

Name, ID: _____ Conference TA, time: _____

Collaborators: _____

Introduction to the Study of Language

LING 200 — Winter 2016

Due: Wednesday March 9th, 11:59pm in PDF format on *MyCourses*.

Please make sure to include at the top your full name and student number (to be safe), the date, your conference TA and time. Please include the names of people you worked with in preparing this assignment (maximum three students per group, all with the same TA).

1 Logical relations

Consider the pairs of sentences below:

- (1) a. My best friend will be here two weeks from now.
b. My best friend will not be here one week from now.
- (2) a. Some people like cilantro.
b. One person likes cilantro.
- (3) a. Sam's wife broke the marathon record.
b. Sam is married.
- (4) a. If she is awarded the fellowship, Amy can finish writing her thesis.
b. Amy is writing her thesis.
- (5) a. If she is awarded the fellowship, Amy can finish writing her thesis.
b. If she isn't awarded the fellowship, Amy can't finish writing her thesis.

- **Question:** For each pair of sentences, indicate whether the (b) sentence is an *entailment* of (a), an *implicature* of (a), or a *presupposition* of (a). Briefly justify your answer (no more than one sentence each) using the diagnostics you have learned.
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2 Grice's maxims

In each short conversation below, one maxim is being violated.

- (6) Joe purchased flowers to plant in his flowerbed at home.
This is the conversation he had with his wife in regards to the flowers:
Wife: Why did you buy flowers to plant?
Joe: I am hoping to do it tomorrow and I was passing the nursery.
Wife: Yeah youll plant flowers during the week and monkeys will fly.

- (7) Matt has been cooking for hours and is about to set the table.
Matt: Where's the roast beef?
Dan: The dog looks happy
- (8) This past weekend, Lindsay did some shopping downtown, and then on the spur of the moment decided to take the train the NYC, and go on a shopping spree there. This is a conversation she had with her friend the other day:
Friend: What did you do on the weekend?
Lindsay: I went shopping downtown.
- (9) John and Mary are married and have two young children.
John: Let's get the kids something.
Mary: OK, but not I-C-E C-R-E-A-M.

- **Question 1:** Which maxim is violated in each case? Explain how it is violated.
 - **Question 2:** The speaker who violates the maxim does so for a reason. What purpose is achieved by violating the maxim? (i.e., what meaning is conveyed by it?)
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3 Inclusive or exclusive *or*

We discussed the two uses of the English connective “or”: inclusive and exclusive.

- (10) In order to take Ling 325, you must first take Ling 200 or Ling 201.
- (11) You can sweeten your tea with sugar or honey.
- (12) John or Tanya called.
- (13) If the team reaches the final or logs a new national record, the coach will get to keep his job.

- **Question:** What is the natural reading you associate with each of the sentences above? Write a short context for that reading to illustrate how it might be used.
 - **Note:** The context should not be more than 2-3 sentences long.
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4 Entailments and equivalences

In class, we defined **entailment** between sentence A and sentence B as follows:
A entails B if and only if whenever A is true, B is true.

We also defined an **equivalence** relation between two sentences:
A and B are equivalent if and only if A entails B and B entails A.

Consider the sentences in (14)

- (14) a. A unicorn is a unicorn.
b. A unicorn is a legendary horse-like animal that has a horn projecting from its forehead.

- **Question 1:** Given these definitions, are the sentences in (14a) and (14b) equivalent? Explain.
 - **Question 2:** In class, we defined the meaning of a sentence as its truth-conditions. Given this definition, do the sentences in (14a) and (14b) mean the same thing?
 - **Question 3:** Is this a welcome consequence or an unwelcome consequence of our theory? Explain why. If this is a problematic result, can you think of a way to fix or improve it?
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5 Syntactic and semantic ambiguities

The newspaper headlines below are ambiguous between two readings.

- (15)
- Squad help dog bite victim
 - Harry and Joe saw a lot at carpentry fair
 - Killer sentenced to die for second time in 10 years
 - Prostitutes appeal to pope
 - Hershey bars protest
 - Complaints about NBA referees growing ugly

- **Question 1:** For each sentence, paraphrase the different possible readings of the sentence.
- **Question 2:** For each sentence, is there semantic or syntactic ambiguity (or both)? Explain: provide the meanings of ambiguous word(s) or phrase(s), and for syntactic ambiguities, use square brackets to illustrate the different readings.

Note: there may be more than one source of ambiguity in a sentence, and one reading may be more plausible than the other.

Example 1: *I saw the man with the binoculars.*

This is a syntactic ambiguity.

Reading 1: I used the binoculars to see the man—*with the binoculars* modifies the verb *see*.

I saw [the man] [with the binoculars].

Reading 2: I saw the man who had the binoculars—*with the binoculars* modifies the noun *man*.

I saw [the man with the binoculars].

Example 2: *Lung cancer in women mushrooms.*

This contains both a semantic and syntactic ambiguity.

Reading 1: *mushrooms* is used as a verb, the rest of the sentence is the subject.

[_{NP} Lung cancer in women] [_{VP} mushrooms].

Reading 2: *mushrooms* is a noun, in a compound with *women*. This headline is not a full sentence but a fragment, roughly: “(there is) lung cancer in women-mushrooms.”

[_{NP} Lung cancer] [in [_{NP} women mushrooms]].

- **Question 3:** What is the principle of compositionality? How does it explain why the sentences in (15) are ambiguous?