

Tue Trinh · Leibniz-Zentrum Allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft (ZAS)

Sauerland and Yatsushiro (2017), henceforth S&Y, take the remind-me reading of such questions as (1a) to arise from a presupposition triggered by the adverb **again**: (1a) can be read as simply asking for the addressee's name, with the inference that the name was made known earlier.

- (1) a. [_S [_Q what is your name] again]?
 b. $\llbracket S \rrbracket = \llbracket Q \rrbracket$ if there was an event preceding the utterance at which the complete answer to Q was made common ground, undefined otherwise

S&Y point out that the remind-me reading can also come about by way of past tense. Thus, (2a) allows the same reading as (1a). This observation is given a straightforward account by S&Y in terms of reference time effects: (2a) picks out a salient time interval C in the past which includes the communication of the name and excludes the utterance. We will represent this reading by subscripting the tensed verb with C.

- (2) a. [_{Q_C} what was_C your name]?
 b. $\llbracket Q_C \rrbracket =$ 'for which x: your name is x at C'

Past tense and **again** can co-occur: (3a is acceptable under the same reading as (1a) and (2a). S&Y take this to be unsurprising: past tense and **again**, they claim, are "two independent mechanisms that work congruently [...]." Applying their analysis, the meaning of (3a) would be (3b).

- (3) a. [_{S_C} [_{Q_C} what was_A your name] again]?
 b. $\llbracket S_C \rrbracket = \llbracket Q_C \rrbracket$ if there was an event preceding the utterance at which the complete answer to Q_C was made common ground, undefined otherwise

Now consider the question below, where the subscript L is mnemonic for 'life.'

- (4) Q_L = 'for which x: your name is x throughout your life'

Let us note two facts about Q_L. The first is specific to English. In this language, Q_L can be expressed by the present tense sentence in (5).

- (5) what is_L your name?

The second fact is logical: the complete answer to Q_L is stronger than that to Q_C. Obviously, the name you have throughout your life is the name you have at C. These two facts, together with S&Y's analysis of remind-me questions, mean that the presupposition of (6a) is stronger than that of (6b).

- (6) a. [_{S_L} [_{Q_L} what is_L your name] again]?
 presupposition: there was an event preceding the utterance at which the complete answer to Q_L was made common ground

- b. [_{S_C} [_{Q_C} what was_C your name] again]?
presupposition: there was an event preceding the utterance at which the complete answer to Q_C was made common ground

The two questions (6a) and (6b), therefore, stand in the same relation as (7a) and (7b).

- (7) a. who also_x went to Harvard?
presupposition: x went to Harvard
b. who also_x went to Harvard or Yale?
presupposition: x went to Harvard or Yale

We can observe that in a context where the presupposition of (7a) is satisfied, the question with the weaker presupposition, i.e. (7b), is deviant, as evidenced by the contrast between (8b) and (9b) as follow-ups to the assertion **John went to Harvard** (cf. Spector and Sudo, 2017).

- (8) a. John went to Harvard.
b. Who also_j went to Harvard?
(9) a. John went to Harvard.
b. # Who also_j went to Harvard or Yale?

In the context of this conversation, the presupposition of Q_L is satisfied, but Q_C, to my ear, is not deviant. To the extent that my intuition is reliable, then, we have a question to ponder: what distinguishes the difference between (6a) and (6b) from that between (7a) and (7b)?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Sauerland, Uli, and Kazuko Yatsushiro. 2017. Remind-me presuppositions and speech-act decomposition: Evidence from particles in questions. *Linguistic Inquiry* 48:651–677.
Spector, Benjamin, and Yasutada Sudo. 2017. Presupposed ignorance and exhaustification: how scalar implicatures and presuppositions interact. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 40:473–517.

Acknowledgements This work is funded by the ERC Advanced Grant “Speech Acts in Grammar and Discourse” (SPAGAD), ERC-2017-ADG 787929.