

SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF PRESUPPOSITION AND ENTAILMENT AS TRUTH-CONDITIONAL SENSE RELATIONS IN TIV LANGUAGE

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Abstract

Truth conditional sense relations in language are expressed through presupposition and entailment. The basic idea behind presupposition in semantics is that the falsity of the presuppose sentence causes the presupposing sentence not to have truth-value (T or F.). Furthermore, both a sentence and its denial have the same semantic presupposition. One sentence 'S' is said to entail another sentence 'S' when the truth of the first guarantees the truth of the second and the falsity of the sentence guarantees the falsity of the other. Researches conducted on sense relations in Tiv focus on lexical sense relations neglecting truth-conditional sense relations: presupposition and entailment. The paper sets to analyse presupposition and entailment as truth conditional sense relations in Tiv. The basic objectives are: (1) to analyse presupposition as a truth-conditional sense relation in Tiv, and (2) to examine what certain statements or utterances entail. Data for the study were sourced from the speakers of Tiv in different gatherings. This was done through observation of the speakers' speeches without them being aware that they were being observed. Notes were taken on statements or utterances found to be significant to this research. Some sentences were picked from texts written in Tiv. The paper found out that both presupposition and entailment are evident in Tiv language. In the Tiv language, both presupposition and entailment express the truth conditional value of sentences. The analysis proves that truth-conditional theory is suitable in analysing presupposition and entailment in the Tiv language. The paper concludes that the knowledge of presupposition and entailment is necessary in mastering and using the Tiv language, interpreting and understanding utterances used by the speakers and writers in the Tiv language.

Key words: sense relation, presupposition, entailment, truth-condition.

Introduction

Languages have shared linguistic features. One among the shared linguistic features is sense relations. The Tiv language of the Bantu language family also exhibits sense relations. In sense relations, there is emphasis on the study of how individual words or lexical items in a given language are either similar or different. Though, sense relations to many scholars is limited to lexical items in a language it goes beyond lexical items and covers the relationship and differences that hold between clauses and sentences. Having this in mind sense relations covers structural

ambiguity, presupposition and entailment.

Sense relations in Tiv is very essential because its knowledge empowers the speakers of the language (Tiv) to have proficiency in its use. The vital nature of sense relations in Tiv has made some researchers to study it. Akase (2019) studied "lexical semantic relations in Tiv." In the research, Akase examined synonyms, antonyms, homonyms and hyponymy as sense relations in Tiv. This study neglects structural aspects of sense relations focusing only on lexical relations. Taminu; Amande; and Salisu (2007) researched on 'lexical and structural ambiguity in Tiv discourse'. The

study though considered structural ambiguity, it neglects presupposition and entailment. The gaps identified in the previous studies motivate the present study. The present study therefore is a “Semantic analysis of presupposition and entailment as truth-conditional sense relations in Tiv language”. Specifically, the study seeks to analyse presupposition and entailment in Tiv and the objectives of the paper are:

- i. To analyse presupposition as a sense relation in Tiv
- ii. Examine what certain statements or utterances in Tiv entail.

The significance of the paper is that it provides information on presupposition and entailment in Tiv. The paper attempts to fill the existing knowledge gap on the two sense relations in Tiv language. The paper therefore adds to the existing literature on Tiv language.

The Tiv Language and Structure

The word Tiv has three varying meanings. Udu (2009:9) Posits that “first, it refers to the ancestral father of Tiv race of central Nigeria. Second, it refers to the ethnic group which is a descendant of Tiv. Lastly, it refers to the language spoken by the race” From genetic perspectives, as Udu (2009) Posits, “Tiv is a splinter of Bantu. It belongs to the Niger- Congo language family and can be further classified as Benue – Congo language. Tiv language is typologically tagged to the Tivoid group based on lexico – statistical testing (meek, 1930; Greenberg, 1963; Williamson, 1971; Blench, 2016); meanwhile the sociological profile and dialectal situation of the Tiv patterned after the genealogy of the Tiv ancestral father, Tiv (yina, 2007). Tiv had two sons namely *Ipusu* and *Ichongo*. The two also had children namely: *Ipusu* had *Shitire*, *Kpar* and *Kum*, while *Ichongo* had *Ihar*, *Gondo*, *Nongo*, *Ikura* and *Tongo*. These names from the genealogy correspond to the social divisions among the Tiv and to very large extent its dialectal classification as well.

Though there are social divisions, the native speakers of Tiv speak one common language Tiv with some variations but mutually intelligible to all- a monolithic situation. Some of the dialectal variations of the Tiv language are *Jeicira*, *Jembah*, *Iharev* *Masev*, *Kwande*, *Ukum*, and

Shitile dialectal variations. It is averred by Armstrong (1983); Hoffmann (1980) and Malherbe in the year 1931 (Shoja, 2010) that Tiv orthography is represented by six short and six long vowel and sixty consonants, making a total of seventy-two phonemes or sound segment in Tiv. The phonology of Tiv language is characterized by tone conventions, consonant clusters and palatalization. Prefixes, suffixes, reduplication among others characterize the morphology of Tiv language while syntax of Tiv language is characterized by a subject verb – object order with features such as verbs serialization, clause chaining, focus marking, among orders. As for the vocabulary, Tiv is richly built with its unique words as well as loanwords or borrowed words from English, Hausa Jakum, possessing features such as compounding, derivations, and idiomatic expression. Tone system, semantic fields, sense relation, lexical semantics, idiomatic expression, pragmatic structure, discourse structure and many other concepts form the semantics of Tiv language.

The present research, therefore, looks at presupposition and entailment as sense relation in Tiv as one of the areas in Tiv semantic structure.

Methodology

This paper adopts a descriptive design. The researcher sourced for data from the native speakers of Tiv languages in fourteen different local Government secretariats and their social gatherings in Benue State. The data were sourced through the observation of the speakers’ speeches without the speakers being aware that they were being observed between February and August, 2022. This was deliberate so as to take notice of utterances that speakers make that are significant to the topic of the research. Notes were taken on such statements and utterances found to be relevant to the research. Some of the utterances and sentences that have the truth-conditional sense relations were picked from text written in Tiv language by Akase, T. (2011) on ‘Semantics.’ The truth-conditional sense relations expressed through presupposition and entailment were analysed using the Truth-Conditional (verificational) Theory.

Review of Related Literature

The concept of sense relations: sense relations has to do with how the meanings of

individual words are either similar or different (Akase, 2011). Pushpinder and Jindah (2005) aver that sense is a complex system of relationships that holds between the linguistic items themselves. Furthermore, Pushpinder & Jindal (2005:45), opine that “sense is concerned with the intra-linguistic relation i.e. opposition, inclusion and presupposition.” From the explanations given, it is clear that sense relations comprise antonyms, synonyms, polysemy, homonym, reversives and conversives, entailment, presupposition among others.

Presupposition and entailment as sense relations go beyond the sense relation between lexical items in a language to sentence relations focusing on the meaning relationships between sentences. The present study focuses on presupposition and entailment hence the need to explain the concepts.

The concept of presupposition

This is a concept used in semantics to refer to assumptions implicitly made by speakers and listeners which are necessary for the correct interpretation of utterances (Finch, 2000). Ndimele (1999:85) sees presupposition as “what the speaker assumes that his listener already knows. It is a shared presumption of background knowledge between the speaker and the listener.” Presupposition is one among sentence relations to express the truth condition of statements (truth value). Presupposition could be positive or negative. For example, both the positive statement (a) and the negative sentence (b) presupposes sentence (c) as seen below:

- 1a. The present king of France is bald
 - b. The present king of France is not bald
 - c. There is a present king of France
 - 2a. John realizes that his car has been stolen
 - b. John does not realize that his car has been stolen
 - c. John’s car has been stolen
- (Ackmajian, 2015:242)

Leech (1981) grouped presupposition into semantic and pragmatic presupposition. While semantic presupposition considers the logical relations between sentences without considering how the sentences were generated but with a focus on the meaning from the perspective of truth relations, pragmatic presupposition considers the

background assumption about the speaker or hearer. That is the speaker takes some truth about the context for granted believing it is part of the background of the conversation. Having the above explanation in mind examples three (3) explains semantic presupposition while four (4) explains pragmatic presupposition:

3a. Our semiotics teacher is Dr. Ishima

This sentence semantically presupposes the following:

b. There is a course called semiotics

c. There is a teacher for that course

In the above sentence, the truth relation is semantically based without bothering on the individuality of the speaker and the listener.

4a. The University guides stopped the meeting

Two meanings are pragmatically presupposed in the above sentence thus:

a. A meeting was ongoing in the university

b. The university authority sensed something wrong with the meeting.

In the above two pragmatic presuppositions, the meanings are semantically inferred.

The concept of entailment

This is a logical relationship that exists between two sentences such that the truth of second sentence necessarily follows the truth of the first sentence (Finch, 2000). This definition indicates that entailment is an aspect of logic like presupposition but in entailment, it is a part of the sentence which has some relationship in a way that the truth of the second sentence is derived from the initial sentence. The implication is that it is not possible for the truth of the sentence to be denied as far as the first sentence is true. In an alternative manner, in entailment, a sentence ‘S’ entails another sentence ‘S’ when the truth of the first guarantees the truth of the second, and the falsity of the second guarantees the falsity of the first for example:

4a. “The cloth is green” entails “the cloth has colour”.

b. “Stephen Ajim is a bachelor” entails “Stephen is unmarried”.

- c. 'The lady is short' entails "The lady is not tall".
- d. 'Peter's wife is pregnant' entails "Peter has a wife."

Presupposition and entailment as explained above are spoken or written expressions which precisely clarify the truth and falsity of an assertion or statement. The similarity between the two is that they are all statements of logical relationships which each statement is depended on the other.

Empirical Studies

Scholars have researched on sense relations in various ways. Umeodinka and Ilechukwu (2015) researched on "presupposition and entailment: Towards the semantic analysis of the dialogue before the crucifixion of Christ." The study seeks to pick some knowledge of the meanings embedded through presupposition and entailment in the dialogue. Truth conditional theory of meaning was applied. The study found out that not only that truth is part of logic but also that the tools of logic can help us represent sentence meanings in summarised truth tables. The study shows that ignorance and disregard for the truth-value condition of some Old Testament biblical prophecies by the Jews, Pharisees and other Christ's accusers had presupposed and entailed some consequences that have changed the course of history of mankind. The study relates with the present as it concerned presupposition and entailment but differs in the sense that it was linked with a historical event in the bible and the English version rather than the Tiv bible was used.

Akase (2019), researched on "lexical-semantic relations in Tiv". The study examines semantic relations like synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, and homonymy. The study relate to the present for it considered the Tiv language. However, it failed to account for entailment and presupposition hence the need for the present study.

Mbapuun (2016) researched on 'lexical semantic relations in Tiv language'. Just like Akase's study, Mbapuun focused attention on lexical relations neglecting sentential sense relations embedded in presupposition and entailment. The present study seeks to fill the gap.

Similarly, Taminu; Amende & Salisu

(2007) researched on "lexical and structural ambiguity in Tiv discourse" which is an aspect of sense relations. The study however neglects presupposition and entailment in Tiv. The present study, beside the works cited earlier, seeks to analyze presupposition as a sense relation in Tiv and to examine what certain statements or utterances in Tiv entail; thereby adding to the existing data on semantics in Tiv.

Theoretical Framework

Presupposition and entailment in semantics are aimed at the truth condition of sentences. The paper is anchored on the 'Truth-Conditional Theory or Verification Theory of meaning'. According to Wikipedia, the Truth-Conditional Theory of meaning was developed by Donald Davidson in 'Truth and Meaning' (1967). The theory tries to explicate the meaning of a given proposition stating when the sentence is true. The theory assumes that when one makes any assertions, the meanings of the assertions are the same as their truth conditions. In other words, the theory recognized the fact that as long as we know the meaning of a given sentence, it is an assurance that we can tell the conditions under which such a sentence should be true or false (Umeodinka & Ilechukwu, 2015). According to Saeed (2003:89) "Truth here is taken to mean a correspondence with fact, or, in other words correct description of states of affairs in the world". For example, the sentence:

5. Stephen taught at the National Institute for Nigerian Languages Aba. If it is found that Stephen once taught there, it is true, if not, it is false. The possibility of a statement to be true or false is what is termed the truth value of a sentence. This theory is suitable in accounting for the truth or falsity that is embedded in presupposition and entailment in the Tiv language. The truth-conditional sense relations expressed through presupposition and entailment were analyzed using the truth-conditional (verification) theory.

Presupposition and entailment as Truth-Conditional (verificational) sense relations in Tiv language

In the Tiv language, truth-condition is expressed through the two sentential sense relations of presupposition and entailment as seen below:

Presupposition as a truth-conditional sense relation in the Tiv language

Truth-conditional value of sentences in the Tiv language can be expressed through presuppositions as seen in the examples below:

S/No	Sentence	Presuppositions
1	Gomna u Benue State ka Samuel Ortom (Governor of Benue State is Samuel Ortom)	(a) State ngu u i yilan er Benue yô (There is a state called Benue). (b) State la ngu a Gomna (the state has a Governor) (c) Ortom ka Gomna (Ortom is a Governor)
2	Polofesô James Ayatse ka Tor-Tiv (Professor James Ayatse is the King of Tiv Nation)	(a) Tar ngu ka yel er Tiv (there is a nation called Tiv) (b) Tar la ngu a tor (the nation has a king) (c) Tor la ka Polofesô (the king is a professor)
3	Polofesô Ihom Cletus ka ityough ki Gbar-kwaghhenen u ijô man ahir-a-ijô sha yunivaseti I Benue State (Professor Ihom Cletus is the Head of Department, Languages and Linguistics, Benue State University)	(a) Gbar-kwaghhenen ngu er ijô man ahira ijôô (there is a Department of languages and Linguistics) (b) Gbar-kwaghhenen la ngu a orhemen (The Department has HOD) (c) Orhemen la ka professor (The HOD is a professor)
4	Tica wase u psycholinguistics ka Dr. Ugechi (our psycholinguistics lecturer is Dr. Ugechi).	(a) Kwagh-henen ngu u I yel er psycholinguistics yô (there is a course called psycholinguistics). (b) Kwagh-henen la ngu a ortesen (there is a lecturer for that course). (c) Ortesen la ka Dôkutô (the lecturer is a Dr.)
5	Or u nan lu ashe ase ka Stephen Ajim (our representative is Stephen Ajim)	(a) Or ngu u nan lu ashe a ior yô (There is someone representing a people). (b) Or shon u a lu ashe a ior la ngu a iti (the representative has name)
6	Mbakuran makeranta va yange mzough la (the school security stopped the meeting).	(a) Mzough lu zan hemen hen makeranta (the meeting was ongoing in the school). (b) Hemen u makeranta kav kwaghbo ke mzough la (the school authority sensed something wrong in the meeting).
7	Gômenti va ngohol inya la (Government has taken over the land)	(a) Ayôôsu lu sha inya la (there was crises on the land). (b) Gômenti fa er ayôôsu la a va na ityav mbi nôngon (Government knew that the crisis would result to war)
8	Koti pav ivar la (the court divorced the marriage)	(a) Mzough lu ke ivese la ga (there was no mutual understanding in the marriage). (b) Ior mba ve lu ken ivese la ve za hen koti (The couple went to court)

Source: Field Survey, 2022

From the above demonstration, it is clear that truth-conditions in Tiv are expressed through presupposition while sentences 1 – 4 presupposes three different things each, sentence 5 – 8 has two presuppositions each. A critical examination of sentence, one (1) to five (5) show semantic presupposition where consideration is on the logical relations between the sentences generated without considering how the sentences were generated but with a focus on the meanings from the perspective of the truth-relations, sentence six (6) to eight (8) show pragmatic presupposition. Here the background about the speaker or hearer is considered. In those sentences the truth about the sentences are inferred.

Table 2: Table of positive and negative presupposition in Tiv

S/N	Positive sentences	Negative sentences	Presupposition
1	Tor-Agbande ngu uma (Tor-agbande is alive)	Tor-agbande kpe Tor-agbande is dead	Tor ngu mba yel er Tor-agbande (there is a king known as Tor-agbande)
2	Yashi kav er I wua un kwase yô (Yashi realizes that his wife has been killed)	Yashi kav er I wua un kwase ga (Yashi does not realize that his wife has been killed)	I wua Yashi kwase (Yashi's wife has been killed)
3	Ikpurtakeda fa er un gbe ikyaren yô (ikpurtakeda knows that he failed examination)	Ikpurtakeda fa er un gbe ikyaren ga (ikpurtakeda does not know that he failed examination).	Ikpurtakeda gba ikyaren (ikpurtakeda failed examination)
4	Tyôwua fa er ityô na i a wua un yô (Tyôwua knows that his kinsmen will kill him)	Tyôwua fa er ityô na i a wua un ga (Tyowua does not know that his kinsmen will kill him)	Ityô i Tyôwua a wua un (Tyôwua's kinsmen will kill him)
5	Ujôôji mba er ajir sha mimi (Judges do judge rightly)	Ujôôji mba er ajir sha mimi ga (Judges do not judge rightly)	Ujôôji mba er a jir (judges do judge)

Source: Field survey (2022)

From the table above, it could be observed that both the positive and negative sentences have the same presupposition.

Entailment as a truth-conditional sense relation in the Tiv language

Truth-conditional value of sentences in the Tiv language can be expressed through entailment as seen below:

Table 3: Table of entailment in Tiv

S/N	Sentences	Entailment
1	Maria ngu iyav "Maria is pregnant"	Maria yav a or. Maria slept with man "Maria had sex with a man"
2	Imoter ka wan u Iorfa "Imoter is child of Iorfa "Imoter is Iorfa's child"	Iorfa ngu a wan "Iorfa has a child"
3	Ortom ka Gomna u Benue "Ortom is the Governor of Benue"	Ortom ya ishangen i Gomna u Benue "Ortom won Benue State Governorship election"
4	Dagba hingir zegeor "Dagba has become wealthy/rich"	Dagba yange lu can-or "Dagba was poor"
5	Senegal tôô iyôongo i boo u shin nguhar u ityar i Africa ken inyom i 2022 "Senegal has taken the trophy for African Cup of Nations' football 2022"	Senegal ka tar u hemban boo u shin nguhar ken Africa "Senegal is the football champion in Africa".

Source: Field Survey, 2022

From the above presentation, it is clear that the Tiv language exhibits entailment as a truth-conditional relation. In the examples above in each sentence, the truth condition of the sentences guarantees truth condition of its corresponding sentence in the entailment column. If such a sentence is false, it then guarantees the falsity of its corresponding sentence in the entailment column.

Summary and Conclusion

The Tiv language exhibits presupposition and entailment as truth-conditional sense relations. These truth-relations can be analysed using truth-conditional or verificational theory. Presupposition in sentences can be expressed in both the positive and negative versions of a sentence while it cannot be the same in entailment. In entailment we cannot have the negative and positive forms of a sentence entailing the same thing. It should however, be known that both presupposition and entailment are written or spoken statements which precisely clarify the truth or falsity of assertions. Presupposition and entailment are similar because, as statements, each of them shows logical relationships in which each

statement is dependent on the other. The knowledge of presupposition and entailment in Tiv enhances ones proficiency in the mastering and use of the language. It also helps in interpreting and understanding utterances used by speakers and writers in the Tiv language.

Contribution to Knowledge

The paper contributes to knowledge by critically analysing presupposition and entailment as truth-conditional sense relations in Tiv. The study is novel in the sense that the previous studies on sense relations in Tiv such as Akase (2019), Mbapuun (2016) and Taminu, Amende, and Salisu (2007) failed to analyse these two important truth-conditional sense relations in the Tiv language.

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