

1. The default strategy for semantic composition of an alternatives set introduced by *or* is to simplify it by set union i.e. the standard boolean treatment.
2. This default strategy is constrained by the anti-redundancy condition mentioned above. As a first approximation, I formulate this condition as follows: “Assign an interpretation which maximizes the contribution of all linguistically introduced elements.” In our particular case, the effect of the condition is to give rise to a preference for interpretations in which each disjunct in a disjunction makes a contribution to the interpretation (presumably, truth conditions) of the sentence which contains it.

I suggest that the supercover condition is a strengthening of the default truth conditions, which is introduced when these do not result in satisfaction of the anti-redundancy condition.

To see how the default interpretation strategy works, and how it interacts with the anti-redundancy condition, consider the truth conditions given in (7) and (8).

(7) *Jane may sing or dance* is true at w iff $\exists w' \in \text{ACC}$ s.t. $w' \in \{[\text{jane sing}], [\text{jane dance}]\}$

(8) *Jane may not sing or dance* is true at w iff $\neg \exists w' \in \text{ACC}$ s.t. $w' \in \{[\text{jane sing}], [\text{jane dance}]\}$

In order to guarantee that the truth condition in (8) is met, we must check the membership of each set independently. That is, we cannot guarantee that no relevant world is in the union of the two sets without taking both of the unioned sets into account. This contrasts with what is needed to guarantee that the condition in (7) is met. Here, if we find some w' that is in one set, then we can ignore the other. I propose that such an interpretation is in violation of the anti-redundancy condition, and that, in order to avoid this violation, the truth conditions are strengthened to those I proposed.

The idea that free choice effects have their source in extra-semantic principles has also been proposed by Kratzer and Shimoyama 2002. They suggest that the free choice reading associated with certain indefinites is generated by Gricean style reasoning. I will argue, though, that the free choice aspect of the sentences under consideration here cannot be separated from their truth conditional component, and thus cannot be treated as a standard conversational implicature. In the proposal just outlined, the condition on interpretation intervenes in the process of semantic composition and affects the actual truth conditions assigned. This view of the interaction between semantic composition and pragmatic inferencing seems to accord with that recently advocated by Gennaro Chierchia (see e.g. Chierchia 2001). The proposed anti-redundancy condition, in turn, has the flavor of the principles underlying default interpretation proposed in Levinson 2000. In the talk, I will offer some brief discussion of the larger issues raised with respect to compositionality and the semantics/pragmatics interface.

Finally, I turn to some additional observations concerning the interpretation of *or* which are explained under the proposed account. Note that sentence (1) is ambiguous between the free choice interpretation in (2) and the straightforward disjunctive reading represented in (3). Note further that the default truth conditions in (7) correctly capture this reading. The disjunctive reading is generally less salient, and must be triggered by some aspect of the discourse context or an explicit addition such as “...but I don’t know which.” It is plausible that these are circumstances in which application of the anti-redundancy condition is suspended, allowing the default truth conditions to emerge. This proposal thus accounts straightforwardly for the observed ambiguity.

A second issue concerns the observation that in an unembedded disjunction, there is a strong implication that each disjunct represents an epistemic possibility for the speaker (Zimmermann’s (2001) *Genuineness* condition.) I will show that this implication can also be explained in terms of the anti-redundancy condition, and that its suspension is associated with circumstances in which this condition cannot be assumed to apply.