

Tackling minimal sufficiency

ObTrEx, Tübingen

Grosz 2012 observes German *nur* 'only' to be ambiguous between two readings in conditional antecedents, an exclusive and a minimal sufficiency reading. The former is slightly more salient than the latter.

- (1) Es ist gut, wenn **nur** zwei Leute kommen
it is good if **only** two people come

EXCLUSIVE reading (EXCL, more salient): The UPPER limit are 2 people
~~> it's no longer good if 3 come

MINIMAL SUFFICIENCY reading (MS): The LOWER limit are 2 people
~~> it's at least as good if 3 come

He further notes *schon* 'already' to disambiguate in favor of the MS-reading:

- (2) Es ist **schon** gut, wenn nur zwei Leute kommen
it is **already** good if only two people come
~~> it's at least as good if 3 come
~/~> it's no longer good if 3 come

We are going to present two different theories one may entertain on this ambiguity, and put to discussion the design for a planned **acceptability rating study** to tease them apart.

Theory 1 (T1) is advocated by Grosz 2012 and has Heim's 1991 principle *Maximize Presupposition* as its background: SCHON enforces the MS-reading by means of a presupposition it triggers. If SCHON is not used, this signals that this presupposition is not satisfied, i.e., that the MS-reading is wrong.

Theory 2 (T2) follows Bade's 2014, 2016 *Obligatory Implicatures* (OI) account, according to which certain additive particles are inserted to cancel an exhaustivity-implicature that would arise in their absence: In (2), SCHON triggers an additive presupposition that blocks matrix exhaustification of the conditional as a whole. The saliency of the EXCL-reading is explained by the fact that exhaustification arises as a default, as long as it doesn't weaken truth conditions, see e.g. Fox & Spector 2018.

The **design** draws on the experimental logic underlying Bade's & Tiemann's 2016 study on obligatory presupposition triggers under negation: Propositions are not exhaustified in the scope of negation. OI thus predicts the EXCL reading to vanish under negation. It also predicts SCHON to be needed to convey the MS-reading only as long as it is not embedded under negation.

Selected References

- Bade, Nadine 2016: Obligatory presupposition triggers in discourse
Bade, Nadine & Sonja Tiemann 2016: Obligatory triggers under negation
Grosz, Patrick 2012: The grammar of optative constructions