

# Assignment 7

Chris Potts, Ling 130a/230a: Introduction to semantics and pragmatics, Winter 2024

Distributed Mar 5; due Mar 12

## Final project task

[10 points]

**This problem is required only for people doing a final project, and it is the only problem that people doing final projects need to do. Everyone else should answer questions 1–3 below.**

The goal of this question is get you as close as possible to a complete rough draft that your project mentor can provide feedback on. The specific requirements are meant to accommodate the fact that you might not yet be in a position to produce a truly complete rough draft:

- i. A preliminary title is required. If you like, you can give a few different options with some commentary about their strengths and weaknesses, and your mentor will provide feedback.
- ii. You should include your full introduction from Assignment 6, updated based on the feedback you received.
- iii. From here, you need to map out your current view of the rest of the paper: all the sections and subsections with their titles. Ideally, you will actually draft all of this prose – messy, non-final prose is fine if it helps your reader see what you are aiming to say. If you don't feel ready to write the actual prose, you should resort to organized bulleted lists of things you need to convey, claims you need to make, and gaps you need to fill in, etc. We will read these as establishing the framework for your paper, and we will assume that you'll turn it all into actual paper prose later.
- iv. For projects that aren't traditional papers:
  - If you're planning an experiment, include draft instructions for participants and drafts of the crucial experimental items. We need to see these in detail at this stage, since so much of your project will depend on getting them right.
  - If you're creating a corpus, include the examples you've collected so far. If you haven't collected data by this time, then you probably need to refocus your project so that it doesn't depend on corpus examples – please discuss this with your project mentor.
  - If you're implementing a model, include your code so far, and make sure your draft includes lots of specific details about what the code does and what you still have planned in terms of improvements and extensions.
- v. The draft should include a proper bibliography. The entries should appear alphabetically and give at least full author name(s), year of publication, title, and outlet if applicable (e.g., journal name or proceedings name). Beyond that, we are not picky about the format. Electronic references are fine but need to include the above information in addition to the link.

Prose from your previous project assignments can be reused freely. We're hoping that all of this is building cohesively to the final submission!

## 1 The semantics and pragmatics of *regret*

[4 points]

Section 7.4 of the ‘Presupposition’ handout provides a partial framework for thinking about how attitude verbs convey speaker and subject attitudes towards the embedded clause. The goal of the current question is to explore whether/how the verb *regret* fits into that framework.

**Task 1** Restricting attention to data and judgments in (1), how would you classify *regret* with regard to the Speaker attitude and Subject attitude categories (+, –, or ‘unk’ for each one to keep things simple)? As usual a ‘#’ sign indicates that the example is semantically or pragmatically strange somehow; please stick to these judgments for this question.

- (1) a. # Oedipus regretted that he killed the stranger on the road to Thebes, but in fact he didn’t kill him.  
b. # Oedipus regretted that he killed the stranger on the road to Thebes, but he didn’t believe he had killed him.

**Task 2** We can also ask whether *regret* conveys its embedded content as a presupposition. To do this, use Hypotheses N, Q, and C from Section 5 of the ‘Presupposition’ handout. For each test, construct the requisite example and indicate what, in your judgment, the examples tell us about the hypothesis that the embedded clause is presupposed. (For your base example, it is fine to use variants of the first clause in each example in (1).)

**Task 3** The examples in (2) add further nuance to the empirical picture:

- (2) a. Under the false impression that he had inflicted a fatal wound, Oedipus regretted that he killed the stranger on the road to Thebes, but in fact he didn’t kill him.<sup>1</sup>  
b. # Under the false impression that he was being watched, Oedipus regretted that he killed the stranger on the road to Thebes, but in fact he didn’t kill him.

What accounts for the contrast between these two sentences, and what do they tell us about how to characterize *regret* in terms of speaker attitude, subject attitude, and the presuppositional status of the embedded clause? We are expecting 5–7 sentence responses (though longer or shorter could be fine; it’s the content that matters.) We do not have a single analysis in mind but rather will assess each answer on its own terms.

## 2 Spotted disks

[2 points]

**Task 1** On the theory developed by Syrett et al. 2009, which is the expected response (according to the theory they describe, for children and adults) for the prompt “Hand me the spotted one” in a context in which the subject is presented with two disks, both spotted but one with more spots than the other?

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<sup>1</sup>Example from Klein, Ewan. 1975. Two sorts of factive predicates. Pragmatics Microfiche it 1.1. frames B5–C14.

**Task 2** In Syrett et al.'s experiment 1, were their predictions for *spotted* borne out? In answering this question, summarize their findings for children and adults. (2–3 sentences.)

### **3 The puzzle of *full***

**[4 points]**

The adjective *full* was treated differently by children and adults in experiment 1 of Syrett et al. First, what is this difference? (2–3 sentence response.) Second, they offer three possible explanations for the difference. What are those explanations, and what is their assessment of them? (4–5 sentence response.)