

# Presuppositions Can Be Disruptors Too: A Case against Strawson-Entailment

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## Introduction

The observation

Goals

Plan

## Against the use of Strawson- Entailment

Sorry

SDEness and SUEness

Main tenets

Operator vs environment

Intervention

## An enriched global meaning

$\mu$  meaning

Too and either

Because

## Conclusion

# Introduction

- ▶ Presuppositions disrupt NPI licensing.

- (1) a. (*Context*: Mary read something interesting.)  
\*I don't think [John]<sub>F</sub> read **anything** interesting **too**.
- b. *Presupposition*: Somebody other than John read something interesting.
- c. \*LF: NOT... **too**... **anything**
- (2) I don't think [John]<sub>F</sub> read something interesting too.

# Introduction

► My goals:

- (i.) Prove that a theory of NPI licensing based on Strawson-entailment cannot work.
- (ii.) Show that the notion of meaning that is relevant for NPI licensing includes presuppositions.

Presuppositions  
Can Be Disruptors  
Too: A Case  
against Strawson-  
Entailment

Vincent Homer

Introduction

The observation

Goals

Plan

Against the use of  
Strawson-  
Entailment

Sorry

SDEness and SUEness

Main tenets

Operator vs environment

Intervention

An enriched global  
meaning

$\mu$  meaning

Too and either

Because

Conclusion

# Introduction

Presuppositions  
Can Be Disruptors  
Too: A Case  
against Strawson-  
Entailment

Vincent Homer

## ► Plan:

- I. Presentation and refutation of a Strawson-based theory
- II. Presuppositions must (sometimes) be included in the meaning that is relevant for NPI licensing

Introduction

The observation

Goals

Plan

Against the use of  
Strawson-  
Entailment

Sorry

SDEness and SUEness

Main tenets

Operator vs environment

Intervention

An enriched global  
meaning

$\mu$  meaning

Too and either

Because

Conclusion

# Downward-Entailingness

- ▶ Fauconnier-Ladusaw: An NPI requires being in the scope of a **downward-entailing function** at LF.

## (3) Downward Entailingness:

A function  $f$  of type  $\langle \sigma, t \rangle$  is DE iff for all  $x, y$  of type  $\sigma$  such that  $x \Rightarrow y: f(y) \Rightarrow f(x)$

- ▶ DE functions: *'no student', not, doubt, without, 'less than three students', 'few students'...*

# Sorry is not DE

- (4) John is sorry that Mary bought **any** car.
- (5) a. John is sorry that Mary bought **a car**.  
*Presupposition: Mary bought a car.*
- b. John is sorry that Mary bought **a Honda**.  
*Presupposition: Mary bought a Honda.*

Unclear whether (5-a) entails (5-b)

# Strawson Downward-Entailment (von Fintel 1999)

- (6) **Strawson-Entailment:**  
 $\Phi$  Strawson-entails  $\Psi$  if and only if, **assuming that the presuppositions of  $\Psi$  are satisfied**, whenever  $\Phi$  is true,  $\Psi$  is true.
- (7) **Strawson Downward-Entailingness:**  
A function  $f$  of type  $\langle \sigma, t \rangle$  is Strawson-DE iff for all  $x, y$  of type  $\sigma$  such that  $x \Rightarrow y$  and  **$f(x)$  is defined:**  
 $f(y) \Rightarrow f(x)$
- (8) **von Fintel's licensing condition:** A (weak) NPI is licensed only if it is **in the scope of a SDE operator.**

Presuppositions  
Can Be Disruptors  
Too: A Case  
against Strawson-  
Entailment

Vincent Homer

Introduction

The observation

Goals

Plan

Against the use of  
Strawson-  
Entailment

Sorry

SDEness and SUEness

Main tenets

Operator vs environment

Intervention

An enriched global  
meaning

$\mu$  meaning

Too and either

Because

Conclusion

# Sorry is SDE

- ▶ von Fintel: A (weak) NPI is licensed only if it is in the scope of a SDE operator.

## Example

- (9) John is sorry that Mary bought **any** car.
- (10) a. John is sorry that Mary bought **a car**.  
*Presupposition: Mary bought a car.*
- b. John is sorry that Mary bought **a Honda**.  
*Presupposition: Mary bought a Honda.*

(10-a)  $\Rightarrow$  *Strawson* (10-b)

- ▶ *Only* and emotive factives like *regret* and *surprise* are captured by von Fintel's SDEness.



# Strawson Upward-Entailment

Presuppositions  
Can Be Disruptors  
Too: A Case  
against Strawson-  
Entailment

Vincent Homer

- ▶ Lahiri (1998): A (weak) NPI is only licensed in the scope of a SDE, **non SUE operator**.

(11) Strawson Upward-Entailingness:

A function  $f$  of type  $\langle \sigma, t \rangle$  is Strawson-UE iff for all  $x, y$  of type  $\sigma$  such that  $x \Rightarrow y$  and  **$f(y)$  is defined**:  $f(x) \Rightarrow f(y)$

Introduction

The observation

Goals

Plan

Against the use of  
Strawson-  
Entailment

Sorry

SDEness and SUEness

Main tenets

Operator vs environment

Intervention

An enriched global  
meaning

$\mu$  meaning

Too and either

Because

Conclusion

# Singular definite article

- (12) (*Context*: There is exactly one student who read some book on NPIs.)
- \***The** student who read **any** books on NPIs is selling them.
  - Presupposition*: There is exactly one salient student who read some book on NPIs.
- (13)
- The student who read **a book** is selling it.  
*Presupposition*: There is exactly one salient student who read a book.
  - The student who read **a novel** is selling it.  
*Presupposition*: There is exactly one salient student who read a novel.

(13-a)  $\Rightarrow$  *Strawson* (13-b)      (*SDE*)

(13-b)  $\Rightarrow$  *Strawson* (13-a)      (*SUE*)

# Both

- (14) (*Context*: Exactly two students read some linguistics book.)
- a. \***Both** students who read **any** linguistics books have applied to the department.
  - b. *Presupposition*: There are exactly two salient students who read some linguistics book.
- (15)
- a. Both students who read **books** have applied to the department.  
*Presupposition*: There are exactly two salient students who read books.
  - b. Both students who read **novels** have applied to the department.  
*Presupposition*: There are exactly two salient students who read novels.

(15-a)  $\Rightarrow$  *Strawson* (15-b)      (*SDE*)

(15-b)  $\Rightarrow$  *Strawson* (15-a)      (*SUE*)

# Main tenets of von Fintel/Lahiri

- ▶ A theory which characterizes possible licensing **operators** (**syntactic** component).
  - ▶ As such, it doesn't deal with the intermediate material between the operator and the NPI.
- ▶ A theory which uses **Strawson**-Entailment (**semantic** component) to ensure that **presuppositions do not disrupt NPI licensing**.

## SDE non SUE operators

### DE operators

*not, no, doubt, few, without,  
every, if...*

*only, sorry, surprise*

Presuppositions  
Can Be Disruptors  
Too: A Case  
against Strawson-  
Entailment

Vincent Homer

Introduction

The observation

Goals

Plan

Against the use of  
Strawson-  
Entailment

Sorry

SDEness and SUEness

Main tenets

Operator vs environment

Intervention

An enriched global  
meaning

$\mu$  meaning

Too and either

Because

Conclusion

# Summary

## ► Where are we?

- I. Presentation and refutation of a Strawson-based theory
  - a. von Fintel's theory
  - b. Against the syntactic and the semantic components
- II. Presuppositions must (sometimes) be included in the meaning that is relevant for NPI licensing

Presuppositions  
Can Be Disruptors  
Too: A Case  
against Strawson-  
Entailment

Vincent Homer

Introduction

The observation

Goals

Plan

Against the use of  
Strawson-  
Entailment

Sorry

SDEness and SUEness

Main tenets

Operator vs environment

Intervention

An enriched global  
meaning

$\mu$  meaning

Too and either

Because

Conclusion

# NPIs are licensed within appropriate environments (not by operators)

- ▶ Licensing is sometimes subject to flip-flop:

- (16) a. There wasn't anyone at the scene of the accident who didn't do something to help.  
b. \*There wasn't anyone at the scene of the accident who didn't do **anything** to help.

- ▶ Flip-flop is not due to the number of operators:

- (17) Everyone who doesn't know **any** Greek is welcome to take this class.

- ▶ Therefore the licensing is checked on some constituent which encompasses at least one licensing operator and the NPI: **the intermediate material matters.**

# Intervention by a presupposition trigger: *too* intervenes

- ▶ Can von Stechow's theory countenance environments (revising the **syntactic** component)?  
No, because presupposition triggers can **intervene**, i.e. cause disruption when they stand on the path between an NPI and its licenser (against the **semantic component**).

- (18) a. (*Context*: Mary read something interesting.)  
\*I don't think [John]<sub>F</sub> read **anything** interesting **too**.
- b. *Presupposition*: Somebody other than John read something interesting.
- c. \*LF: NOT... **too**... **anything**
- (19) I don't think [John]<sub>F</sub> read something interesting too.

# Intervention by a presupposition trigger: *too* intervenes

(20) \*I don't think [John]<sub>F</sub> read **anything** interesting **too**.

(21) a. I don't think [John]<sub>F</sub> read **a book** too.  
*Presupposition: Somebody other than John read a book.*

b. I don't think [John]<sub>F</sub> read **a novel** too.  
*Presupposition: Somebody other than John read a novel.*

$$\begin{array}{ll} (21\text{-a}) \Rightarrow^{\text{Strawson}} (21\text{-b}) & (SDE) \\ (21\text{-b}) \not\Rightarrow^{\text{Strawson}} (21\text{-a}) & (\text{not } SUE) \end{array}$$

- ▶ This is a problem for the **semantic** and the **syntactic components** of the theory.



# Either doesn't intervene

- (22) a. (*Context*: Mary didn't read anything interesting.)  
I don't think [John]<sub>F</sub> read **anything** interesting **either**.
- b. *Presupposition*: Somebody other than John **didn't** read anything interesting.
- c. LF: NOT... **either**... **anything**

# Either doesn't intervene

(23) I don't think [John]<sub>F</sub> read **anything** interesting  
**either.**

(24) a. I don't think [John]<sub>F</sub> read **a book** either.  
*Presupposition: S.o. other than John didn't  
read a book.*

b. I don't think [John]<sub>F</sub> read **a novel** either.  
*Presupposition: S.o. other than John didn't  
read a novel.*

(24-a)  $\Rightarrow$  *Strawson* (24-b)      (*SDE*)  
(24-b)  $\not\Rightarrow$  *Strawson* (24-a)      (*not SUE*)

# Summary

## ► Where are we?

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  - a. von Fintel's theory
  - b. Against the syntactic and the semantic components
- II. Presuppositions must (sometimes) be included in the meaning that is relevant for NPI licensing

Presuppositions  
Can Be Disruptors  
Too: A Case  
against Strawson-  
Entailment

Vincent Homer

Introduction

The observation

Goals

Plan

Against the use of  
Strawson-  
Entailment

Sorry

SDEness and SUEness

Main tenets

Operator vs environment

Intervention

An enriched global  
meaning

$\mu$  meaning

Too and either

Because

Conclusion

Introduction

The observation

Goals

Plan

Against the use of  
Strawson-  
Entailment

Sorry

SDEness and SUEness

Main tenets

Operator vs environment

Intervention

An enriched global  
meaning

$\mu$  meaning

Too and either

Because

Conclusion

- ▶ **Hypothesis:** Presupposition triggers intervene and the presupposition itself must be taken into account.

# Licensing within a DE environment

- (25) **Licensing condition:**  
An NPI  $\alpha$  is licensed in a sentence  $S$  only if the constituent  $\beta$  of  $S$  containing  $\alpha$  upon which licensing is checked is Downward Entailing with respect to the position of  $\alpha$ .
- (26) A constituent  $\beta$  is **Downward Entailing with respect to the position of  $\alpha$**  ( $\llbracket \alpha \rrbracket \in D_\sigma$ ) iff the function  $\lambda x. \llbracket \beta[\alpha/v_\sigma] \rrbracket^g[v_\sigma \rightarrow x]$  is Downward Entailing.

Presuppositions  
Can Be Disruptors  
Too: A Case  
against Strawson-  
Entailment

Vincent Homer

Introduction

The observation

Goals

Plan

Against the use of  
Strawson-  
Entailment

Sorry

SDEness and SUEness

Main tenets

Operator vs environment

Intervention

An enriched global  
meaning

$\mu$  meaning

Too and either

Because

Conclusion

## $\mu$ meaning

- ▶ Let's define the operator  $\mu$ , which takes a trivalent meaning and returns a bivalent meaning:

(27) Let  $F$  be a constituent of type  $\langle t \rangle$ .

$$\mu(\llbracket F \rrbracket) = 0 \text{ iff } \llbracket F \rrbracket = \# \text{ or } 0$$

$$\mu(\llbracket F \rrbracket) = 1 \text{ iff } \llbracket F \rrbracket = 1.$$

- ▶ The notion of meaning of  $F$  that is relevant for NPI licensing is (sometimes) the  $\mu$  meaning, i.e. the **conjunction** of the **assertive content** and the **presuppositions** of  $F$ .

# Too

(28) \*I don't think [John]<sub>F</sub> read **anything** interesting **too**.

(29) a. I don't think [John]<sub>F</sub> read **a book** too.  
*Presupposition: Somebody other than John read a book.*

b. I don't think [John]<sub>F</sub> read **a novel** too.  
*Presupposition: Somebody other than John read a novel.*

(30)  $\mu(\llbracket(29-a)\rrbracket) = \exists x [x \neq j \wedge \llbracket a \text{ book} \rrbracket [\lambda y. \text{read}(x,y)]]$   
 $\wedge \neg \llbracket a \text{ book} \rrbracket [\lambda y. \text{read}(j,y)]$

(31)  $\mu(\llbracket(29-b)\rrbracket) = \exists x [x \neq j \wedge \llbracket a \text{ novel} \rrbracket [\lambda y. \text{read}(x,y)]]$   
 $\wedge \neg \llbracket a \text{ novel} \rrbracket [\lambda y. \text{read}(j,y)]$

$$\begin{array}{l} \mu(\llbracket(29-a)\rrbracket) \not\Rightarrow \mu(\llbracket(29-b)\rrbracket) \\ (29-a) \Rightarrow^{\text{Strawson}} (29-b) \quad (SDE) \\ (29-b) \not\Rightarrow^{\text{Strawson}} (29-a) \quad (\text{not SUE}) \end{array}$$

# Either

(32) I don't think [John]<sub>F</sub> read **anything** interesting **either**.

(33) a. I don't think [John]<sub>F</sub> read **a book** either.  
*Presupposition: S.o. other than John didn't read a book.*

b. I don't think [John]<sub>F</sub> read **a novel** either.  
*Presupposition: S.o. other than John didn't read a novel.*

(34)  $\mu(\llbracket(33\text{-a})\rrbracket) = \exists x [x \neq j \wedge \neg \llbracket\text{a book}\rrbracket[\lambda y. \text{read}(x,y)]]$   
 $\wedge \neg \llbracket\llbracket\text{a book}\rrbracket[\lambda y. \text{read}(j,y)]\rrbracket$

(35)  $\mu(\llbracket(33\text{-b})\rrbracket) = \exists x [x \neq j \wedge \neg \llbracket\text{a novel}\rrbracket[\lambda y. \text{read}(x,y)]]$   
 $\wedge \neg \llbracket\llbracket\text{a novel}\rrbracket[\lambda y. \text{read}(j,y)]\rrbracket$

$$\begin{array}{l} \mu(\llbracket(33\text{-a})\rrbracket) \Rightarrow \mu(\llbracket(33\text{-b})\rrbracket) \\ (33\text{-a}) \Rightarrow^{\text{Strawson}} (33\text{-b}) \quad (\text{SDE}) \\ (33\text{-b}) \not\Rightarrow^{\text{Strawson}} (33\text{-a}) \quad (\text{not SUE}) \end{array}$$



# Two different positions in the presupposition triggered by *too*

- (36) a.  $[X]_F$  did  $Y$  too.  
b. *Presupposition of (36-a)*: Someone other than  $X$  did  $Y$ .

Presuppositions  
Can Be Disruptors  
Too: A Case  
against Strawson-  
Entailment

Vincent Homer

Introduction

The observation

Goals

Plan

Against the use of  
Strawson-  
Entailment

Sorry

SDEness and SUEness

Main tenets

Operator vs environment

Intervention

An enriched global  
meaning

$\mu$  meaning

Too and either

Because

Conclusion

# A case of non intervention with *too*

(37) I don't think [**anybody** in my class]<sub>F</sub> read something interesting **too**.

(38) a. I don't think [**a student**]<sub>F</sub> read s.t. interesting too. *Presupposition*: S.o. other than a student read s.t. interesting.

b. I don't think [**a French student**]<sub>F</sub> read s.t. interesting too. *Presupposition*: S.o. other than a French student read s.t. interesting.

(39)  $\mu(\llbracket(38\text{-a})\rrbracket) = \exists x[x \notin \llbracket\text{student}\rrbracket \wedge \exists y[x \text{ read } y]]$   
 $\wedge \neg \exists x[x \in \llbracket\text{student}\rrbracket \wedge \exists y[x \text{ read } y]]$

(40)  $\mu(\llbracket(38\text{-b})\rrbracket) = \exists x[x \notin \llbracket\text{French student}\rrbracket \wedge \exists y[x \text{ read } y]]$   
 $\wedge \neg \exists x[x \in \llbracket\text{French student}\rrbracket \wedge \exists y[x \text{ read } y]]$

$$\begin{array}{l} \mu(\llbracket(38\text{-a})\rrbracket) \Rightarrow \mu(\llbracket(38\text{-b})\rrbracket) \\ (38\text{-a}) \Rightarrow^{\text{Strawson}} (38\text{-b}) \quad (SDE) \\ (38\text{-b}) \not\Rightarrow^{\text{Strawson}} (38\text{-a}) \quad (\text{not } SUE) \end{array}$$

- ▶ A rule of thumb: A presupposition trigger disrupts the licensing of an NPI falling under its scope (within the environment upon which licensing is checked) unless the presupposition it triggers is downward entailing in the relevant position.

## Introduction

The observation

Goals

Plan

## Against the use of Strawson- Entailment

Sorry

SDEness and SUEness

Main tenets

Operator vs environment

Intervention

## An enriched global meaning

$\mu$  meaning

Too and either

Because

## Conclusion

# Because intervenes (only if it triggers a presupposition)

- ▶ A contrast that von Stechow/Lahiri cannot capture.

- (41) a. (*Context*: Peter broke your vase.)  
\*You're not mad at Peter **because** he broke **anything**, but because he won't own up to it.  
b. *Presupposition*: Peter broke something.
- (42) a. You're not mad at Peter **because** he broke **anything** (of course, he would never do such a thing), but because he says you're on the chubby side.  
b. *Presupposition*: None.

## Because intervenes (only if it triggers a presupposition)

- (43) (Context: Peter broke your vase.)  
\*You're not mad at Peter **because** he broke **anything**, but because he won't own up to it.
- (44) a. You're not mad at Peter because he broke a **vase**.  
*Presupposition:* Peter broke a vase.
- b. You're not mad at Peter because he broke a **blue vase**.  
*Presupposition:* Peter broke a blue vase.

$\mu(\llbracket(44-a)\rrbracket) \not\Rightarrow \mu(\llbracket(44-b)\rrbracket)$ : (43) predicted **bad** by my theory

$$\begin{array}{l} (44-a) \Rightarrow^{\text{Strawson}} (44-b) \quad (SDE) \\ (44-b) \not\Rightarrow^{\text{Strawson}} (44-a) \quad (\text{not } SUE) \end{array}$$

# Both and singular *the*

- ▶ The non-licensing under the operators *both* and *the* (sg.) is simply due to their presuppositional nature (no need for the SDE-non SUE criterion).

Presuppositions  
Can Be Disruptors  
Too: A Case  
against Strawson-  
Entailment

Vincent Homer

Introduction

The observation

Goals

Plan

Against the use of  
Strawson-  
Entailment

Sorry

SDEness and SUEness

Main tenets

Operator vs environment

Intervention

An enriched global  
meaning

$\mu$  meaning

Too and either

Because

Conclusion

# Conclusion

- ▶ A number of intervention effects can only be captured if presuppositions are taken into account.
- ▶ The meaning that is relevant for NPI licensing is the conjunction of the assertive content and presuppositions.

How to account for exceptions?

- ▶ The exceptions (*only, regret, surprise*) suggest a modular system: the presuppositions are not always accessible to the rest of the grammar.
- ▶ Or the notion of presupposition needs to be refined: the cause of the intervention is a *certain* type of presupposition.

Presuppositions  
Can Be Disruptors  
Too: A Case  
against Strawson-  
Entailment

Vincent Homer

Introduction

The observation

Goals

Plan

Against the use of  
Strawson-  
Entailment

Sorry

SDEness and SUEness

Main tenets

Operator vs environment

Intervention

An enriched global  
meaning

$\mu$  meaning

Too and either

Because

Conclusion

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### Introduction

The observation

Goals

Plan

### Against the use of Strawson- Entailment

Sorry

SDEness and SUEness

Main tenets

Operator vs environment

Intervention

### An enriched global meaning

$\mu$  meaning

Too and either

Because

### Conclusion



# Interesting consequences

- ▶ Intervention data provide a way to tease apart local accommodation and non-projection on the one hand and non-triggering on the other.

Presuppositions  
Can Be Disruptors  
Too: A Case  
against Strawson-  
Entailment

Vincent Homer

Interesting  
consequences

Local Accommodation

Non-projection

Non-triggering

Every, each and  
both

Strong NPIs

Summary of the  
data

## Local accommodation: the intervention effect remains

(45) The King of France is not bald, because there is no King of France.

(46) (*Context: Marie has some chance.*)

\*Pierre ne **s'aperçoit** pas que Marie a **la**  
Pierre NEG REFL-perceive NEG that Marie has the  
**moindre** chance, car elle n' a aucune chance.  
slightest chance, for she NEG has no chance.  
*'Pierre doesn't realize that Marie has any chance,  
for she has no chance.'*

# Non-projection of the presupposition: the intervention effect remains

- ▶ The presupposition of the consequent is satisfied by the antecedent:

(47) \*I doubt that if Peter went to Paris, [Mary]<sub>F</sub> too ever went to Paris.

## Non-triggering: no intervention effect

- (48) Si Pierre **s'apercevait** que Marie ait changé  
If Pierre discovered that Marie have.SUBJ changed  
**quoi que ce soit**, il serait en colère.  
anything , he would-be in wrath.  
*'If Pierre found out that Marie changed anything, he  
would be mad.'*

Presuppositions  
Can Be Disruptors  
Too: A Case  
against Strawson-  
Entailment

Vincent Homer

Interesting  
consequences

Local Accommodation

Non-projection

Non-triggering

Every, each and  
both

Strong NPIs

Summary of the  
data

## Every, each and both

(49) a. Every student who knows **any** linguistics has applied to the department.

b. *Presupposition:* **None**.

- ▶ If *every* carries a presupposition, the following test should reveal it (local accommodation in the scope of a quantifier over times):

(50) a. Each year since 1990, every visiting student from France who spent a quarter in the department got their first job in the US.

b. No presupposition that there was at least one student from France in the department every year from 1990 on.

## Every, each and both

- (51) (*Context: Exactly two students know some linguistics.*)
- \***Both** students who know **any** linguistics have applied to the department.
  - Presupposition: There are exactly two salient students who know some linguistics.*
- (52)
- Each year since 1990, both visiting students from France who spent a quarter in the department got their first job in the US.
  - It is presupposed that there were exactly two students from France in the department every year from 1990 on. (*Local accommodation*)

## Every, each and both

(53) (*Context*: There is at least one student who knows some linguistics.)

- a. ??**Each** student who knows **any** linguistics has applied to the department.
- b. *Presupposition*: The set of students who knew some linguistics is non-empty.

(54) a. Each year since 1990, each visiting student from France who spent a quarter in the department got their first job in the US.  
b. It is presupposed that there was at least one student from France in the department every year from 1990 on. (*Local accommodation*)

- ▶ The difference between *each* and *every* is not captured by von Stechow/Lahiri (*each* and *every* are SDE non SUE in their restrictors).

# The problem of Strong NPIs

- ▶ Strong NPIs like *in years* or *yet* are not licensed by *be sorry*.
- ▶ Let's show that they require being in a strictly DE environment.

Presuppositions  
Can Be Disruptors  
Too: A Case  
against Strawson-  
Entailment

Vincent Homer

Interesting  
consequences

Local Accommodation

Non-projection

Non-triggering

Every, each and  
both

Strong NPIs

Summary of the  
data

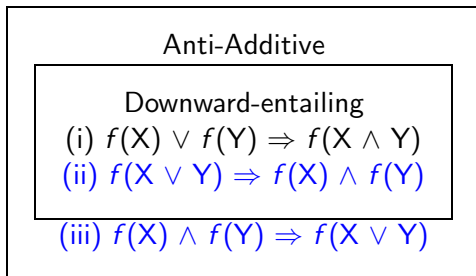


# The problem of Strong NPIs

- ▶ According to Zwarts (1996), strong NPIs must be licensed by an **Anti-Additive function** (e.g. 'fewer than three students' is not AA, but 'no student' is):

(55) **Anti-Additivity:**

A function  $f$  is AA iff  $(f(X) \wedge f(Y)) \iff f(X \vee Y)$   
(Zwarts 1996)



- *Sorry* is **not Anti-Additive**.

- (56) a. John is sorry that Mary is here and is sorry that Peter is here.  
b.  $\Rightarrow$  John is sorry that Mary or Peter is here.

$\text{SORRY}(X) \wedge \text{SORRY}(Y) \Rightarrow \text{SORRY}(X \vee Y)$  (Left to Right)

- (57) a. John is sorry that Mary or Peter is here.  
b.  $\not\Rightarrow$  John is sorry that Mary is here and is sorry that Peter is here.

$\text{SORRY}(X \vee Y) \not\Rightarrow \text{SORRY}(X) \wedge \text{SORRY}(Y)$  (Right to Left)

► Sorry is **Strawson Anti-Additive**:

(58) **Strawson Anti-Additivity**:

A function  $f$  is Strawson Anti-Additive (SAA) iff  $(f(X) \wedge f(Y))$  and  $f(X \vee Y)$  Strawson-entail each other.

- (59) a. John is sorry that Mary is here and that Peter is here.  
b.  $\Rightarrow^{Strawson}$  John is sorry that Mary or Peter is here.

$SORRY(X) \wedge SORRY(Y) \Rightarrow^{Strawson} SORRY(X \vee Y)$  (Left to Right)

- (60) a. John is sorry that Mary or Peter is here.  
b.  $\Rightarrow^{Strawson}$  John is sorry that Mary is here and is sorry that Peter is here.

$SORRY(X \vee Y) \Rightarrow^{Strawson} SORRY(X) \wedge SORRY(Y)$  (Right to Left)

NPIs:	<i>Why/How</i>	<i>Know</i>	<i>Sing. Definite article</i>	<i>Both</i>
Weak:	✓ (rhetorical)	✓	*	*
Strong:	*	*	*	*

NPIs:	<i>Because</i>	<i>Too</i>	<i>Regret that...</i>	<i>Be surprised that...</i>	<i>Only</i>
Weak:	*	*	✓	✓	✓
Strong:	*	*	*	*	*

NPIs:	<i>It-Cleft</i>	<i>Again</i>	<i>Stop</i>	<i>Even</i>
Weak:	✓	✓	✓	✓
Strong:	*	??	*	✓

**Table:** NPI-Licensing in the Scope of Presuppositional Items in English

Presuppositions  
Can Be Disruptors  
Too: A Case  
against Strawson-  
Entailment

Vincent Homer

Interesting  
consequences

Local Accommodation

Non-projection

Non-triggering

Every, each and  
both

Strong NPIs

Summary of the  
data

NPIs:	<i>Why/How</i>	<i>Know</i>	<i>Sing. Definite article</i>	<i>Both</i>
Weak:	*	*	*	*
Strong:	*	*	*	*

NPIs:	<i>Because</i>	<i>Too</i>	<i>Regret that...</i>	<i>Be surprised that...</i>	<i>Only</i>
Weak:	*	*	✓/?	✓	✓
Strong:	*	*	*	*	*

NPIs:	<i>It-Cleft</i>	<i>Again</i>	<i>Stop</i>	<i>Even</i>
Weak:	✓	✓	✓	✓
Strong:	*	??	*	✓

**Table:** NPI-Licensing in the Scope of Presuppositional Items in French

Presuppositions  
Can Be Disruptors  
Too: A Case  
against Strawson-  
Entailment

Vincent Homer

Interesting  
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Strong NPIs

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