Presupposition. Edited by CHOON-KYU OH and DAVID A. DINNEEN. (Syntax and semantics, 11.) New York: Academic Press, 1979. Pp. xv, 411. $32.00.

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The study of presupposition has been fraught with disagreements and disputes ever since it was first undertaken, ninety years ago, by Gottlob Frege. Linguists have been interested in its study for little more than ten years, but their disputes and disagreements have been no less vigorous than those of philosophers. The very existence of presupposition as a property of sentences, distinct from entailment and implicature, is in dispute. Assuming that it exists, there is disagreement over whether to analyse it as a semantic or as a pragmatic notion, and over how to provide a suitable recursive definition for it (i.e. how to solve the projection problem for presupposition).

The view that presupposition should be given up, as a distinct property of sentences, is represented in this volume by Deirdre Wilson and Dan Sperber, 'Ordered entailments: An alternative to presuppositional theories' (299–323), and by Lauri Karttunen and Stanley Peters, 'Conventional implicature' (1–56). W&S contend that 'presuppositional behavior' can be satisfactorily accounted for in semantic theory in which the entailments of a sentence form an ordered, rather than an unordered, set of objects (299). K&P, however, propose that presuppositions can all be re-analysed as preparatory conditions on speech acts, conversational implicatures, or as conventional implicatures (i.e. implicatures that 'arise ... from the conventional meanings of words and grammatical constructions that occur in [sentences]'; p. 2, n. 3).

The view that presupposition exists as a distinct property of sentences is maintained by all the other contributors. Derek Bickerton, 'Where presuppositions come from' (235–48), holds that 'the manner in which presuppositions work ... is derived from syntactic ... facts' (247).[1] However, Jerrold Katz, 'A solution to the projection problem for presupposition' (91–126), Ralph Weischedel, 'A new semantic computation while parsing: Presupposition and entailment' (155–82), Janet Fodor, 'In defense of the truth-value gap' (199–224), and S. K. Thomason, 'Truth-value gaps, many truth values, and possible worlds' (357–69), all support the view that presupposition is properly viewed as a semantic property of sentence types. 'On representing event reference' (325–55), by Philip Peterson, can also perhaps be put into this category. However, these papers differ on exactly what constitutes the set of semantic presuppositions of a sentence, and on what semantics is a theory of.

The remaining papers all maintain that presupposition is properly viewed as a pragmatic property of sentence tokens. Jay Atlas, 'How linguistics matters to philosophy: Presupposition, truth, and meaning' (265–81), and Ruth Kempson, 'Presupposition, opacity, and ambiguity' (283–97), both argue specifically

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[1] Bickerton's claim is less interesting than it seems, since he considers any difference in the relative acceptability of sentences to be a syntactic fact.

for the non-ambiguity of sentences like *The present king of France is not bald*, whose alleged ambiguity provides the basis of one of the classical arguments for the analysis of presupposition as a semantic property of sentence types. S.-Y. Kuroda, 'Katz and Langendoen on presupposition' (183–98), concludes that 'the notion of semantic presupposition, and correlatively absence of truth value ... are not theoretically grounded on reason, and their justification can perhaps rest only on the intuitions of the investigator' (198). Karttunen & Peters, along with Gerald Gazdar, 'A solution to the projection problem' (57–89), Traugott Schiebe, 'On presuppositions in complex sentences' (127–54), and Choon-Kyu Oh and Kurt Godden, 'Presuppositional grammar' (225–34), all provide different solutions to the projection problem for pragmatic presupposition. Finally, Johan van der Auwera, 'Pragmatic presupposition: Shared beliefs in a theory of irrefutable meaning' (249–63), and James McCawley, 'Presupposition and discourse structure' (371–88), discuss various problems in the analysis of pragmatic presupposition.

The book concludes with a useful 'Bibliography of works dealing with presupposition' (389–403), by Ivan Sag and Ellen Prince, and three indices of dubious value.[2]

Katz observes, in his paper, that the burden of proof that semantic presuppositions exist falls on its proponents—since proponents of the opposite view, e.g. Bertrand Russell, have a simpler theory (96). He then repeats an argument for semantic presupposition (originally presented in Katz 1972:136–9) which, he says, 'dispenses the onus of proof successfully'. Consider this example:

     (1) Sentence 1 is false.

If sentence 1 is either true or false, then it is both true and false. This is a contradiction; hence 1 can be neither true nor false, and any non-presuppositionalist semantic theory—according to which all meaningful indicative sentences must be either true or false—is refuted. On a presuppositionalist semantic theory, the contradiction is avoided; we say that 1 fails to have a truth value by virtue of the fact that the subject phrase of 1 fails to refer to a statement (97)[3] It is essential for anyone who wishes to deny the existence of semantic presuppositions to refute Katz's argument.[4] So far, no one has succeeded in doing so.[5]

    Katz points out that his argument for the existence of semantic presupposition commits one only to 'Fregean presuppositions, namely ones taking the form of conditions that terms refer to appropriate objects or sets of objects' (97); he concludes that the class of semantic presuppositions

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    [2] A few misprints could cause a reader difficulty; here are corrections for three of them. Gazdar informs me that, following line 2 of paragraph 2 of §2, p. 59, the following line should be inserted: 'ploy something rather similar since his formulation is basically'. In line 5 of fn. 16, p. 106, replace 'motion' by 'notion'. In line 16, p. 289, the symbol '*v*' should be replaced by the logical sign for 'or'.

    [3] Sentence 1 is said to be 'ungrounded' (97, fn. 7). For analyses of the notion of groundedness, see Herzberger 1970, Kripke 1975; for a useful informal discussion, see Smullyan (1978:214–18).

    [4] Much the same point is made by Martin (1979:15).

    [5] Only Kuroda 1974 has made the attempt; to this, Katz's rebuttal (96–7) seems to me successful.

coincides exactly with the class of Fregean presuppositions (124).[6] However, other conclusions are at least logically possible. One may wish, like Strawson 1964, to restrict the class of semantic presuppositions to a proper subset of the set of Fregean presuppositions; or one may wish, like many linguists in the early 1970's, to consider Fregean presuppositions as a proper subset of the set of semantic presuppositions.

Fodor's paper draws the first of these conclusions.[7] She contends that 'the descriptive study of sentences suffering from reference failure has been ... extraordinarily simplistic' and that 'not all instances of reference failure are alike' (199–200). In particular, she holds (201) that the failure to refer of the expression *the king of France* results in our considering 3 as making a false statement, but not 2:

    (2) The king of France is bald.
    (3) The king of France is standing next to me.

The reason that 3 is judged false is that 'it says something about me' and that 'what it says about me is false'.[8] The theory that Fodor develops to distinguish between these two types of examples has interesting and subtle predictive powers; however, it also requires acceptance of a very 'liberal' ontology, which she candidly admits 'may be bad' (223).[9]

Among the alleged cases of semantic presupposition that are not analysable as Fregean presupposition are those associated with aspectual verbs like *stop*; with the intonational and stress foci of sentences; with the relative clauses of cleft sentences; and with particles like *even, only, already, yet,* and *too.* Katz, Wilson & Sperber, and Karttunen & Peters all contend that none of these cases is to be analysed as involving semantic presupposition. However, none of their papers in this volume treats the complete range of phenomena, and each adopts a different account of how to re-analyse the phenomena they consider.

Katz proposes that the 'presuppositions' associated with aspectual verbs should be analysed as 'predications on which other predications are stacked' (98). He contends that one who utters *I have stopped beating my wife* succeeds in making a statement, even if he has never beaten his wife. The statement *I formerly beat my wife*, rather than being a presupposition of the original statement, is a 'prior statement', whose falsity renders the original statement both false and 'out of place'.[10]

Wilson & Sperber contend that the 'presuppositions' associated with the intonational and stress

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[6] Katz formalizes the notion of semantic presupposition as the occurrence of the reading of a term in referential position in a semantic representation. Only NP's, including complements of factive predicates, have readings which can occur in referential position. However, not all positions in which NP's occur are referential.

[7] She considers (200), but does not develop, the remaining logically possible alternative, in which the set of semantic presuppositions includes a proper subset of Fregean presuppositions, together with some non-Fregean ones.

[8] Kuroda (190) argues on similar grounds that examples like 3 must be considered false; but he contends, without further justification, that this shows that examples like 2 must also be considered false.

[9] Katz (105–6) shows that a simplified version of Fodor's theory leads to semantic paradoxes; but Fodor (208–9, n. 9) argues that her full theory does not.

[10] Thus a statement can be true only if all its prior statements are true. It is not, however, sufficient to define a prior statement simply as one whose falsity renders another statement false. Consider the following:

    (a) John is a bachelor.
    (b) John is unmarried.

Although (a) can only be true if (b) is, we would not consider (b) a prior statement of (a). The falsity of a prior statement should also render the given statement 'out of place' in the sense that pointing out the falsity of the given statement is insufficient to establish that the prior statement is false. (However, see fn. 13, below, for a case where the falsity of a prior statement does not render the given statement out of place.)

foci of sentences, and with the relative clauses of cleft sentences, can be described by a technique of variable substitution (required independently for the analysis of questions) that partially orders some of the logical entailments of sentences. The relevant 'presuppositions' are those entailments that occupy certain positions in the ordering.[11]

Finally, Karttunen & Peters analyse the 'presuppositions' associated with the relative clauses of cleft sentences and with certain particles as conventional implicatures, in the sense of Grice 1967. Consider these sentences:

(4) Even Bill likes Mary.
(5) Bill likes Mary.

According to Karttunen & Peters, 4 and 5 have the same truth conditions (p. 12); they differ semantically only in that 'one is entitled to infer from [4] not just that Bill likes Mary, but also what is expressed by the sentences in [6]':

(6) a. Other people besides Bill like Mary.
    b. Of the people under consideration, Bill is the least likely to like Mary.

However, one who asserts 4 is alleged not to assert 6a–b; these propositions are said to be merely implicated. Moreover, since they 'cannot be attributed to general conversational principles in conjunction with the peculiarities common to certain contexts of utterances', they are said to be conventionally implicated. Accordingly, the 'conventional implicatures' of 4 are not presuppositions in the sense that their truth is a prerequisite for the statementhood of 4. For suppose that 6a or 6b is false; then 4 can still be used to make a statement, which is true in case 5 is true, and false in case 5 is false.

Of these three notions—prior statement, entailment ordering, and conventional implicature—I find the last the least satisfactory. The one example which Grice 1967 uses to illustrate the notion of conventional implicature does not in fact illustrate it (Harnish 1976:339, Katz & Langendoen 1976:13).[12] The example of Karttunen & Peters, just discussed, is also unsatisfactory, for suppose 5 (and hence 4) is true, and either 6a or 6b is false. Then from a true premiss (namely 4), one is entitled to infer a false conclusion (namely 6a–b), contrary to the principle that inferences should be sound. Since, intuitively, one is justified in inferring 6a–b from 4, it is unsatisfactory to analyse the meaning of 4 in such a way that the inference can conflict with the soundness principle.[13]

We turn now to the projection problem for presupposition. Despite the similarity of the titles of the papers by Gazdar and Katz, the two authors are interested in quite different things. Gazdar seeks a solution to the projection

[11] This technique of ordering entailments and Katz's notion of predication-stacking may not be independent of each other; their relation would be worth exploring further.

[12] Harnish maintains that the following example (presented and analysed originally in Grice 1965:445–7) does illustrate the notion:

(a) She was poor but she was honest.
(b) She was poor and she was honest.
(c) Honesty contrasts with poverty.

According to Grice, (a) and (b) are used to say exactly the same things, but only (a) conventionally implicates (c).

I do not find this analysis convincing, since it seems at least as plausible to maintain that *and* and *but* contrast in meaning (specifically, following Katz 1972:250, that *but* means 'and in contrast'), and consequently that something like (c) is part of what one says with (a).

[13] Suppose we say that 5 is a prior statement of 4. Then if 5 is true, 4 is either true or false, depending on whether 6a–b is true or false. If 5 is false, then so is 4. However, 4 would not be out of place, because any denial of 4 turns out to be tantamount to a denial of 5. To see this, consider the following negation of 4:

(a) Not even Billy likes Mary.

For reasons I don't fully understand, the negative element in (a) has no effect on 6b; i.e., (a) entails 6b and the negation of 6a. But these two propositions together entail the negation of 5.

problem for pragmatic (or speaker) presupposition; Katz, a solution to the projection problem for semantic (Fregean) presupposition. That the problems, and their solutions, are different can be seen by considering these examples from Gazdar (p. 74; my numbering):

(7) Lord Avon said that Churchill regretted resigning.
(8) Churchill resigned.

Clearly 8 is not a semantic presupposition of 7, since its truth is not a condition on the statementhood of 7 (though it is a condition on the statementhood of the underlying embedded sentence *Churchill regretted resigning*). However, a speaker who asserts 7 will normally be understood as assuming 8, which indicates that 8 is a pragmatic (or speaker) presupposition of 7.[14] Thus Katz adopts a solution to the projection problem for presupposition according to which 7 does not semantically presuppose 8, while Gazdar adopts one according to which 7 does pragmatically presuppose 8.

Both Gazdar and Katz take as their starting point the solution to the projection problem proposed by Langendoen & Savin (1971:59), namely that 'presuppositions of a subordinate clause ... stand as presuppositions of the complex sentences in which they occur.' They both find this incorrect; but despite the fact that the original solution was proposed for the projection problem for semantic presupposition, it turns out to be more nearly correct for the projection problem for pragmatic presupposition. Examples 7–8 illustrate this point: 8 occurs as a presupposition of a subordinate clause of 7, and it remains as a pragmatic (but not semantic) presupposition of 7 as a whole.

Gazdar's solution to the projection problem for pragmatic presupposition involves two steps. First, all the potential presuppositions (called 'pre-suppositions') of a sentence are enumerated. Second, those that are inconsistent with the (conversational) implicatures of the sentence are canceled. The remaining elements are the pragmatic presuppositions of the sentence. Unfortunately, Gazdar gives us little information about how to enumerate the pre-suppositions of a sentence, except to say that they are computed by a finite set of functions that operate on the semantic representations of a sentence.[15]

Soames 1979, in the course of a detailed critique of the solution to the projection problem for pragmatic presupposition presented by Karttunen &

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[14] Wilson & Sperber (302) claim that the 'semantic presuppositional approach' cannot handle the fact that (a), below, 'shares most of the presuppositional characteristics of [b]', since the semantic presuppositions of the complement of the verb *say* are not semantic presuppositions of the sentence of which *say* is the main verb:

(a) Bob says that it is Peter who is married to Sarah.
(b) It is Peter who is married to Sarah.

However, Wilson & Sperber's observation is not damaging to the semantic presuppositional approach, since the presuppositional characteristics that (a) and (b) share are pragmatic, not semantic.

[15] Gazdar distinguishes several of these functions, including one that resembles Wilson & Sperber's variable-substitution technique for ordering entailments, and another (labeled f_2) that operates on any definite NP and yields the statement that its referent exists. Accordingly, as Gazdar points out (74, fn. 12), sentence (a), below, pre-supposes that the king of France exists, but does not pragmatically presuppose it, since the pre-supposition is inconsistent with (a) itself:

(a) The king of France does not exist.

However, Gazdar's theory falsely predicts that (b) does pragmatically presuppose that the king of France exists, since its pre-supposition would not be canceled:

(b) The king of France exists.

Gazdar would be better off with a revised function f_2' that did not associate an existential pre-supposition with a definite NP subject of the verb *exist* (cf. Katz, 104–5).

Peters in this volume, arrives at a solution that is strikingly like Gazdar's.[16] However, unlike Gazdar, he presents a class of cases that falsify it (659–60). Consider the following:

(9) If someone at the conference solved the problem, then it was Julius who solved it.

(10) Someone solved the problem.

Soames points out that one who utters 9 need not presuppose 10.[17] On the 'filtering' theory of Karttunen & Peters, this is accounted for, since 10 (which is a pre-supposition of the consequent clause of 9) is filtered out. However, there is no explanation in Gazdar's theory for the absence of 10 as a pragmatic presupposition of 9.[18] A genuine solution to the projection problem for pragmatic presupposition is not likely to be forthcoming until the notion of pragmatic presupposition itself is further clarified.[19]

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[16] See Soames (653–4, n. 62) for documentation of the independence of his work. Soames' solution is not identical to Gazdar's, since the former concerns itself only with truth-functional compound sentences, while the latter is concerned with every sentence type.

[17] Note that 10 is not a semantic presupposition (in Katz's sense) of the consequent clause of 9, but it is a pre-supposition (in Gazdar's sense) of that clause. Soames, following Stalnaker 1974, calls the relation between 10 and the consequent clause of 9 a 'sentential presupposition'.

[18] The problem is, as Soames puts it (659), that the consequent clause of 9 pre-supposes 10; but while the antecedent clause of 9 entails 10, 10 does not entail the antecedent clause. Thus the speaker does not conversationally implicate that he is not assuming 10. (In cases where the pre-supposition entails the antecedent, the assumption that the pre-supposition is being taken for granted leads to the assumption that the truth of the antecedent has already been assumed. Since this latter assumption violates the conversational implicature that the truth value of the antecedent has not yet been established (maxim of quantity), the pre-supposition is canceled. Soames' point about 9 is that this mechanism of cancelation does not explain the cancelation of the pre-supposition 10.)

[19] The situation that Soames describes in 9 and 10 does not arise in Katz's treatment of the projection problem for semantic presupposition, since 10 is not a semantic presupposition of the consequent clause of 9. In fact, when a genuine semantic presupposition is used in place of the pre-supposition 10, it is not canceled in compound sentences analogous to 9. For example, the consequent clause of (a), below, semantically presupposes (b); and although the antecedent clause of (a) entails (b), and (b) does not entail the antecedent clause, (a) as a whole semantically presupposes (b):

(a) If Alice left the party suddenly, then Betty must have realized that Alice left the party.
(b) Alice left the party.

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This is the first volume of a new series, with Peter Trudgill as General Editor and Ralph Fasold and William Labov as Advisory Editors. The book deserves to be congratulated and to receive our best wishes, not only in its own right but on behalf of the series as a whole.

The volume is introduced by Giles' preface ('Sociolinguistics and social psychology: An introductory essay', 1–20) and then divided into two parts, the first on the decoding process and the second (somewhat the longer) on encoding processes. Although Giles admits that this division of the communication process is an artificial one, he nevertheless hopes that it can serve as a first-stage approximation in advancing social-PSYCHOLOGICAL sophistication into the more encompassing sociolinguistic enterprise. The decoding part of the volume deals with such language variables as accent, speech rate, pitch variety, and loudness, and the ways they influence decoders' impressions and decisions. Giles notes that the dominant members of any interaction dyad are the ones usually focused upon (the teacher rather than the pupil, the lawyer rather than the witness), and that they are usually considered in their individual, rather than group-imbedded, capacities; he hopes that the new field will overcome these two limitations in the future. The encoding part of the volume points to cognitive aspects of self- and other-monitoring, and focuses on affective components of speech production and acquisition.

The remaining contents of the volume are as follows:

John R. Edwards, 'Judgements and confidence reactions to disadvantaged speech', 22–44.

Howard Giles and Philip M. Smith, 'Accommodation theory: Optimal levels of convergence', 45–65.

E. Allan Lind and William M. O'Barr, 'The social significance of speech in the courtroom', 66–87.