A SECOND TIME AND AGAIN

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This paper considers focus alternatives to presuppositional elements like *again*. We observe that there are empirical differences between *again* and its non-presuppositional counterpart *a second time*. A general question is raised about presuppositions in alternative sets.

1. Introduction

It has been observed that the discourse behaviour of focused *again* differs from that of unfocused *again* (Fabricius-Hansen 1983, Kamp & Rossdeutscher 1994, among others). An example taken from Beck (to appear) is given in (1) (imagine somebody reading through a long list of former US presidents).

(1) a.   Smith was a Republican, Jones was a Republican,
            Longbottom was a Republican AGAIN
    b.   Smith was a Republican, Jones was not a Republican,
            Longbottom was a Republican again/ *AGAIN

Recent discussion of several interesting aspects of this problem is found e.g. in Klein 2001 and Beck (to appear). Here I will simply raise the question of the focus semantic contribution of a presuppositional element like *again*. Observe that *again* does not license the same contrast relationships as the non-presuppositional, but otherwise semantically parallel *a second time/for the second time*. Hence *again* and *a second time* must introduce different focus alternatives.

(2) a. ??   Peter is in Rome for the first time & Paul (is) AGAIN.
    b.   Peter is in Rome for the first time & Paul (is) for the SECOND time.

Section 2 discusses the effect of focus on *again* in more detail, and introduces a second purely presuppositional element, *also*. Section 3 generalizes the question about presupposition (ff: psp) in alternative sets. Conclusions are drawn in section 4.

2. Focus on Purely Presuppositional Items

2.1. Again

I will work with the (simplified) semantics in (3) for *again*. I suggest that typical focus alternatives (ff: FAlts) to *again* are a semantically empty adverb (i.e. the identity function of the relevant type) and *still*. There may be further plausible FAlts like *(not) yet* and *(not) anymore* (thanks to Graham Katz for pointing this out). It is also likely that the set of FAlts varies with context. I will concentrate on the semantically empty adverb and *still*. Let ALT_x be the set of contextually relevant focus alternatives to expression x. This set will contain the focused element itself as well as its alternatives. The assumption that we have a typical set of alternatives ALT_{again}={[[again]], [[still]], $\varnothing$} explains discourse coherence in the exchanges below. Here I use contrast to test whether something is an FAlt to *again* or *still*. A category α stands in a contrast relation to a category β if the the ordinary semantic value of β is a member of the focus semantic value of α, i.e. $[[\beta]]_o \in [[\alpha]]_f$, and $[[\beta]]_o \neq [[\alpha]]_o$ (Rooth (1992a)). Regarding (4A-4Bb), for example, a natural analysis in the framework of Rooth (1992a) would be to regard (4A) as the focus antecedent for (4Bb), as indicated in (6). This implies (6c), which in turn implies that an FAlt to *again* is the empty adverb.

(3) $[[again]] \, (p_{<\tau,<s,t>>}) \, (t) \, (w)$ $= 1$ if $p(t)(w)$ & $\exists t'[t'<t$ & $p(t')(w)]$
     $= 0$ if $\sim p(t)(w)$ & $\exists t'[t'<t$ & $p(t')(w)]$
     undefined otherwise.

(4) **A**: Ellen is the president.
    B: a.   (Yes,) Ellen is STILL the president.
          b.   (Yes,) Ellen is the president AGAIN.

(5) **A**: Ellen is still the president. **B**:   Ellen is the president AGAIN.

(6) a. $g(C) \in [[\alpha]]_f{}^g$ & $g(C) \neq [[\alpha]]_o{}^g$
    b.   [[Ellen is the president AGAIN] ~C]
       $g(C) := [[Ellen \text{ is the president}]]_o$
    c. $[[Ellen \text{ is the president}]]_o \in [[Ellen \text{ is the president AGAIN}]]_f$

(7a,b) are examples of sentence internal contrast that show the same. I assume that in cases in which a sentence S2 contains an ellipsis that finds its antecedent in a sentence S1, S2 must stand in a contrast relation to S1 - i.e. $[[S1]]_o \in [[S2]]_f$ (Rooth (1992b)); the account can be extended to deaccenting (7b). (8a) is an example in which 'be in Rome' and 'be in Rome again' are scalar FAlts. (8b) may be an example of association with scalar *only*. Both have a metalinguistic flavour because we try to focus a psp, but

they are not unacceptable. It is instructive to contrast the data above with examples that do not work. *Again* being an adverb that combines with a proposition to yield a proposition, perhaps other adverbs of the same type could be FAlts, too? This is not generally plausible, as (9) illustrate. Hence the tests I ran above are meaningful tests and do indeed tell us something about FAlts to *again*.

(7)   a.   Peter is still in Rome and Paul is AGAIN.

       b.   Peter is in Rome and Paul is in Rome AGAIN.

(8)   a.   Peter is in Rome. He is even in Rome AGAIN.

       b.   Peter is only in Rome AGAIN - he is not STILL in Rome.

       c.   scale: 'be in Rome' < 'be in Rome again' < 'still be in Rome'

(9)   a. ??   Peter is probably/often in Rome and Paul is AGAIN.

       b. ??   Peter is only PROBABLY in Rome - he is not STILL in Rome/
                 in Rome AGAIN.

A more minimal contrast exists between *again* and *for the second time* concerning their respective FAlts (thanks to Irene Heim (p.c.) for pointing this out). I will assume the lexical entry for *for the second time* given in (10). The contrast between (11a) and (11b) shows that it matters for the purpose of FAlts whether a meaning component is asserted or presupposed: what is presupposed by *again* -- $\exists t'[t'<t \ \& \ p(t')(w)]$ -- is asserted by *for the second time*. *For the first time* is an FAlt to *for the second time*, but not to *again*. Given these observations, I suggest the hypothesis in (12) (a purely presuppositional element is one that, like *again*, triggers a psp but has no effect on the assertion).

(10)   [[for the second time]] $(p<\tau,<s,t>>)$ (t) (w) = 1 iff $p(t)(w) \ \& \ \exists t'[t'<t \ \& \ p(t')(w)]$

(11)   a. ??   Peter is in Rome for the first time & Paul (is) AGAIN.

       b.   Peter is in Rome for the first time & Paul (is) for the SECOND time.

(12)   **Hypothesis**: Focus alternatives to purely presuppositional items are other
             purely presuppositional items plus the empty alternative of the same type.

There remains the larger question of how psps show up in FAlts, and whether we can predict the facts we just observed about *again* systematically from the answer to that question. Below I will take a look at another purely presuppositional element, and then I will briefly comment on the more general question.

2.2. Also

Another purely presuppositional element is *too/also*. We can simplify and assume (14) about its semantic contribution. The application is illustrated in (15) where we suppose that the associate of *also* is *Bill*.

(14)   [[also]] $(y)(P)(t)(w)$ =1 if $P(y)(t)(w) \ \& \ \exists x[x{\neq}y \ \& \ P(x)(t)(w)]$

                                  =0 if ${\sim}P(y)(t)(w) \ \& \ \exists x[x{\neq}y \ \& \ P(x)(t)(w)]$

(15) Bill also ran.   [[also]] (Bill) ([[run]]) (**t1**)(w)

                              =1 if $\exists x[x{\neq}Bill$ & x ran in w at **t1**] & Bill ran in w at **t1**

                              =0 if $\exists x[x{\neq}Bill$ & x ran in w at **t1**] & ~(Bill ran in w at **t1**)

                              undefined otherwise.

We may ask what *also*'s FAlts are, and whether it is plausible that an empty element is among them. I think this is so. Below is an example that illustrates that. B's utterance is the natural focus antecedent for utterance A2. The assumption that an FAlt to *also* is the empty alternative helps with the data in (17): we can say that there is a contrast relation between the first and the second sentence in the conjunction. This reduces (17a) to the same phenomenon as (17b,c). I should note that in the case of FAlts to *too/also*, there is in fact some discussion in the literature, although it is not very prominent. Krifka (1999) and following him Rullmann (2003) are concerned with focused *too/also*. They propose that the FAlt to *too* is negation. The reasoning is that *too* (ignoring its psp) expresses the identity function on propositions, and the only relevant alternative to that is negation. Dimroth (2004) argues on empirical grounds that German *auch* 'also' contrasts with verum focus, stressed negation, and the affirmative particles *schon/wohl*. Assuming that verum focus contributes the relevant identity function, Dimroth's position agrees with the suggestions made here.

(16) **A1**:   Es ist kalt.   **B**:   Es regnet.

                 It's cold.   It is raining

      A2:   Regnen tut's   AUCH.

                 rain   does it   too

                 'It's raining, too'

(17) a.   Peter is in Rome and PAUL is, TOO.

     b.   Peter will see Jim and PAUL will STACEY.

     c.   Peter saw Jim and PAUL DIDN'T.

3. Focus Alternatives to Presuppositional Elements

How do psps fare in general when alternative sets are constructed? Intuitively, FAlts to a given element are things that are comparable but contrasting. Normally, we assume that comparable are things that have the same type (Cohen (1999) has a more constrained view of what plausible FAlts are, but he is not concerned with classical psps). Looking at presuppositional elements reveals that information on semantic type is not enough to tell us what is comparable to a given focused item. *Again* and *for the first time* (also *often* and *probably*) have the same type, but that is not sufficient to make them FAlts. Recall that I introduced ALT_x - the set of relevant FAlts to an element *x*.

We want to predict what those can be in a systematic way. It seems to me that it is required that the psps of the elements of ALT$_x$ be parallel, in some sense, to the psps of *x*. To start with fairly obvious cases, note that items with the same psps or no psp at all are FAlts (18); and note also that items whose psps are unrelated, or presuppositional vis-a-vis non-presuppositional items are not FAlts (19). The picture is complicated by items that have psps that seem related, but not identical. For example, *still* and *again* can be focus alternatives, while *again* and *for the first time* cannot. This must be because *still* and *again* share a psp about a preceding time interval. Similarly for *start - stop* vs. *start - try*, *start - manage* as illustrated below. We are looking for a definition of the general shape of (23) which will permit us to predict what the FAlts to a given expression can be. We still need to define what it means for psps to be parallel.

(18) **plausible alternatives**:
  a.   no (relevant) psp: b: same psps:
         sing - dance   *both - neither*

(19) **non-alternative**s:
  a.   psp vs. no psp: b.   non-parallel psps:
         for the first time - again   *start - manage*
         start - try

(20) [[still]] (p)(t)   =1 iff p(t) & ∃t'[p(t') & t' extends to t]
                            =0 iff ~p(t) & ∃t'[p(t') & t' extends to t]
                            undefined otherwise.

(21) a.   Molly started to play soccer and Sue stopped _ .
  b. ??   Molly started to play soccer and Sue tried _ .
  c. ??   Molly started to play soccer and Sue managed _ .

(22) **"parallel" psps - plausible alternatives**:
  again - still;   stop - start

(23) For any expression x of type σ, the set of plausible focus alternatives to x,
  ALT$_X$={y:y is of type σ and the psps of x ARE PARALLEL TO the psps of y}

I leave this as a project for future research. A final comment: there is an interesting relationship between the issue discussed here and Abusch's (2002) suggestion to derive certain psps from the alternatives that lexical items give rise to. For example, the psp of "x be right that p" that x believes p would arise because the alternative to "be right" is "be wrong", which shares this meaning component, and there is a pragmatic psp that some alternative is true. We approach the problem from opposite perspectives, in that Abusch wants to predict psps from alternatives, while I want to predict FAlts from psps. That is, I would wish to predict that an FAlt to "x be right hat p" is "x be wrong that p" from the fact that they have the same psp that x believes p. Interestingly, though, the

same issue concerning "parallel" psps in cases like *again* arises under both strategies.

4. Conclusion

Presuppositions matter for what an element's focus alternatives are. Items that share psps are alternatives. There is a little more leeway: *still* and *again* are alternatives though their psps aren't exactly the same. There is also the special case that an alternative to a purely presuppositional element is the identity function of the same type. Items with unrelated psps are not focus alternatives, though, A precise definition is missing of when psps are sufficiently alike.

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