noun: <em>building</em></th>
<th>METAPHORICAL Noun: <em>agreement</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>entered a/the N</em></td>
<td>1173</td>
<td>413 (7.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>99.2%</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>entered into a/the N</em></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td><strong>92.2%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>1182</strong></td>
<td><strong>5344</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INFERENTIAL RELATION</th>
<th>Defeasible</th>
<th>Reinforceable</th>
<th>Reinforceable with additional implicated content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implicature</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entailment</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presupposition</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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
