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Presupposition triggers in a cross-linguistic perspective: Maximize Presupposition vs. Obligatory Implicatures in Ga (Kwa)

Agata Renans
Ulster University
am.renans@ulster.ac.uk

Nadine Bade
Universität Tübingen
nadine.bade@uni-
tuebingen.de

Joseph
P. DeVeugh-Geiss
Universität Potsdam
joseph.de.veugh-geiss@uni-
potsdam.de

This paper presents an experimental investigation of the obligatory occurrence of presuppositional additives in Ga (Kwa), an under-researched Ghanian language, in comparison to previous studies on German.

Additives are obligatory when their presupposition is verified by the context, as in (1). The obligatory insertion of presupposition triggers has been explained by exploiting the Maximize Presupposition (**MP**) principle, i.e., presuppose as much as possible (Heim 1991), and Obligatory Implicatures (**OI**), i.e., the stronger the exhaustivity, the more obligatory the additive (Bade 2016, based on Krifka 1999, Saeboe 2004).

- (1) a. John came to the party. b. Bill did, #(too).

For MP, no contextual factors beyond whether a presupposition holds are predicted to play a role in the insertion of a trigger. By contrast, according to OI the insertion of the additive should depend on whether an exhaustivity implicature is made prominent in the discourse: the stronger the exhaustivity, the more obligatory the additive. We tested experimentally the hypothesis that obligatory additives are related to the strength of exhaustivity in Ga (Kwa), and compare the results to previous experiments in German using a different methodology.

The results of the experiment show that Ga exploits the MP principle. This data contrast with an experiment in German, the results of which support the OI principle. Comparing the results for both languages points to previously unattested cross-linguistic variation in pragmatics.

References: • Bade, N. (2015): Obligatory Presupposition Triggers in Discourse. Universität Tübingen PhD Thesis • Heim, I. (1991): Artikel und Definitheit. In: *Semantik: ein internationales Handbuch der Zeitgenössischen Forschung*, 487–535 • Renans, A (2016): Modeling the exhaustivity effect of clefts: evidence from Ga (Kwa). In: *Proceedings of Sinn und Bedeutung 20*.