89%

QUESTION 1

(a) A: Do you have a Siamese?

  B: I have a cat.

Implicature: B does not have a Siamese

Another implicature: B does not consider Siamese cats to be worthy of the term 'cat'

When you perform a cancellation test on the implicatures you get the result:

good

11/11   3/3   • B has a cat and he has a Siamese

• B has a cat and he considers Siamese cats to be worthy of the term 'cat'

These are not strange sentences (they are felicitous and logically consistent) therefore they are implicatures.

We can see why B might choose to respond in this way instead of responding like B' if we look at the Gricean reasoning behind the answer:

15/15   In the conversation A assumes that B is being cooperative i.e.

good   That the speaker is obeying the maxim of quantity i.e. that he is being appropriately informative. When one asks the question "Do you have a Siamese? ", the speaker will say if he has a Siamese and will not conceal this fact. Because B did not disclose he has a Siamese, A can conclude that he does not have one.

That the speaker is obeying the maxim of quality. The speaker is not saying what he thinks is false. The speaker is also not saying what he lacks evidence for (He is not going to say "I have a cat" when he does not have one)

That the speaker is being relevant. The speaker is talking about the pets that he has right now and is not talking about the pets that he had in the past or the pets he expects to have in the future.

However the speaker flouts the maxim of manner (be perspicuous). He made a deliberately ambiguous statement that expected to be understood by his

good, and this is what gives rise to the second implicature you note

hearer.

Here are top potential competitors for the implicature:

- "I have a Siamese"

- B': " No, I don't"

We assume that B did not choose the competitors because there are limitations to them.

Why was "I have a Siamese" not chosen?

Obeying the maxim of quantity, "I have a Siamese" would be more informative than "I have a cat". Additionally it would also be relevant to say "I have a Siamese" . All other things being equal the speaker should have said "I have a Siamese", but he didn't. This means that all other things *must not be equal and* it would violate the maxim of quality (the truth) to say "I have a Siamese". We can therefore conclude that he does not have a Siamese.

good

15/15

Why was "No, I don't " not chosen?

2

Obeying the maxim of relevance, "No, I don't" would have been more relevant than "I have a cat". It would also have been more perspicuous to say, "No I don't" vs. "I have a cat". All other things being equal the speaker should have said "No I don't" but he didn't. B chose to flout the maxim of manner with his statement "I have a cat". With additional knowledge about the world (experience with these kind of statements), one may interpret B's statement as a sarcastic one with an inflection that provides the additional implicature that demonstrates his feeling about Siamese cats: B does not consider Siamese cats to be worthy of the term 'cat'.

good

QUESTION 2 WAS DONE IN LAMBDA NOTEBOOK

QUESTION 3

(a) An Epithet is a nickname that consists of an adjectival phrase expressing a characteristic of a noun phrase being described e.g. America is known as the "land of the free" which would be considered to be an epithet.

An expletive epithet, such as damn, may be used as semantically vacuous filler that does not contribute to the propositional meaning of the sentence but it increases the emotional content of the sentence.   good

Moreover, if used in another syntactical context such as 'damn computer' the expletive points to a specific, frustrating computer so it may be used as a good determiner in such contexts.

Additionally, it could be used as a verb in the sense that you could say, 'damn you' or 'fuck you'. but these are different (they're not adjectives) - completely different denotations would be required

In the sentence in the question the epithet damn is used to express anger or frustration.

However, depending on the conversational context, it may be used to express satisfaction. This happens when the expletive is paired with upbeat intonation and words that are associated with desirable goals (goals that are usually of beneficial advantage to people such as eating, relaxing, or being good, but this is more af an adverb promoted). For example: "That food was damn good!"

Additionally, it may be used to express elation if the action it is describing is a positive one. For example in the context of a person passing a difficult exam he could yell out, "I passed the fucking test!", when he receives his exam results. good Although word fucking conveys the fact that the speaker had negative feelings toward the exam, it also conveys that these feelings are in the past and that the speaker currently feels intense relief and joy from overcoming the obstacle.

They also may be used to express awe: "Damn, Alfonso broke the computer!" In a context that is focused on Alfonso's strength, it would be appropriate to utter this sentence and it would convey feelings of admiration or respect for Alfonso because of the force that he was able to use to break the object.

It is also interesting to explore the syntactic environments in which such epithets can be used. It does not seem to matter so much where it appears in the sentence apart from the third sentence where it appears right before the determiner:

great

- o Fucking Alfonso broke the computer/ Damn Alfonso broke the computer
- o Alfonso fucking broke the computer/ Alfonso damn broke the computer
- o #Alfonso broke fucking the computer/ # Alfonso broke damn the computer
- o Alfonso broke the fucking computer/ Alfonso broke the damn computer

Expletive epithets may also be used insertively, however their use in this manner is more complicated and seems to depend on the prosody of the phrase in which it is used (the number of syllables and the stress patterns) in order for it to be felicitous. It has been suggested that infixation is felicitous when it occurs before a stressed syllable in a word with alternating stress patterns (McCarthy,1982).

- Alfonso abso- fucking- lutely broke the computer

nice

- #Alfonso ab-fucking-solutely broke the computer

- #Alfonso abso-damn-lutely broke the computer

- #Alfonso ab-damn-solutely broke the computer.

(b) To see what kind of contribution an epithet provides we might want to see the inference type that the expletive epithet falls under.

Does it project from embedding?

5

Constancy test: an inference is a presupposition only if it escapes certain embedded contexts

Embedding would be negation, questions and asymmetrical conjunctions

Negation: Alfonso did not break the fucking computer

excellent

Question: Did Alfonso break the fucking computer?

Asymmetrical conjunction: # Alfonso broke the fucking computer and the computer is fucking.

In the first two sentences, the expletive epithet projects embedding because it passes up the tree unchanged (we can agree that the computer is still fucking in all the situations) In the third sentence, the asymmetrical conjunction makes the sentence sound strange, therefore the inference projected.

Because of these tests we can rule out the epithet being an at-issue entailment, however we still need to confirm if is an implicature or a presupposition. We can do this by performing a cancellation test. The implicature of this sentence would be that the speaker is angry.

Cancellation test: # Alfonso broke the fucking computer but I am not angry.

This is a logically consistent utterance but it seems not to be felicitous

good

because the first part clearly has a negative connotation but the second part is denying it. Because of this I would conclude that it is not an implicature.

Additionally, it does not sit well with me to consider it a linguistic presupposition because although it passed the constancy tests, it does not

good

contribute to the meaning of the sentence, but rather gives information about the

6

speaker's state of mind and how he feels about the subject (like the function of

tone of voice). If another speaker were to utter this sentence but they did not feel

intense emotions toward Alfonso or computer it would be out of place. The

contribution is more emotional and speaker-focused than about knowledge.

Because of this I would conclude that these expletive epithet must be a speaker

presupposition (that expresses opinions about matters hard to verify). The

listener would have to accommodate for it if he did not realize that the speaker

was angry before the utterance.

10/11

interesting, although technically speaker presuppositions are things that the speaker takes for granted BY uttering something, so that would mean that the speaker is assuming the computer is damned (whatever that really means) by uttering (8). You have the right idea though. Chris Potts has referred to these things as conventional implicatures.

c) I would propose that the type for adjectival epithets would be variable

depending on the context.

In the example above (Alfonso broke the fucking computer), it is

semantically vacous, but expresses anger, so I would give it the denotation. :

$$[[\text{fucking}]]_{\langle\langle e,t\rangle,\langle e,t\rangle\rangle} = \lambda\, f_{\langle e,t\rangle}.f_{\langle e,t\rangle}$$

but would this capture the syntactic facts taht you note at the top of page 5? It 's better to have variables in the denotations so that it can modify other things just like normal adjectives do

However, we would need to include the presupposition, that the speaker is

expressing intense emotion such as anger. Since we do not have a formal procedure of

doing that, I will append the definition with an informal statement:

9/11

good

$$[[\text{fucking}]]_{\langle\langle e,t\rangle,\langle e,t\rangle\rangle} = \lambda f_{\langle e,t\rangle}.f_{\langle e,t\rangle} \text{ given that the speaker is feeling an intense emotion}$$

but note that my solution above would still not capture all the projection facts ...

In an example when the word fucking or damn is being used as a determiner, it
may have a similar denotation to the, but still with the speaker presupposition that shows
that the speaker is feeling an intense emotion:

$$[[\text{fucking}]]_{\langle\langle e,t\rangle,e\rangle} = \lambda f_{\langle e,t\rangle}.\iota x e.(f_{\langle e,t\rangle}(xe)\circ(xe\in c\{e\})) \text{ given that the speaker is feeling an intense}$$
emotion

I don't think this is quite right. You may get a uniqueness presupposition from 'the fucking computer] but that is coming from [[the]] and not [[ADJ]]

In an example when the word fucking or damn is being used as a verb, it will also
have the speaker presupposition that shows that the speaker is feeling an intense
emotion:

$[[fuck]]_{(e,t)} = \lambda x_e, .fuck'(x)$ _{given that the speaker is feeling intense hatred toward the object}

EXTRA CREDIT

3d) A difference in meaning across expressive adjectives is intensity ^good of emotion. They could be ranked in a similar fashion to horn scales depending on the degree of intensity from least intense to most intense: [dumb, idiotic, fucking] [nice, great, wonderful] and to explain why one would chose one expressive adjective over another. The denotation for each one could include the degree

+2 type that specifies the intensity of emotion of the speaker relative to neutrality. Negative degrees could express negative emotions and positive degrees could express positive ^good ones.

but you need some extra parameter in here to encode the intensity otherwise this is functionally equivalent to what you have above

$[[fuck]]_{(e,t)} = \lambda x_e, . -\text{Emotional intensity}(x)$

$[[wonderful]]_{(e,t)} = \lambda x_e, . +\text{Emotional intensity}(x)$

References

McCarthy, J. J. (1982). Prosodic structure and expletive infixation. *Language*, 574-590.

Spencer, A. (2013). *Lexical relatedness*. OUP Oxford.

I discussed the exam with Yuqing Zhu