

Parallel puzzles: Concessives, adversatives, and presuppositions in infelicitous conditionals

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Here, I explore a link between infelicitous Hurford conditionals (Mandelkern & Romoli 2018) and reverse Sobel sequences (von Fintel 2001, Gillies 2007, and Moss 2010). I claim that both are infelicitous because they lack certain obligatory particles; when present, these particles allow an additional presupposition – absent from the infelicitous reading – to surface, rendering the constructions less infelicitous.

Hurford conditionals: Mandelkern & Romoli (2018) show that although (1) and (2) have the same underlying structure, the latter is less felicitous:

- (1) If John is in France, he is not in Paris.
- (2) #If John is not in Paris, he is in France.

The addition of an obligatory particle (e.g., *still*) to (2) allows the presupposition ‘John may be in non-Paris France’ to surface, yielding a concessive conditional with the result that it is less infelicitous (3):

- (3) If John is not in Paris, he is *still* in France.

Sobel sequences: The prototypical reverse Sobel sequence is given in (4):

- (4) #If Sophie had gone to the parade and had been stuck behind a tall person, she wouldn’t have seen Pedro; but if she had gone to the parade, she would have seen Pedro.

The inclusion of an obligatory particle (e.g., *just*), allows the presupposition ‘Sophie did not get stuck behind a tall person’ to surface, yielding an adversative conditional, and rendering it less infelicitous (5):

- (5) ...but if she had *just* gone to the parade...

The contribution of this study is its demonstration of a link between two constructions involving infelicitous conditionals. In both, the presence of obligatory particles triggers the surfacing of an additional presupposition, which mitigates the infelicitousness.

References: • von Fintel, K. 2001. Counterfactuals in a dynamic context. In M. Kenstowicz (ed.), *Ken Hale: A life in language*, 123–152. Cambridge: MIT. • Gillies, T. 2007. Counterfactual scorekeeping. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 30. 329–360. • Mandelkern, M. & J. Romoli. 2018. Hurford conditionals. *Journal of Semantics* 35. 357–367. • Moss, S. 2010. On the pragmatics of counterfactuals. *Nous* 46. 561–586.